

A
Book
of
Shadows

A Book of Shadows

*A personal collection
Of spells, chants, and ancient lore
In celebration of the Ancient Ones
The Wiccan Faith
The Pagan Path
and
The Green Way*

*Dedicated to the Ancient Ones
And the Old Ways*

May they never be forgotten.

A Simple Spell To Gain Wealth

Math,
Son of Mathonwy,
Grant great treasure unto me.

Money I must have and soon
By golden Sun
And silver Moon.

Bless me with prosperity
As I do say,
So Will It Be!

On Sunday break and Monday rise, the Lady
waxing white, send this message to the sky.
Sunday, face the Dawn. Monday, face the West, a
coin in the Cauldron place, buried in the North,
water to the South to coalesce the act.

A Most Ancient Chant

ERO ERO AZARAK
ERO ERO ZOMALER
ERO ERO ARIDA
ERO ERO KERMINIOS

BEZABI LACHA BACHABABA
LAMACH CHI ACHABABA

CARRÆLS CASHI ACNABABA
LAMACH LAMACH BACHAROS
CARBAHAI SABAYOS BARYLOS
LAZOS ATHAMÆ CALYOLAS
SAMAHAC ET FAMYOLAS
HARRAHYA!

The Kybation

“And Man was made of Life and Light,
Into Soul and Mind,
Of Life, the Soul,
Of Light, the Mind.”

“All things are moved,

Only That which is not moveable”

“Every body is changeable”

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## To Open the Circle

### Purification

Bless me, O Mighty Ones,  
That I may  
See no evil  
Hear no evil  
Speak no evil  
And be purified in Your sight!

3,7,9,21

### Of the Water

I exorcise thee  
O creature of Water  
That Thou cast out from Thee  
All the impurities and uncleanness  
Of the spirits of Phantasm

In the names of \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.

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## Of the Salt

Blessings be upon Thee  
O creature of Salt  
Let all malignity and hindrance  
Pass henceforth  
And let all good enter in  
But ever are we mindful  
That as water purifies the body  
So salt purifies the soul

Wherefore do I bless Thee  
In the names of & and +  
That Thou mayest aid me  
**3 measures for 3 turns. Cense and aspurge.**

## Call to Quarters

Hear Ye , O Mighty Ones  
Dread Lords of the Watchtowers  
I, x, Priest and Witch  
Do summon you  
And I do command your presence  
That my rite be witnessed  
And my Circle be blessed.

The calling pentacle at each quarter, a salute, and kiss,  
Finally, a salute to the fifth.

## On Parting

Hear Ye, O Mighty Ones,  
I thank you for your attendance  
And 'ere Ye depart to Your lovely realms  
I bid Ye  
Hail and Farewell!

## INVOCATION

By the flame that burneth bright  
O Horned One  
We call Thy name into the night  
O Ancient One!

Thee we invoke by the Moonled sea  
By standing stone and twisted tree

Thee we invoke where gather Thine own  
By the nameless shore forgotten and lone  
Come where the round of the dance is trod  
Horn and hoof of the Goatfoot God!

By moonlit meadow, on dusky hill  
When the haunted wood is hushed and still  
Come to the sound of the chanted prayer  
As the Moon bewitches the midnight air!

Evoke Thy powers that potent bide  
In shining stream and secret tide

In the fiery flames  
By starlight pale  
In shadowy hosts that ride the gale  
Come? O Come!  
To the heartbeat's drum!

Come to us who gather below  
When the broad white Moon is climbing slow  
Through the stars to heaven's height  
We hear Thy hoofs on the wind of night!

As black tree branches shake and sigh  
By joy and terror we know Thee nigh  
We speak the spell Thy power unlocks  
At solstice, sabbat, and equinox!



Sylphs, Sword of Nuadh

**In the South:**

Fire, Michael, Aral, El

Salamanders, Spear of Lugh

**In the West:**

Water, Gabriel, Taliahad, Elohim

Undines, Cauldron of Cerridwen

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## **Correspondence of Tools**

In the North, pentacles

In the East, the athame

In the South, the wand

In the West, the cup

## Tarot Suits

North, discs

East, swords

South, wands

West, cups

## Chant

Darksome night and shining moon

Hearken to the Witches' Rune

East then South, West then North

Here, Come!

I call Thee forth!

By all the powers of land and sea

Be obedient unto me

Wand and Pentacle and Sword

Hearken Ye unto my word!

Cords and Censer, Scourge and Knife

Waken all Ye into life

Powers of the Witches' Blade

Come Ye as the charge is made!

Queen of Heaven, Queen of Hell,

Send your aid unto the spell

Horned Hunter of the night

Work my will by magic rite

By all the powers of land and sea

As I do say  
So Mote It Be  
By all the might of Moon and Sun  
As I do Will  
It shall be done!

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Cakes and Wine

As the Athame is male
So the Cup is female
And enjoined
They bring happiness

The cake is the fruit of the harvest
The wine is the fruit of the vine
Eat, drink, and enjoy!

Samhain Invocation

Dread Lord of the Shadows
God of Life and Bringer of Death

Open wide, I pray Thee
Thy gates through which all must pass

Let our dear ones who have gone before
Return this night to make merry with us

And when our time comes as it must
O Thou the Comforter and Consoler
The Giver of Peace and Rest
We will enter Thy realm gladly and unafraid

For we know that when rested and refreshed
Among our dear ones

We will be born again by Thy grace

Let it be in the same place and time as our dear ones
That we may love again, O Horned One

Descend, I pray, on me
Thy High Priest and Witch

Initiation Calls

Bound and blind, be led to the Circle. learn the passwords. Abandon
fear!

“Who comes before the circle?
Who wishes to gain entrance at the gate?
By what name are you called?”

Answer unafraid or withdraw

“Know thee this
That it would be far better

To plunge yourself onto my dagger
Than to enter the Circle with fear in your heart.”

Give the passwords “perfect peace and perfect love”

“All who bring such words are welcome!”

Enter and be led and unbound

‘Blessed be your feet
That have brought you in this way.”

“

Blessed be your loins
That bear the fruit of future generations.”

“Blessed be your breasts
That nourish the young-f
That bears your courage-m.”

“Blessed be your lips
That will speak the words

Of Magick and Wisdom.”

“Blessed be thee, _____,
Priest (esse) and Witch!”

“Here are the Tools of the Craft.
And remember this:
Thou Must Suffer To Learn!

Welcome, _____, Priest and Witch.”

Full Moon Esbat

Pray to the Moon when She is round
Luck with you will then abound
What you seek for will be found
In sea or sky or solid ground

Self Blessing

I am Perfect
Made of Light and Life
A Perfect Being
Living in Perfect Peace
And Perfect Love
And this is So!

For Youth:

Take three needles from a pine
Bind them with your hair and twine
Keep the charm beside your bed
Dream ye of Eternity
And youth surely will never leave thee.
As with the evergreen, so will you always wear some green.

To Make a Sacred Place

“I cleanse and purify this place
Let all adverse influences depart
With all the enemies of my Art
Depart, Depart, Swiftly Depart!”

To Cast a Personal Circle

I cast this Circle to protect me
From all energies
Positive and negative

That may come to do me harm
In the names of & and +
So mote It Be!

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Self Dedication

I am in a place that is not a place
At a time that is not a time
Between the Worlds
Blessed and Free

Opening the Circle: Celtic Method

Draw the Circle

I consecrate this Circle of Power
To the Ancient Gods
Here may They manifest and bless Their child

At the altar

This is a time that is not a time
In a place that is not a place
On a day that is not a day

I stand at the threshold between the worlds
Before the veil of the Mysteries
May the Ancient Ones help and protect me
On my magical journey

Consecration of Water

Great Mother

Bless this creature of Water to Your service

May I always remember

The Cauldron waters of rebirth

Consecration of Salt

Great Mother

Bless this creature of Earth to your service

May I always remember

The blessed earth

Its many forms and beings

Aspurge the Circle

Consecration of Fire

Great Father

Bless this Creature of Fire to Your service

May I always remember

The sacred Fire

That dances within the form

Of every creation

Consecration of Incense

Great Father

Bless this creature of Air to your service

May I always listen to the spirit winds

That brings me the voices of the Ancient Ones

Touch incense to Pentacle

Great Father

I give You honor!

Cense the Circle

Salute each quarter, calling each, saluting each
lighting each candle in turn, invoking in turn

Calling the Quarters

I call upon the Powers of ESWN
To witness this rite
And to guard this Circle!

Correspondences

East: red, yellow

South: white, red

West: grey, blue

North: black, green



Altar Charge

The Circle is bound
With Power all around
Between the worlds I stand
With protection at hand

Complete the Work

Binding the Work

By the powers of the Ancient Gods
I bind all power within this Circle
Into this spell
So Mote It Be!

License to Depart

Depart in peace
O Powers of ESWN
My thanks and blessings

Banish. Extinguish each candle in turn. Salute.
Return to the Altar.

Parting Charge

To all beings and powers
Of the visible and invisible
Depart in peace
May there always be harmony between us
My thanks and blessings

Cutting the Circle

The Circle is open
Yet ever it remains

A Circle

Around and through me always flows
Its magical power.

Rulers of the Celtic Quarters

East: Paralda

South: Djin

West: Niksa

North Ghob

Inhabitants and Aspects of the Celtic Quarters

East: Sylphs, Zephyrs, Nature spirits, Fairies;
Spring, dawn, incense, optimism, joy,
intelligence, storms; warm & moist; Imagination

South: Salamanders, Firedrakes, imps;
Summer, candles, stars, blood, courage,
leadership, hate, envy, fear, anger, war, ego,
lightning, volcanoes; warm & dry; **Faith**

West: Undines, Nymphs, springs, lakes, ocean,
Fall, sunset, chalice, compassion, mercy, love,
forgiveness, peace, intuition, floods, rain,
whirlpools, tidal waves, laziness, indifference,
instability, insecurity, lack of emotional control;
cold & moist; **Secrecy**

North: Gnomes, Dwarfs; Moon, midnight, Winter,
salt, gemstones, mountains, caves, soil, respect,
endurance, responsibility, stability,
thoroughness, purpose, rigidity to change,
vacillation, lack of conscience, earthquakes,

landslides; Will

Fifth Element (Spirit): center of the Circle,
balance, invocation; Manifestation



Altar Consecration

I consecrate this Altar
That it may be a holy and pleasing place
To the Gods
O Ancient Ones,
Bless this foundation
The focus for my worship and work

Self Blessing

I consecrate this body
To be a vehicle for my Will
To be at all times subservient
To my Spirit

I herewith dedicate myself
To the Great Goddess
And the Horned God

I give my solemn oath
That I will,, follow
The Green Way
As Priest and Witch

Witches' Dedication

Enter I the Circle old
With heart of love and courage bold
God and Goddess
Hear my call
Guardians of the witches all

Take my token, take my love
Given Ye all else to prove

As the Mill around I tread
Guide me in the way ahead
Forge my Spirit keen and bright

Leading me into the Light

Spells and symbols, thought and deed

Governed by the Wiccan Rede

Green is the Goddess

Green the God

I praise Thee with this flaming Rod

EVO IO EVO HE

EVO IO EVO HE

Self Concentration

Ana and An

I call to Thee

Send Thy blessing unto me!

VII

Consecration of Tools and Implements

O Ancient Ones

(Ana and An)

In Thy names

I consecrate and purify this _____

That it may be used

In Wisdom and Love

Present to the Elements (Cense & aspurge)

Names of the God

Storm Magick

To the East:

O wind of storm
I call thee forth
Cast thy blessing I do ask
Upon the Magick
That will be worked here!

To the South:

O fire of lightning
I call thee forth
Bringer of storms and power of Magick
Aid I ask

This powerful spell
That will be worked here!

To the West:

O torrents of rain
I call thee forth
Join me I ask
In performing
This most powerful
Of Magicks!

To the North:

O earth most heavy and damp
I do call thee forth
That I may feel the earth itself move
In the roar of the storm that comes
And thou shalt aid

In this powerful rite!

In the Center, to the God:

Strong and powerful Lord of the Wilds

Wielder of thunder

Be with me I ask

And may it be with Your steady hand

That I do work here

These Great Magicks!

In the Center, to the Goddess:

Great and magical Lady of the Night and of the

Storm

Thou who doth ride through the thunder and the

tempest

Leading the Spirits and the Elder Ones

Beauteous and awesome One

Aid me I do ask
In the performance of Power, of Magick, of Joy,
of Strength!

Turn to the storm. Draw in 13 breaths of Power.

Work the spell

Closing

I thank you
O Wind of Storm
O Gales of Power
That have aided me in this Magick
Go well
And blessings be with you!
I thank you
O Lightnings of Storm

Brilliant and searing
That have aided me in this Magick
Go well
And blessings be with you!

I thank you
O Torrents of Rain
Deluging and cleansing
That have aided me in this Magick
Go well
And blessings be with you!

I thank you
O Powers of Earth
Washed free, wild, and pure
That have aided me in this magick
Go well
And blessings be with you!

From the Altar, to the God, into the Wind:

O Great and Mighty One
Thou who hast helped me to use
The lightning and torrents of the storm
I thank You for aiding me
For being one with me in this Magick
Blessed Be!

In the Center, to the Goddess, against the Wind:

O wild and powerful Rider of Storms
Thou who reveals the deepest of Magicks
I thank you for your presence here

In aiding me and being one with me
In this Magick
My love and thanks be with Thee
O Gracious One
Blessed Be!

To the Storm:

I thank thee
O Storm of Power
And I salute the life within thee
In the names of the wide-ruling Gods
I give thee thanks and release!

Evo He Blessed Be!

Times III

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## Entreatment of Aid to Spells

O Ye who would aid me  
Draw near to me now  
I have need of Your help  
Let me not wander  
Let me not delay  
Help me keep to the Path  
Tell me tales to hold me straight  
Blessed Be to all of Thee  
Give Your blessing unto me

## Esbat Call

Behold!  
The Lords of Light

Have set their stars upon the heavens  
The Earth spins and the Moon holds her course  
The Sky is my father  
The Earth my mother  
I am the Child of Promise  
Come to stand between the Worlds!

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## A Message from the Goddess

North: the Maiden, young and strong, the warrior princess; Rhiannon

East: the Bride transformed by Love; Brigid

South: the Great mother energized by Love, the complete woman; Dana

West: Grandmother, Crone, the hand between

the worlds; Hecate

The Center: Cerridwen, the Circle itself is the  
Cauldron

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## A Pleasant Chant for a Circle Dance

Faerie folk around me go

Moon of silver

Sun of gold

Water, Fire,

Air and Earth

Ring the Circle of Rebirth

Deosil the dance is done

Mother, Hunter

Bound as One

Heart to heart  
Lip to lip  
Five are the points of Fellowship

Blessed Be Thee!  
Blessed Be Me!  
Never bound, always Free!

## A Call to Hecate

Hecate  
Sweet Grandmother  
I welcome Your wisdom  
Your knowing smile  
Be with me by waning light  
Comfort me on moonless night  
Take from me the ancient fright  
With Your Love

## Dark and bright

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### *Irish Correspondences*

East: Findias, Uiscias, Nuadhu's Sword

South: Gorias, Esras, Gae Bulga

West: Murias, Semias, Dagda's Cauldron

North: Falias, Morfasa, Lia Fal

### *Arthurian Correspondences*

North: Arthur, Morgan, the Round Table

East: Guinevere, Marion, Excalibur

South: Lancelot, Robin, the Arrow



# Self Initiation and Renewal

Done at the full moon; best done skyclad; Bathe  
and Meditate beforehand; Open the Circle

Put a pinch of salt on the tongue

I am a mortal

Loved and cared for

By the Triple Goddess

And the Horned God

Through the Great Mother

All things are born

To Her

All things in their season return

Through Her sacred cauldron  
I enter and leave this physical world  
Until by my actions  
I no longer must return to learn

Set perfumed oil on the altar pentacle

I, N, come into this sacred place willingly  
I come to dedicate my life to the pagan way  
To the Old Celtic Gods  
Whose power is still strong and vital  
Here I give my word bond  
To follow these ancient paths  
That lead to true Wisdom and Knowledge  
  
I will serve the Great Goddess

And the Great God

I am a pagan

A stone of the Ancient Circle

Standing firmly balanced upon the earth

Yet open to the winds of the heavens

And enduring through time

May the Old Celtic Gods

Witness my words!

Go to each of the quarters in turn

Behold, Powers of N.

I, N, am a follower

Of the Lord and Lady!

Anoint each point; forehead, lips, heart, palms,  
feet

Let my mind open to Your Truth

Let my mouth be silent  
Among enemies of the Faith  
And eloquent in Your praise

Let my heart seek You always

Let my hands lift in praise of You  
And be skilled in the Old Ways

Let my feet walk Your secret paths

Stand in silence to receive a blessing

Lay your pentacle on the altar

This emblem shall I wear

For all things magical

Bless this pentacle

O Great and Ancient Ones

That I may be blessed and protected

In all ways

*cakes and wine*

As the Athame is male

So the Cup is female

Enjoined they bring happiness

To the Old Gods!  
Merry meet, merry part  
And merry meet again!

An offering to the faerie

Close the Circle

## A Healing Spell for the Waning Moon

As the Moon diminishes  
In the sky's dark sea  
So will this illness  
Diminish in thee  
As I do say  
So Mote It Be!

*Burn a black candle until it through. Invoke the aid of Diancecht.*

*Keep the attributes in a safe place.*

## A General Invocation for Any Spell

O Diancecht, I ask Your aid.

This spell is done

The charm is made!

*Use the appropriate name. If a negative result is sought, use "curse" in place of "charm".*

### For War

Bear and Horse,

Wolf and Ram,

Send swift aid unto my plan

Morrighan of Glamorgan  
Bran the Blessed, Son of Llyr  
Bathe my enemies in fear

Cunning of the Wolf  
Be with me now!

Courage of the Ram  
Be with me now!

Power of the Shire  
Be with me now!

Strength of the Bear  
Be with me now!

Bran and Morrighan, send Your aid

The spell is done

The charm is Made!

*Bathe in salt and iron. The enemy's name in blood on parchment, sealed with an Attribute. The Sword to the South. The Cup empty on the altar. Red and black candles on the altar, North and South. Candles at the quarters: Red, Green, Black, Yellow. Pine, the scent. Red the Stone. Blood the Oil. Light the Black from the Red at the altar. Let the Black, Red, and quarter South burn beyond opening the Circle. Bury the parchment and the Attribute in rotting ground.*

## Yule

*Three times sound the Bell:*

This is the Winter Solstice  
longest night of the year

Darkness reigns triumphant  
Yet gives way to the coming Light

The Sun King has gone to Emania  
Yet within the sacred Cauldron of Rebirth  
He is once more transformed  
Into the newborn Divine Child of Light!

*Incense to the coals:*

All is cold  
And I await the coming of the dawn  
As the Sun rises  
The triple Goddess once more gives birth  
To the Divine Child

In silence and wonder I stand

before the sacred Cauldron of Rebirth  
Knowing that one day  
I too must pass through the Cauldron  
And be reborn

Such is the Ancient Promise

For this I honor  
The Triple Goddess  
And all the Ancient Ones!

## *The White Candle*

White is for the maiden  
May you plant your seeds  
Of joy and new beginnings  
Within my life

## The Red Candle

Red is for the Mother  
May you grant me the gift of creative thoughts  
And the strength to bring them to fruition

## The Black Candle

Black is for the Crone  
The Wise One  
May you give me Wisdom  
To understand  
The Magical Mysteries

## The Green Candle

Green is for the newborn Lord of the Forests  
The Divine Sun Child  
Who comes once more into the world  
I welcome you  
Child and Consort of the Goddess  
Living King of the Sun!

*Ring the Bell in each quarter, saying:*

Rejoice, O Powers of N!  
Welcome the Divine Child!

*Ring thrice at the Altar, saying:*

Hail, O God of the Woodlands and New Life!  
I give You honor and ask Your blessing

Again, thrice ring, saying:

Hail, Triple Goddess

Bringer of Light

Out of the Cauldron of Rebirth

I give You honor

And ask Your blessing

Receive the blessing.

Cakes and wine.

Close the Circle

A Children's Rhyme  
from  
Olden Tymes

Ride a cock horse  
To Banbury Cross  
To see a fine Lady  
Ride a white horse

With rings on her fingers  
And bells on her toes  
And she shall have music  
Wherever she goes

## A Druid Prayer

Grant, Almighty,  
Thy protection  
And in protection,  
Strength  
And in strength,  
Understanding  
And in understanding,  
Knowledge  
And in knowledge,  
The knowledge of justice  
And in the knowledge of justice,  
The love of it  
And in that love,  
The love of all Existence  
And in the love of all Existence,  
The love of God  
God and all goodness.

## The Wiccan Rede

Do what ye will,  
An ye harm none.

for whatever is done  
Is returned  
Threefold

# Book of Shadows

## A Wiccan Guide to Rite and Ritual

### Introduction

A Book of Shadows is a magical diary. No two are exactly alike, since these volumes contain the experiences and important documentation of Wiccan practices of significance to the individual witch. Similar to the scientist's laboratory notebook, these books record the methods and materials used to perform magic and the results of these operations. The witch would carefully document rituals, chants, tools and correspondences; then, through careful observation and analysis, synthesize working methods for everything from healing spells to tasty recipes for sabbat cakes.

Herbal lore and treatments for various ailments accompanied weather signs and ancient verse. Original songs and poetry could be found along with rites celebrating the wheel of the year.

Eclectic information gathered from travelers found its way into the book. The witch hungered after raw data from other places to supplement what could be learned by direct observation. When it came to knowledge, arcane or mundane, no witch was ever too proud to borrow.

The witch did not limit the acquisition of knowledge to the "real" world. It was common to find passages describing journeys to other planes of existence, complete with detailed descriptions of those worlds and their inhabitants. Knowledge from Otherworld contacts was held in great esteem, since the inhabitants of that plane were not limited by space or time. The witch often relied on these beings to provide solutions to problems that were beyond the scope of available human resources to resolve. Infrequent calamities such as famine, hostile contact with other cultures, and natural disasters for which there was no known precedent stirred the witch to journey to the Otherworld to gather lifesaving intelligence from ancestors and helpful spirits.

In early society, the witch functioned as healer, meteorologist, counselor and sage. It was the witch's responsibility to identify beneficial plants, predict climactic changes that would determine planting, harvesting, and the need to migrate, and to act as intermediary to the spiritual plane where ancestors could be consulted and the entities responsible for the forces of nature appeased. The earliest method of perpetuating this store of knowledge was the oral tradition that exists to this day in many cultures. The Druids have been said to rely almost exclusively on the spoken word to educate generation after generation in the intricacies of their lore.

Songs, poems, and narratives have also been used in many traditions that have found themselves at odds with the establishment. Unfortunately, total reliance on the spoken word can result in the almost complete loss of the wisdom acquired by a culture should that culture meet with some circumstance that results in a break in the informational chain. Most of what we currently know of Druidic society was documented by the Roman invaders of Gaul and Britain, who viewed the Druids as enemies. An important part of the cultural heritage of Britain and Western Europe has been reduced to a few terse footnotes in the history of Roman conquest.

Long before the Druids, however, some cultures recognized the need to document information necessary to survival and considered esoteric knowledge as important as the learning of physical hunting skills.

The earliest cave painting depict primitive rituals indicating that our ancestors probably considered

sympathetic magic as important as a sharp spear to a successful hunt. The joining of human and animal forms seen in many of these paintings may have been used to illustrate the importance of identifying with the prey to predict its behavior. Since survival depended on hunting success, it is likely that early man considered this information far too important to tribal continuity than to trust it to a less than permanent record. Thus, the oldest Books of Shadows are pictorial and probably were reinforced by verbal storytelling.

Oral tradition has always been a common idiom for passing on arcane wisdom, particularly during times of persecution. Possession of a Book of Shadows was a sure death sentence. In many cases, knowledge was disseminated only within one's family and disappeared with that family's demise or conversion to another faith. Written records were rare, typically incomplete, and kept in coded form. These codes consisted of special alphabets and word orders meant to bewilder rather than inform.

An individual's Book of Shadows is personal, since it contains the arcane knowledge of the particular tradition followed by its author as well as personal practices and observations that might have little meaning to anyone else. To further confound the inquisitive, the witch often used runes, pictograms and personal encryption, along with a healthy dose of nonsense passages meant to thoroughly confuse the uninitiated reader.

Very often the proper names of deities and archetypes were left out altogether, owing to the Wiccan belief that to know the correct name of someone or something enhanced one's magical control over that subject. Deciphering such texts proved almost impossible without knowing the cryptographic key employed by the author.

Persecution of pagans and witches gradually diminished with time. Yet, it was not until March 25, 1951 that Britain repealed its last laws against witchcraft. Until that time, a Book of Shadows could conceivably be used as evidence of criminal activity.

That Wicca has relied on oral tradition and cryptic manuscripts that seldom survived beyond a few generations of a given clan has left large gaps in its history. Archaeologists have had some success at theorizing what early pagans and witches believed based on Stone Age artifacts. Anthropologists have attempted a similar reconstruction based on surviving regional folk rituals.

From these complementary approaches, much has been extrapolated by modern Wiccan writers in an attempt to reconcile current Wiccan practices with their ancient roots. Through their diligent efforts, these neopagans have provided a sound foundation for modern Wicca.

An important point: it has recently become fashionable to explore pre-Gardnerian and pre-Alexandrian Wiccan traditions. The pursuit of ancient knowledge is laudable and should continue in earnest. However, the use of that knowledge should not take the form of a tool for the disparagement of those two traditions to which the Wiccan revival as a whole owes so very much. Witches have always been open to learning without the need to dispose of what has already been learned and proven to be useful.

Wicca remains the religion of the *individual*. Keep in mind, during your studies, that what touches you personally should find a place in your art, regardless of its source, its antiquity, or its lack thereof.

In modern times, the need for secrecy has been greatly reduced, and Wiccan beliefs and practices have been made public by many authors. The dawning of this new age has also seen Wicca split into many forms based on the cultural, philosophical, and political backgrounds of these modern practitioners.

This reawakening over such a wide spectrum cannot help but be healthy for Wicca as a whole. As long as the nay-saying is left to other religions who feel they are the one and only true faith, Wicca will thrive. Our covens may follow different methods, and our solitary practitioners may adhere to none of those, but we all have the same spiritual goal and remain bonded to one another through thousands of years of Wiccan heritage.

Our common bonds include a reverence for all Creation, recognition of forces outside ourselves that can be summoned to our aid, and a supreme interest in humanity's survival. We may call on different gods, stage elaborate rites or none at all, practice in groups or alone, state our beliefs publically or shroud them in secrecy; no matter. ***We are all witches.***

**Practice your way!  
Refrain from coarse remarks  
When criticized by others.**

**Educate them gently.**

**When any are attacked for their beliefs,  
Remember that Wicca  
Is the foundation of many faiths.  
Defend the persecuted with wit and wisdom.**

**Pursue the persecutors with all due diligence  
Until the persecution stops.  
Let them find no rest and no safe harbor.  
Expose those so full of hate for what they are;**

**Souls bound to the lowest post  
By their own Devil's chains,  
Doomed to wander *this* world forever  
In search of new "enemies" to victimize.**

## A GUIDE TO USING THIS BOOK

To make this Book of Shadows readily accessible, I have translated the text into working English and added commentary in order to clarify various passages that may consist of a few notes that would have meaning only to the author. I have included the names of archetypes and deities as they are most commonly known in my own Celtic tradition and encourage the reader to substitute names with which the reader feels comfortable working.

The God and Goddess have many names, some particularly suited to specific rituals and traditions. Use names that you can identify with, names that invoke in you the desired emotional response. Pay special attention to names that may come to you during rituals and meditation. While you may never have seen these names in any text that you have yet read, do not be surprised to find them in future reading. The secret names so frequently mentioned in Wiccan writings were often those revealed during ritual through Otherworld contacts.

In Wicca, the term "secret" sometimes referred to private knowledge held by the individual practitioner as opposed to any general Wiccan dogma. What you learn between the worlds is important to your personal development within Wicca.

To make best use of these writings, the reader should pay careful attention to the directions given for constructing rituals and spells and use the specific wording of such workings as a guide. Correspondences that have great meaning to me may have no significance at all for you. I routinely alter the exact methods of many rites in favor of different ones that seem more applicable for a given moment, the sole exception being that I tend to use certain chants and follow closely the ancient rituals for sabbats and esbats. However, if you already follow some tradition for these occasions, do not feel they must be scrapped in favor of mine. A common predicament that most new students fall into is that of starting over again with each new book they read.

*I have written this book to add to your knowledge, not to supplant what you have already*

*learned.*

Exposed in the simplest of terms, a Book of Shadows still is very much a secret document. It resembles a classical music composition in that it portrays in words and symbols that which is often beyond description. Just as a master musician will transcend the score when playing Mozart, so will the witch go beyond the chants and charms to work on the magical plane. The book is the sheet music. It is up to you to play the tune, and only you know exactly how it should sound.

To truly find your way along Wicca's ancient path, do not just read this book (or any other). Live it! Try the rituals. Chant the chants. ***Work, work, work!***

Wicca is a personal religion and must be experienced on the personal level. Thus, Wicca has very little dogma and no churches. Its highest authorities are servants of the faith, not rulers of the congregation. Accept as true that which you yourself prove in whatever manner has meaning to you. You will encounter many guides on this plane and the next, but their lessons are not cut in stone. The only "true faith" is the one that grows inside you.

*A caution to travelers along this path: **know yourself**, both your talents and your flaws.*

While you will not be expected to flagellate yourself for past sins, your subconscious will readily bring up those as you get deeper into Wicca, usually as a means of preventing you from repeating behavior that can damage you. Know and accept the truth about yourself. Wicca has no sainthood to bestow, but faults whose existence is denied can poison the best magic. However, mere acceptance is not enough. Do your best to put these problems behind you and go on. Remember, too, that you are not alone in your efforts. The Goddess loves Her children and the God protects them from harm. Help is there. Know when to ask for it.

## **Chapter One**

**The things you need, O Witch, are three,**

**Will, Imagination, Faith they be,  
To open any well locked door,  
And learn the secrets never told,  
To one so young or one less bold,  
To will, to dare are easy, yes?  
Imagination you're not lacking,  
Faith, no strong suit of the young,  
But you have enough, or so you've sung.  
Now know what's harder than these three,  
Is to keep Silent,  
Quiet be!  
Let no one know the work that's done,  
For Mother Moon and Father Sun.  
Heed this, if you would learn the ways,  
Ancient in your most elders' day.  
  
Do what you will, but harm you none,  
Threefold's the prize you will have won,  
For every seven deeds you've done,  
Expect to get back twenty one.**

Wicca has few absolute rules beyond the two stated in the last verses above. Do whatever your will inclines you to do, but endeavor to harm no one, because what you do will be returned threefold.

This does not mean that you will never have occasion to cause someone some grief. It does mean that you should be absolutely sure of the consequences of your actions. No one can provide you absolution should you choose to act in a way that invites retribution. A witch bears full responsibility for any action, and this law is not limited to spellwork.

Many modern texts have used this law of threefold retribution as evidence against the popular belief that witches work black magic and live to harm those around them through curses and hexcraft. While it is certainly true that it would not be in the best interest of a witch to be involved in such activity, be advised that negative actions are a part of Wicca, particularly if the result of such work might lead to a greater good.

Suppose that new factory in your town that's brought in oh-so-many new jobs to your community is, at the same time, poisoning the environment to such a degree that farmers are being driven from their land and health problems are rampant in the town. To work toward closing the factory would certainly be negative work, although its overall outcome may be positive. If a witch should undertake such a task, whether through spellwork or good old civic protest, the negative aspects of the work will incur a debt that must be paid. A witch must be WISE in making such choices.

It also doesn't hurt to consult your favorite means of divination or spirit guides!

While the devil has no place in Wicca, the use of negative entities and energy does. These forces

are not evil. They are the opposites necessary to positive forces to achieve balance within the universe. Healing often requires the use of negative energy as a means of reducing the effect of illness on the body before health can be improved through positive methods.

Polarity is one of the Hermetic principles that define the natural laws of Creation. Love and hate are identical emotions differing only in degree. The same is true of hot and cold, light and dark, and so on. To completely ignore the negative is to surrender one half of your magical arsenal.

In Wicca, the principal of polarity is expressed by the Triple Goddess. Each persona represents a phase of the moon. The waxing moon is the Goddess in her youth, a maiden filling with energy as she proceeds toward full maturity and becomes capable of motherhood. This maternal aspect is represented by the full moon, the center between the two axes of light and dark, positive and negative. As the moon wanes toward complete darkness, the Goddess becomes the crone, a wise woman past the point of physical productivity. The crone is valued for her wisdom and understanding love. She has mastered life's experiences and is infinitely patient with youthful transgressions, very much the loving grandmother. She also teaches that decrease is a natural part of life. She is, despite being a negative aspect, far from evil.

*Work toward increase in the Goddess's growing light. Seek fulfillment bathed in full moon's light. That which you would cast out from yourself or others, that which injures and festers succumb to the crone's power. Let them die as the moon diminishes, meeting their end at the new moon, when Hecate rules the sky.*

## **Waxing Moon Chant**

Maiden racing cross the sky,  
Work my Will by magic rite.  
Make the \_\_\_\_\_ increase in me,  
As the light increases Thee.

## **Full Moon Chant**

Gracious Mother,  
Full of love,  
To this sacred space I've come  
To ask in faith that You will do

This favor that I have asked of You.

### **Waning Moon Chant**

Grandmother of the dying light,  
Work my Will by magic rite,  
Take this burden to Your side,  
That it may vanish with new moon's night

### **New Moon Chant**

Darksome Lady, blackest night,  
This I will by magic rite.  
That which troubles me tonight,  
Take with You on Your dark flight.  
By Your grace and by Your might,  
Let it never see the light.

Use these chants alone or with other spells or chants. Substitute the objects of your magical work and restructure the rhymes as you wish. These chants are especially useful for closing spellwork.

When writing your own rites and spells, keep in mind that the elements of such work must appeal to your rational mind *and* your emotional or intuitive mind.

One method for accomplishing this difficult task is to overwhelm the rational side with signs, symbols, and correspondences, giving it so much work to do that it hasn't the time to spoil the task at hand with its steady stream of criticism.

The intuitive mind associates pleasure with accomplishment. Rites layered in rhymes, pleasing symbols, and beauty appeal to this side of your personality. The intuitive mind is childlike. It likes ice cream, no matter how many pounds you have sworn to lose. If not tempered by the rational mind, the intuitive mind can lead to negative behavior, including addiction.

In magical work, the intuitive mind serves as the bond between subject and operator. While the rational mind differs greatly among individuals depending on experience, education, and intelligence, the intuitive mind does not. Input of data to the intuitive mind comes from the five senses and is identified as positive or negative without qualification. The intuitive mind is the source of superstitious behavior that

cannot be reasoned away and is also the home of phobias. Since conventional logic has little meaning to the intuition, it is much more easily convinced that magic will work. This conviction is accomplished by using music, poetry, vibrant colors, pleasant smells from incense and oils, dance, and, most importantly, imagination. The intuitive mind dearly loves imagination. It has probably been sulking ever since some misguided adult told you as a child to stop pretending and to live in the "real" world. Be assured that if pretending wasn't important to your survival, your ability to do it would have vanished over evolutionary time. You may as well have been told not to walk!

Regaining your ability to pretend may require a bit of psychic rehabilitation, but it will come back to you. Be patient with yourself. There are exercises in the text that will help.

The rational mind can be a pest when constructing a ritual. It acts very much like a bank auditor, demanding explanations for each step in the ritual and expecting the bottom line to balance to its liking. The intrinsic elements so important to the intuition are as worthless to it as a debtor's promise. It wants the cold, hard facts. The rational mind is convinced that there must be some logical reason for expecting a ritual to succeed. Thus, it insists on correspondences. It counts the candles, quantifies the chants, measures the efficacy of each tool, and dictates the timing of the rite to coincide with planetary and astrological influences. The more information you provide it, the more comfortable it becomes, until it finally accepts that the work you are about to perform should succeed through your diligent adherence to the rules it understands. Doubt is the enemy of magic. The more you reduce doubt in your mind, the better your chances of success.

**Follow these guidelines in all your magical work:**

- 1) Identify the goal as specifically as you possibly can. Write it down, and try to use no more than one sentence. Long-winded elaborations are not necessary; they usually indicate that you have not given quite enough thought to the task at hand.***
- 2) Consult whatever means of divination appeals to you. Assume that your work has been successful and examine the results. Meditate and cogitate! Will there be negative repercussions from your work? Ask your spirit guides. Ask the archetype most closely associated with the work you intend to do. This may seem a lengthy process, In fact, it is not, particularly when compared to the time required to fix any problems that may arise through your efforts.***
- 3) Compose the words you will use. These may be your own or someone else's. What matters is that they have meaning to you. Configure the Circle and altar based on your liking and what you feel suits the work at hand. gather the tools necessary, including incense, candles and the like. Consecrating any tools that might be particular to the rite helps concentrate your energies and appeals to your rational side. Identify where and when the rite is to take place, consulting tables of correspondence that you find reliable. Carefully rehearse the rite, placing emphasis on identifying any points you may have missed. Commit as much of the rite as you can to memory. This aids concentration in the Circle, not to mention that candlelight is not the best for reading some meaningful incantation written in Chaldean. Keep things as simple as possible.***
- 4) Before the rite, purify yourself with a bath. Salt will aid purification. You may also include any herbs that appeal to you or may be associated with the work to be done. Remember, the more correspondences, the better!***
- 5) Be absolutely sure that everything you will need for your work is at hand. Breaking the Circle to retrieve tools is not conducive to maintaining concentration.***
- 6) Cast your Circle. Call to the quarters, in addition to the usual guardians, any archetype or deity whose help you may need. Consecrate yourself and the Circle, and dedicate it and yourself to the rite to be performed.***
- 7) Raise the Cone of Power. Picture it spiraling upward from the earth through you and out into space. See the spiral as interweaving bands of colors that seem appropriate for the task or that particularly***

*please you. My favorites are gold and silver, representing solar and lunar energy. I usually add a third strand to my spiral in a color suited to the work at hand.*

**8) Conduct the rite. This may include dancing, chanting, reading or reciting, invocations, evocations, and any ritual work that has meaning to you toward accomplishment of your goal.**

**9) Once all work has been completed, sit quietly and focus totally on your goal, visualizing it as already having come to be. When you have the clear image in your mind, say "SO MOTE IT BE" and propel your energy into the Cone with all the force you can muster, knowing that any entities you have asked to assist you are doing the same. You should feel quite drained after this portion of the rite and may need a few minutes to recover. Don't hurry. You have all the time you need.**

**10) Before closing the Circle, it is important to ground any energy left over from the ritual. This can be done by drawing the Cone back through yourself and releasing to the earth. You may also wish the energy out into the cosmos to increase the reservoir of energy available to those who may need its healing power, or you may simply direct it to some general task, such as healing the planet and restoring her natural balance. If you choose to project the energy in this manner, it is still wise to ground what may be left over by eating or drinking something as soon as you close the Circle, since ritual often tends to leave one a bit out of touch with the mundane world. A Cakes and Wine ceremony just before closing will also act as a ground and is a particularly pleasing sacrament to the Goddess and the God.**

**11) Close the Circle in the usual way, being sure to thank any entities whose help you have requested.**

**12) Clear your mind of the work as you would any task that has already been completed. While you will want to review your work to measure and record its success as would any reputable scientist, there will be plenty of time for that later. Immediately after ritual work that involves magic, it is important that you rest both physically and mentally. The drain that such efforts can put on your system are enormous and are not to be taken lightly. It is not uncommon to feel slightly displaced with respect to the mundane world. Relax and recover, or risk forgetting your own phone number!**

**13) After you have rested, review your work. Keep a written log that includes every detail including weather, time of day, season, lunar phase, and all special circumstances, both positive and negatives. Record your feelings and any impressions you may have had during the work, particularly if you felt you were being helped or hindered by some external force. Your log entries should be quite long initially. It will take time and careful analysis to determine what influences and circumstances are important to your success and which are not. As you progress, your notations will shrink to those of an experienced and practical scientist and will contain only information you know to be pertinent.**

Your magical record must be accurate in every detail to provide the information you will need for future work.

Be verbose, be poetic, be terse, but above all be *precise*.

Do not give in to wishful thinking. Record the facts as you know them. Be careful not to draw conclusions without complete justification. Certain impressions that may have come to you that seem disconnected and nonsensical.

Be patient.

These little sidebars are often pieces of a longer story that may become clear to you as you continue your magical operations. In some cases, you will be learning the details of a story that may have taken eons to unfold, and these tales are almost always connected to your personal development. You will be given no more than you can handle at the time.

In the eyes of the gods, we are all children, some more precocious than others, but nonetheless capable of spiritual maturation under their tutelage.

There will be countless times when you will receive information that makes no sense at the time, only to review your diary at some later time and find enormous significance to those nonsensical images.

As you continue to conduct magical operations, you will begin to learn what elements are important to success. Much has been written, especially by ceremonial magicians, concerning the correspondences and operations to be followed to achieve magical goals. Historical records exist from

many cultures that provide recipes that promise satisfactory results. Books of spells and charms abound in every book store.

Read and learn but remember that *your work is your own*.

The most important magical book you will ever have is the one you write for yourself. Only you know what circumstances and correspondences have meaning to you, and these take precedence over all but the most basic rules governing such matters.

Read with a mind toward how the information you are gathering will fit with your personal experiences. Even influences as fundamental as the phases of the moon should be personalized.

For example, suppose you are researching information on healing magic. In the past, you have been successful at healing when your goal was to diminish the sickness rather than improve the person's wellness. You read that the waxing lunar phase is excellent for work involving increase and that the waning phase aids decrease or banishment. Your personal experience would lead you to perform the healing work during the waning of the moon, and you would concentrate on diminishing the illness.

If you are powerfully attracted to the influence of the waning moon, you may find that much of your successful work involves decreasing negative situations.

It is more common to find that your personal power changes depending on any number of circumstances that effect you. Thus, it is extremely important that you study your log in order to determine causes and effects. With time, your log will become your personal Book of Shadows.

Hermetic law dictates that every event, no matter how seemingly random, is caused by some set of circumstances and that the more fully these causes are understood, the more our understanding of universal laws expands. That you record carefully, clearly, and at some length the details of magical operations will help you to recognize the factors that are necessary for success.

## **A Brief Comment About Working Magick**

It is not necessary to perform spellwork in order to make your way through the ordinary trials of life. Sometimes you may only need to attune the forces around you to your goal. This can be accomplished in any way that has meaning to you; prayer, meditation, or the simplest ritual. Spellwork should be reserved for those times when you feel that your everyday resources are definitely not sufficient to achieve the desired end. Performing magic is hard work, and only a fool would seek the most difficult means to accomplish a task. Bending a spoon using only your mind may be entertaining, but it is far more taxing than using your hands to do the same thing. Use spellwork as a last resort, not because spellcasting is wrong, evil, or provides an unfair advantage, but because it is exhausting, both physically and mentally.

Magic is to life what orchestration is to musical composition. It is easy enough to come up with a melody, a bit harder to write a simple accompaniment, but a huge task to arrange the same piece for a symphony orchestra. Spellcasting and its more formal cousin, ceremonial magic, absolutely fall into the latter category.

Much has been written concerning "hereditary" witches and some modern day practitioners of the Craft claim roots to various degrees of antiquity. Certain individuals seem to have a natural talent for magic. Though the view is less common presently, some earlier authorities have stated that magical ability could not be learned any more than eye color and that those seeking to become witches without such inborn talent were doomed to fail and must be content to worship the Old Gods as simple Pagans, leaving magic to the precious few born to it.

While it is true that some people seem to have inherent magical abilities and can produce family trees that sprout witches on every branch, the notion that magic cannot be learned is nonsense. To continue the musical analogy, Mozart was certainly gifted from birth with enormous musical talent and became an accomplished composer; it is equally true that more great composers were made through individual effort than were ever born that way. All that is really necessary is a disposition toward the work and a deep sense of the personal and spiritual reward that comes from doing something that really appeals to you.

Even for the most gifted, Wicca demands serious dedication. The Craft is not a hobby, but a way of life that places a great deal of responsibility on the individual for making personal progress.

Its best text is the one you write for yourself, and Wicca's boundaries are not limited to rituals or acts of magic, but include every facet of your life. The true witch measures life according to a personal philosophy based on Wiccan beliefs. Each word and deed that satisfies these criteria strengthens the witch,

making subsequent acts that much easier. You are responsible for your own behavior. Remember that it is nearly impossible to work magic or achieve any spiritual goal using a foundation of guilt and doubt. Your faith in yourself must come from an inner assurance that you are following your chosen path as closely as possible.

This does not mean that you must realize some inner perfection to be a witch. It means that you must be actively attempting to reach your personal goals. Witches are explorers by nature, scientists by training, and philosophers by practice.

### **Chapter 3: Why Are There Witches?**

***Working magic, keep in mind,  
You will be bound to what you bind.  
Take on any task you will,  
But be prepared to pay the bill.***

Few naturally talented musicians seek or find success in the fields of mathematics and science. However, scientists and mathematicians boast a large number of accomplished musicians among their ranks. It seems that learning something about the nature of vibration and the behavior of numbers translates well to music. It is equally true that those accomplished in magic are attracted to music and its literary cousin, poetry, as well as the sciences. Historically, the “secret societies” dedicated to the practice of ceremonial magic filled their ranks with the accomplished scientists of their day, who saw no conflict between the two disciplines.

The earliest witches most certainly used the scientific method of analysis routinely to discover and record all manner of information, from predicting the weather to preparing herbal medicines.

It may seem odd that something that describes itself as a religion sets so much store by scientific principles and the power of observation. Religion is typically a matter of faith, with precepts not to be questioned by the flock.

Wicca owes its origin to humankind's efforts to control and predict environmental forces in order to survive. The first witches were individuals who possessed the necessary skills to enhance the chances for the continuity of the species. There was absolutely no place for nonsense in the life of the earliest Homo Sapiens. The penalties for indulging in superfluous activities were death and extinction.

Not until much later in human history did religious rules and regulations become a matter of faith. With the progress of human culture came dogma that may have its roots in ancient rules of survival no longer valid for the modern believers who adhere to these tenets as a means of demonstrating their faith, clearly showing that the spiritual needs of humankind do not begin and end with avoiding catastrophe.

In its purest state, Wicca has few rules and no dogma. Almost everything you will learn within the Craft will be in the form of examples and suggestions, and you will frequently be advised to seek out what has meaning to you personally. You are responsible for your own spiritual journey. Only you can know what path it should take.

You will learn right from wrong the hard way, so pay attention!

In Wicca, the highest position you can attain is that of servant, for that's what we all once were. To master the Craft is to achieve a status that allows you to most effectively help those around you through every deed, magical and mundane. You are your own priest. Your way is right for you and not the "only

true faith" for some larger group.

Wicca has no sheep, only wolves. We are social animals, but we are individually strong and capable.

All this emphasis on solitary practice is not meant to downplay the role of covens. The most successful covens tend to be composed of practitioners who find strength and support within groups of like-minded people. The coven is a working group of witches, not a congregation that adheres to some common dogma. While covens may be established along certain traditional lines such as Celtic, Gardnerian, or Dianic, these labels are typically meant to attract members who share the rudiments of that tradition with respect to ritual methods and ethnic heritage.

The role of the coven is to provide strength in numbers for magical work and to act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences among individuals. Covens also initiate new members and teach the skills required to move along the Wiccan path of spiritual development. They may provide a ranking system that measures the progress of each member. Typically, ascending in rank obligates one to further service within the coven and without. A high priest/esse or elder is a repository of information that can be accessed by any coven member. Achieving rank does not mean an automatic increase in authority, only responsibility. Leadership requires respect from the coven members, and this respect is won through deeds that serve the coven and the community.

Authoritarianism has no place in the Craft. Most witches are far too independent to obey any leader without good reason.

In a coven, you can usually tell who holds the highest rank; it's whoever appears to be doing the most work!

The true strength of a coven in magical practice is that the members bring different talents to a task. A member who may be weak at some skill can entrust that portion of the work to someone who is more adept. It may be that divination has never been easy for you, no matter what method you have tried. You know what spell you would like to perform but cannot clearly assess its possible repercussions. The chances are excellent that someone in the coven will find divination very easy and can provide you with the information you seek.

Another typical scenario is that some task may require contact with a number of archetypes, deities, or forces. Most witches identify closely with certain of these correspondences and not with others as a matter of personal preference. By combined effort, a coven can utilize a great many more of these entities and energies, thus increasing the chance for success.

One of the most rewarding aspects of coven life for even the most ardent solitary practitioner is that they have the numbers necessary to act out the rituals marking the Wheel of the Year. I can say from personal experience that the words and charges associated with these Sabbats sparkle with life when you see them performed. It is the difference between reading Shakespeare and seeing the play.

Later in this text, you will be cautioned about sharing your power and maintaining the secrecy of your work. These rules apply equally to the solitary practitioner and to coven members. It is not necessary to share every thought with your fellow coven members to solicit their help. Merely state the goal you hope to reach and allow each individual to help in their own ways in keeping with their particular talents. Think of the process as linking several batteries in series to produce a combined electrical force. The batteries need not be identical, just compatible.

One final word about covens; humans being essentially social animals, it is always comforting to know you are not the only one who thinks the way you do. A coven is an excellent support group, even for those witches who may want to continue solitary practice. The frustration of having no sounding board can be stifling, especially if no member of your family shares your philosophy. Even if your conversational forays into the Otherworld are tolerated (and they often are not) by family and friends, you may begin to feel that you are attempting to teach calculus to your dog!

There are many alternatives to contacting a coven for those who are seeking instruction or exchange of information. On-line computer services, Pagan periodicals, and regional gatherings all provide forums for Wicca, as do a number of correspondence courses in various aspects of the Craft.

One caution; beware those who may use these formats as a bully pulpit to increase their own status at the expense of the truth. To become recognized as an authority on Wicca has its economic benefits (October is not known as "rent-a-witch" month for nothing!), and nothing soothes the ego like a good dose of praise from one's peers.

Anyone who claims to be the one and only guardian of true Wicca isn't. Wicca has no pope! Keep

an open mind and heart. You'll know the truth when you hear it. When in doubt, meditate on the Fool from the tarot deck. Maintain a positive attitude, but watch out for that cliff.

As you interact with others that share your beliefs, it may seem that the need for secrecy that surrounds Wicca has become outdated. After all, there are television specials throughout October that feature any number of witches explaining the Craft and its basic tenets. Talk shows abound in guests dressed in black and waving wands. That the media has helped to spread the word that witches are not evil, Satanist hags bent on destroying Christianity cannot be denied, and those Wiccans who have risked much to appear in public to dispel old prejudices deserve the highest praise. But before you go running down the street shouting "I'm a witch, tee hee, tee hee!" or decide to impress your friends at some dinner party by revealing to them that they have a witch in their presence, remember that animosity dies hard. The burning times were not so very long ago, and there are certainly those that would welcome their return. You need only to recall the violence directed at abortion clinics to learn that there are people in this world whose personal religious and philosophical convictions justify the destruction of perceived "enemies of the faith" by any means.

At the very least, you may find yourself pigeonholed among your closest friends and family as a bit of a "kook" and, therefore, not to be taken seriously.

The itch for recognition of what makes us special is in all of us. Please trust that, as you progress in the Craft, you will find the inner rewards far more satisfying than any you might gain by sharing your secret. An old adage from a Celtic Book of Shadows states in an initiation ritual that a sheep does not show the shepherd how well it has eaten by disgorging food at his feet, but by growing rich, thick wool.

As for those who may need your help, have no doubt that they will find you, though they may not realize why they sought you out or what it is that they have found. A witch tends through everyday living to be identified as a caring, helpful person whose actions indicate a level of intelligence and wisdom that draws those in need to seek advice. Eventually, you will find that you are being asked for your opinion on all sorts of matters, particularly those involving health and well-being, whether psychological or physical.

Your very commitment to Wicca will lead you to people who need your help. Witches are apt to look for trouble, and there is never a shortage of it. Have no fear that your talents will go unused. You may find yourself so busy that you will develop a deep appreciation for the efforts of the ancients to use magic to bend time just to get a break and some much needed rest.

Help, but don't meddle. The path a person is travelling may seem entirely wrong to you, but you must restrain yourself from interfering. Even the most negative behavior may have to run its course. Life's lessons are learned in mysterious ways, and you are not omniscient. If you have offered to help and been refused, let it go for now. Don't storm off in a huff and don't feel you know better than to hold back your aid.

Above all, refrain from criticism, constructive or otherwise. Keep your observations to yourself. Do not stir the pot with idle gossip born of an all-knowing attitude.

## **Chapter Four: Old Ways, Best Ways? Not Always!**

*Be servant to all and master to none,  
Sometimes you must let troubles run,  
Keepers of the greatest truth,  
Know an unfinished cup can hold no juice.*

*Walk away, come back again,  
Now is not the same as then.  
The help you hold will not grow old,  
Be more patient and less bold.*

### **Traditional Wicca**

Wicca encompasses many traditions from virtually every culture. You may feel drawn to one branch over another because of your family ties to a particular heritage. It is common for people of Irish and Welch decent to follow Celtic Wicca. The same is true for those of eastern and central European ancestry. Germanic and Scandinavian cultures followed the Nordic path, while southern Europeans, particularly Italians, identify with the mystery cults of Greece and Rome.

All of these traditions have been modified by time and the lack of written records concerning the exact nature of certain beliefs and rituals, but they share a number of characteristics, including polytheism that emphasizes the association of deities with specific responsibilities. Each holds the idea of dualism, with the Goddess holding a position of authority that she shares with a male consort who may be her equal or subordinate. While there is no written history of the craft that dates to its origin, discovery of Goddess figures three hundred thousand years old indicate that some form of this religion predates all others by many millenia.

Modern witches tend to be eclectic, borrowing from any tradition as suits their needs. Spellwork may include chants from voodoo rituals or invocations from ceremonial magic and the Cabala. A witch is equally at home with Sumerian talismans and Welch mythology. All that matters is that you feel comfortable in your work.

Most Wiccans adopt a tradition to follow regarding the Sabbats. Again, all that matters is that the rituals feel right for you. I have attended a Samhain rite with Celtic Wiccans who used an ancient chant from India that fit very well with work at hand.

I have also celebrated with covens who adhered strictly to one tradition or another. Both experiences proved enjoyable and eminently satisfactory for honoring the Ancient Ones.

To better understand the various Wiccan traditions, read the mythologies of many cultures. Myths are based on archetypes and experiences common to the human community as a whole. There are great similarities across many cultures regarding the feats and personalities of mythological figures, be they gods or heroes.

Wicca comes from a time before there was such cultural diversity in beliefs. The original function of the witch was to aid human survival in a hostile world. The commonalities across today's cultures reflect the tie to this earlier time. Thus, Wiccans of every tradition share more similarities than differences. The path you chose should have meaning to you. Its rituals should touch your spirit with magic. Follow your own path, but remember that it is not the one and only. Learn from every tradition, and share your knowledge freely with others of the Craft.

**kkk**

## **Basic Invocations**

To invoke means to call inward. An invocation is used when attempting to draw the powers of some entity into yourself to strengthen your abilities to perform a task. You may also wish to gain an intimate understanding of that entity.

A number of very old invocations exist, but this does not mean you must use them. You may formulate your own invocations, but you must first have a working knowledge of the being or power you intend to call upon. Read extensively and note the characteristics attributed to who or what you intend to invoke. Review these carefully and be absolutely sure that they fit the work you will be doing. There is no shortage of talents in the Otherworld, so be very specific in your choices. If you intend to make a sword, for example, you may need the help of a being associated with metalworking and, since the sword is a weapon, you may also want to call on those Otherworld personalities having to do with war and the martial arts, of which you will find many. It will prove necessary for you to choose from this multitude those entities most aligned to the purpose you intend for the sword. If this sword is to be strictly a tool of war, it would be appropriate to seek the help of those beings that are associated with the resolution of conflicts by force of arms and those known as patrons of warriors preparing for battle. If the sword is to be used for magical purposes, the darker forces of war may have to be replaced with those involved in the more esoteric functions of a bladed weapon like the command of the forces of Air and the severing of spiritual ties that you may feel are detrimental to you. If your intent is to endow the sword with specific characteristics, seek the aid of those who are powerful sources of such energies. It may also prove necessary to use certain invocations for making the sword and others to charge it toward its ultimate purpose. Ritual tools may be used for a great variety of tasks that extend their range beyond the simple charge used to originally consecrate them. Keeping in mind the basic attributes of a given tool, feel free to invoke forces that might be more specific your needs at the moment, inviting them to join with those already present in the tool itself.

A simple method for invoking power (charging) any tool is:

*1) Find a place where you will not be disturbed. If possible, be outdoors where your tool may most easily be in contact with the forces you will invoke.*

*2) Invoke those forces appropriate to the nature of the tool first. Holding the tool in your power hand, say;*

**I charge this (name of tool)  
That it may serve me,(Your name) in all my work.  
Power of (element, archetype, or deity),**

## **Enter this (tool). So Mote It Be.**

(Repeat second sentence for each of the powers you intend to invoke.)

*3) Present the tool to each representative of the powers you have invoked to charge the instrument. In the case of an element, consecrate the tool with that element. For Air, you may blow on the instrument; for fire, run it through a candle flame; douse or immerse it for Water; Place it in the earth or in salt for the powers of Earth.*

If you have called upon any personalities (including archangels, gods, or mythological archetypes), it is appropriate to salute them with the tool while facing the direction attributed to that entity. You may also use an invoking pentagram drawn in the air to attract such forces. Use your finger or any appropriate tool that has already been consecrated, such as a wand, sword, or knife.

It is not absolutely necessary that you perform such a rite in a Circle, although the Circle does help concentration. If you do choose to use a Circle, be sure to thank any entities you may have invoked. Good manners are smiled upon by the gods.

I like to consecrate all of my ritual tools, including candles and anything else I use in the Circle, with my own oil to truly personalize the implement. I make this oil by adding three drops of my blood and a small amount of material associated with my Wiccan name to a base of olive oil. I draw an invoking pentacle on the device itself while saying a final "So Mote It Be" at the end of the consecration.

## **Evocation**

Evocation is the calling forth of entities that have jurisdiction over a rite and who can, by their presence, aid in its success. Evocation may also be used when the advice of a spiritual guide is needed. In either case, it differs from invocation in that the entity is not drawn into an object or person, but is asked to attend and assist in the work at hand.

Evocation almost always is directed at an entity rather than a force. Therefore, it is extremely important that you have a complete understanding of the personality you are calling upon. Some are terribly hard to housebreak and may be hostile. Others hold high rank on their plane of existence and must be treated with all due respect. The annals of ceremonial magic contain many tales of the dire consequences visited upon magicians who failed to follow these precautions.

While earth magic deals with entities whose personalities are not quite on the level of angels and demons, they are still worthy of respect and should be treated with great courtesy. Most ancient cultures regarded courtesy as essential in all affairs of this world and the Otherworld. It paid to be polite to someone who carried a sword!

While behaving courteously, you must also maintain control of the situation. Otherworld personalities respect courage and command. Have complete confidence in yourself and do not abase yourself. Do not feel compelled to act subservient to any Otherworld visitor. You are a witch, not a superstitious ninny overwhelmed by the presence of an archetype.

Make your requests for help simple and direct, but not brusque. You are addressing a friend, not a saint or servant. Most archetypes are as imperfect in their behavior as any human, but they remain worthy of the greatest respect. By acting in a firm, confident, and polite manner, you honor yourself and them.

One important difference between ceremonial magic and Wiccan evocations is that witches request aid while magicians demand it. Grimoires are filled with methods for binding intelligences that treat these entities as disobedient children who are not to be allowed to have their own way. Failure of the entity to appear or to follow the magician's directions results in chants that are all the more binding and threatening until the intelligence is forced into obedience. This is not the Wiccan way. Seek help, and be clear about your needs, but be prepared to sometimes be told "No." Your magic should never stand against the greater Will of the All and the plans of the gods. Do not be disappointed if you are refused. Remain polite, do not whine, and accept that your goal may not be possible at the present time. Consult your spirit

guide and use any tool for divination and inner reflection that you feel comfortable with to learn why your request has been refused, then let it go.

Do not dwell on success or failure,

Learn from the gods,

Do not regale them.

The scheme you plan may have great merit,

But the time must be right, or you won't get it.

A typical evocation should include the following steps:

*1) Learn as much as you can about the personality you intend to evoke. Temperaments vary among those of the Otherworld just as they do among people living on this plane. Some can be mean-spirited and demanding, while others are pranksters who may have a good laugh at your expense. There can be an element of danger associated with certain entities, especially those concerned with war and revenge or who may have passed into the Otherworld through an injustice or a malicious act. A few are so remote from the present day conditions of living in this world that their help is far outweighed by the difficulties encountered when working with them. Extremely ancient archetypes may possess a savagery that would be out of place in the modern world but was a tool essential to survival in the distant past. Remember, too, that the older an archetype is, the less accurate the available information will be regarding character and traits.*

*2) Gather as many of the known correspondences to that entity as possible. Pay attention to details regarding likes and dislikes. Have nothing in your Circle that would irritate the archetype. Make an extreme effort to have the correct incense, tools, plants, colors, and attributes in the Circle. Conduct your ritual at the proper time for contact. This means selecting the right season as well as the right hour and day. It is usually possible to adjust some details of an evocation to avoid time restrictions. An archetype associated with Winter may be called upon during the symbolic Winter of night, for example, but try to keep such adjustments to a minimum.*

*Evocation is one of the few rites where all the elements may not appeal to you. The Ancient Ones have strange tastes by today's standards. If you find some necessary portion of the rite to be absolutely abhorrent, you are probably trying to reach the wrong entity. Hang up and call again, and leave the animal sacrifices and blood drinking to those pitiable people who get a charge out of such nonsense.*

*A word about blood used in ritual; infrequently some ritual may call for the use of blood as a binding agent in order to assure your complete dedication to the work and to instill life force into the operation. Many Otherworld figures are warriors and respect blood oaths above all others. In such cases, it is perfectly acceptable to use a tiny bit of your own blood, and this is almost always considered to be of much greater power than any animal sacrifice to procure the same end. Harm none!*

*3) Prepare yourself through meditation for whom you intend to meet. Consult your spirit guides for advice and follow it exactly. Purify yourself in whatever manner seems appropriate to the intended work, taking care not to have about you anything that the Ancient One might find offensive. A bath in water and salt is recommended for most rites. You may also add any correct fragrance or herb to the bath water.*

4) *Begin the ritual immediately after you have purified yourself and have attuned your mind to the work. Evocation cannot be made to fit your social schedule. It requires dedication and complete attention. Your mind must be a blank slate on which the archetype may write. Take no prejudices into the Circle. Know that you have made your best effort to meet the requirements of the work and proceed.*

5) *Cast the Circle and call to the quarters. While you may, as with invocations, call upon any archetypes for help in your work, be sure that these are compatible with the main entity you intend to evoke.*

*It is true that any time you call upon an entity, you are performing an evocation, but it must be realized that there is a big difference between asking for a bit of assistance and making an involved formal request. Thus, it is not necessary to undertake such elaborate preparations as those noted here every time you call on the Ancient Ones. The functional difference can be thought of as that between asking someone to watch you do something and inviting their complete participation. By adhering to the rules for evoking a certain entity, you are preparing a comfortable work setting for both yourself and the Ancient One.*

6) *The language of the gods is symbolic, as is that of animals and plants. You must remain completely open to symbolic input and try not to define every impression verbally. Wicca is among those religions that value individual symbolic experience far more than any verbal description of events. When witches resort to words, they often use poetry to express what prose never could.*

6) *Follow your ritual precisely. If you make a mistake, calm yourself and start again. Proceed slowly and with maximum concentration. You should be working yourself to high level of mental activity, whether through chanting, dance, or some other appropriate means. You should peak just as you reach that point in the work where you expect the entity to manifest. Then...relax! Open yourself to any communication and know that the Ancient One is there with you. Here you may set the entity about the desired task or become receptive toward the lesson you wish to be taught. Be friendly and firm. Let the Ancient One know that you hold her/him in high respect and value this time you may spend together. Concentrate on every detail of your encounter. You are in the presence of the wisdom of the ages. Learn all you can.*

7) *Present your request for assistance in the form most meaningful to you and your Otherworld friend. Do not be impatient. The Ancient Ones have much to offer to those, as Hermes wrote, who have ears to hear. Treat this encounter as you would a visit from a long lost friend. Ask questions, pay attention to the answers, and be ready to answer a few yourself! The residents of the Otherworld are not omniscient and are often curious about the current goings on in the mundane world.*

8) *It is very common for the Ancient Ones to present gifts to the seeker that can help you to achieve your goal. These may prove to be highly symbolic, stirring in you the mental machinery necessary to accomplish your task. Some of these gifts have been known to manifest on this plane, so it is important that you remember what you have been given and keep your eyes open for its equivalent in your world.*

*Over time, you will accumulate many of these gifts, so categorize them in your Book of Shadows. Do not be like the man who owns a thousand tools but has no idea where to find a screwdriver when he needs one!*

*Should the entity you have contacted take a particular liking to you, you may be provided with a way of establishing contact that circumvents elaborate ritual. This, too, should be recorded in your Book, but be sure to keep it to yourself as you would the unlisted phone number of a trusting friend. Keep in mind that you may be called upon by the entity as well. Do not be surprised to hear your psychic phone ringing in the middle of some other ritual or when you are being mentally quiet.*

9) *"So Mote It Be" can be used to end your contact with the Ancient One, or you may choose to write your own dismissal. It is customary to close contact with words or gestures thanking the entity for favors granted (in advance) and for coming to your aid. Be grateful, but remain in control. The Ancient Ones do not expect subservience. Your heartfelt thanks is enough.*

***10) Close the Circle, being sure to dismiss all entities you have called. Rest and food will help ground you, after which you should document the entire experience for future reference. Be sure to include your personal impressions of the encounter.***

Do not feel obligated to respond positively to every ritual operation you conduct. It is far more important that you honestly record your likes and dislikes about any rite and its results. The magic you perform and the Otherworld journeys you make must appeal to you on many levels of consciousness to be effective. Do not feel that you must continually maintain contact with an entity that you do not find appealing, or that you must perform a ritual that does not stir your spirit. There are always other entities and different rites available to reach the same goal. Magic is work, but it is not a chore to be endured, and the celebrations within Wicca are invariably designed for maximum joy. Find the best path for ***YOU***.

## Chapter Five: Thinking for Yourself

**Lost upon the ancient sea,  
Of words and chants and all you read,  
Know that just your heart is true,  
The source of magic lives in you!**

## **Creating Your Own Rituals**

To be effective, rituals must appeal to that side of human nature that is receptive to pleasure in an artistic sense while satisfying the intellect's need for logical procession toward a goal.

The artistic or poetic mind likes or dislikes without regard to conventional reasoning. People considered expert in artistic endeavors create works that stand critical analysis without the artist being consciously aware of the elements contributing to critical acclaim during the creation of the piece. Music, poetry, and the visual arts are measured against two standards. The first is objective; do we find the work pleasing for what it is without regard to logic or reason, i.e. does the song have a good beat and can we dance to it? The second standard is based on how expert the artist is at using those devices that the reasoning mind respects as a measure of expertise; does the tune follow the correct modality for its idiom, demonstrate harmonies in the proper keys, and adhere to the classic phrasings typical for songs of its type? For poetry, the comparison would be between what emotional response the poem elicits as opposed to how well it meets a rhyming scheme. Professional critics adhere to this second set of criteria when reviewing the artist's work. If you have ever found yourself in disagreement with the opinions of these "experts" over a particular poem, song, painting, or theatrical piece just because you like what they have analyzed as lacking those elements by which they define excellence, and have maintained your stand despite the critics, you have made the first step toward creating successful rituals.

The sights, sounds, and atmosphere of any ritual must appeal to that part of you that likes and consumes ice cream no matter how hard your rational mind wants to stay on a diet. This emotional and unreasonable side must be balanced by discipline, or you will wind up weighing three hundred pounds. It is common for this portion of the personality to lie to its reasoning sibling, leading to some pretty bizarre rationalizations, like that ice cream is really very nutritious and the perfect way for you to get your fill of vitamins and minerals or that a cookie broken in half has let all the calories leak out and is therefore virtual diet food.

On the darker side, this "child" mind is also the source of self destructive patterns of addiction, and its ability to deceive and disrupt logical thought processes can kill. It is an excellent place to hide from reality, and it responds well to the most basic pleasures. The "child" mind has no moral code and can allow us to behave in an almost purely instinctual way. It is completely self centered, disregarding anyone or anything that does not provide it with immediate pleasure. It has no concept of any time other than the present and has no conscience, which is a product of the rational mind. Much unhappiness arises from the totally independent functioning of these two sides of the same individual working toward their own goals.

The "child" mind is the home of Jung's collective unconscious, the repository of those characteristics that all people have in common regardless of upbringing or training. This portion of the personality responds to stimuli in the most basic way and is heavily influenced by hormones and other chemicals that may be released into the body depending the immediate circumstances of a situation. It avoids pain and seeks pleasure, and only through the disciplines of reason and logic can its responses be tempered.

Without stimulation, whether external or internal, this portion of the mind tends to sit at idle, waiting to receive its next input. Because of its receptive nature, the "child" mind has been associated with the feminine side of the human personality, while the rational mind houses those traits associated with the masculine. This division is not entirely correct and depends on exactly what one defines as inherently masculine or feminine behavior. The complexities of the human personality defy such pedantic attempts at

classification. To truly understand the personality, the witch uses the very tools all people possess; the ability to observe and analyze rationally seasoned with a goodly amount of intuition and extrapolation based on the witch's understanding of the self.

Concomitantly, witches spend a lot of time in reflective thought and meditation, use many methods of divination, and seek the opinion of spiritual guides before conducting a ritual.

Knowledge of the self is the key to success. The axiom "As above, so below" can be extended to "As within, so without." Identifying with the subject of a ritual allows the witch to predict the outcome and to structure the ritual in such a way that it will please any entities that may be involved. The witch acts as the microcosm where work can be tested for its effectiveness within the macrocosm. This principle applies equally to all rituals including those involving magic. Role playing after this fashion helps the witch to realize when some aspect of the work may be out of place and when too much force is being used to accomplish a magical feat. To force magic upon someone that cannot handle the change can cause serious damage and prevent any healing that may have been intended.

If a ritual does not contain elements that satisfy both sides of the mind, it cannot succeed. A good ritual will delight the inner child with colors, sounds, sights, smells, and sensuality, while simultaneously appeasing the rational mind through logical associations, historical references, and the application of scientific methods. The more you can do to satisfy these requirements, the more likely you are to perform a successful ritual.

Suppose you are romantically attracted to someone who, while amicable toward you, sees you as just a friend. You decide to do a love spell to bring this person closer to you, hoping to stimulate in this person the same feelings that you have regarding the relationship. The first thing to consider is whether or not getting closer to you is in this person's nature. Does your love object have any roadblocks standing in the way, like an existing love relationship or a history of painful romantic experiences? You may be able to gather this information from mutual contacts, or you may find it useful to do a divination or consult your spirit guides. Use any tool that you trust to provide you with as much information as possible. Forcing your way through negative barriers is certainly possible, but not always wise. In particular, never attempt to destroy a current love relationship in order to achieve your personal goals. You may at first succeed, but the threefold law is very clear about the disaster you will bring upon yourself eventually. Personal gain at another's expense invites trouble.

The same holds true for magically bashing through a barrier that unleashes painful memories in your love object. The very feelings that you wish to promote may produce extreme anguish, so much so that, as romantic feelings arise, that person is likely to run and hide to prevent repeating the tortuous experience of loving and losing.

You have done your best to determine that there are no blocks standing in your way, and you feel ready to compose a rite that will produce your desired end. Define this goal as clearly as you can. With love spells, it is usually better to plant a magical seed and let the love grow as it may rather than to use more binding methods. You may find with time that this particular flower has no place in your personal garden. Remember that as you bind, so will you be bound. Letting love follow its own course reduces the risk of binding you to a relationship that may prove entirely wrong for one or both parties.

Love magic can ease the way toward establishing feelings in your love object that reciprocate your own. Therefore, it is extremely important for you to know yourself and your own feelings very well. Meditate, consult your spirit guides, use divination, and by all means discuss your feelings with trusted friends. Determine what's right for you and your love object, and then go ahead and do it!

The specifics of such a spell should include colors that you find conducive to creating "that loving feeling" in you. If you know the favorite color of the person you wish to attract or have noticed that the person dresses in a particular shade, use it. If some smell reminds you of the person, you may want to mix its essence with a fragrance you prefer when you are feeling your most attractive. You can use these in Circle during the rite in the form of incense or perfumes. Scenting yourself with this blend both during and after the rite will help you to focus on your goal.

Everything that decorates your Circle should be after a fashion that would make your love object comfortable and attracted to the decor.

Next, you should consult various tables of correspondences to determine what aspects are classically associated with the work at hand. Meet as many of these conditions as you can, keeping in mind that any that you find especially disquieting should be omitted or substituted by others that are pleasing to you. Eliminate all negative influences when making these choices. The tables speak in generalities. Narrow

your selection to what is specific to your own work.

During this selection process, you will become aware of your rational mind's participation as it raises doubts about every choice you make, warning that you should not stray too far from the historical correspondences that have the wisdom of the ages to recommend them, "Who are you," it will ask, "To tamper with such a time honored list?" This is where you must reconcile your feelings with your demand for the facts of the work in detail. This reconciliation is for you alone to establish. Key to its resolution is that your rational side can be convinced by the "child mind" with relative ease. Otherwise, none of us would ever eat ice cream as diet food. Your "child mind" lies quite convincingly, and your rational mind will accept these lies as truth because of its one inherent flaw; without evidence to the contrary, it cannot dispute what it is being told. (It also has a short memory. Try eating that ice cream while you're standing on a scale. Then give it an hour!)

Next comes your selection of the exact activities you will perform during the rite. Again, these are quite personal. Typically, they will include chants, dances, songs, and the like, as well as what entities you may ask to be present and what natural forces you may want to use. Always keep your goal in strict focus. If you have a singing voice that people find especially appealing, use it. If you have a talent for visual arts, try drawing a picture of your desired goal. Poets find chants efficacious. Budding ballerinas should try dancing your way into your beloved's heart. Whatever choice you make should touch your spirit and call it to the work.

Now to the work itself. Be open concerning the time you allow for completion of the rite. It is not uncommon for these things to take longer than expected, and knowing that you are making yourself late for some appointment does not help concentration. Give yourself plenty of time to accomplish the work and to indulge in any activity that you might be inspired to perform that wasn't in your original plans. The Ancient Ones are seldom silent observers in matters of magic or the heart, so pay attention to their expert contributions.

Do not rush from one step to the next as though you must meet some timetable. Ritual shares much in common with a gourmet feast. Savor each portion. Experience the flavor of every morsel. Never hurry, and don't talk with your mouth full. Maintain full concentration on what you are doing at the moment. The whole will take care of itself as long as you pay attention to the separate parts.

Project your entire being into your work. Hold nothing in reserve. You should feel completely drained by your effort. Launch the power you have summoned to yourself throughout the rite with the cosmic force. You are dealing with pure energy. The more you pour into the work, the more effect the work will have.

When you are sure that you have given the rite your best effort, ground any leftover energy by distributing it mentally to all who might share the same goal in their own lives. Close the Circle with all due amenities. You should be exhausted. Eat, rest, and bathe in the afterglow of magic.

Once you have completed a ritual that involves magic, it is important to hold the mental image of your goal already being accomplished. This does not mean that you should exhibit behavior that may be harmful to yourself or others. It is unwise, for instance, to go wild with your charge cards after casting a spell to increase your wealth or to fling yourself bodily at the object of a love spell. Rather, carry yourself as though you have complete confidence that your spell is working at that very moment and that you need not worry yourself about it. Anxiety can ruin the best magical work. Eliminate self doubt and know inside that you have made your best effort. Leave yourself no excuses for failure.

Give your work time to succeed or fail before subjecting it to analysis, and analyze your successes with the same critical eye as you would your failures. While it is important to understand why a spell has failed, it is much more important to know why your magic has worked so that you can repeat the effort in the future. You are not trying to learn how to fail, but how to succeed.

Guilt can destroy the best magic, and some novice practitioners feel bound to an altruistic approach in all such work, denying their own needs because they see using magic to achieve personal goals as "cheating." They feel perfectly comfortable performing rites for others who need help but refuse to help themselves in the same manner.

Know that the gods do not expect you to live a monastic life clothed in sack cloth and ashes. You are certainly entitled to improve your own station through ritual and magic. As you progress within Wicca, the spiritual maturity you gain will provide a quite adequate scale against which to measure your work. Do not feel that you must not use magic to your own benefit. If for no other reason, remember that success in magical endeavors is bound to how well you know the person for whom you are doing the work. Whom do

you know better than yourself?

As with any skill, magic requires practice, and you can expect to fail with some frequency as you perfect your technique. Therefore, it is, in fact, advisable to keep your first efforts simple and concentrate on your personal needs. While you should scrutinize your work to be sure it will do no harm to others, do not hesitate to work magic for yourself. It is far better to fail at a personal goal than to fail trying to help others. You will also find that your confidence will increase as you begin to see the positive effects of magic in your own life. It is extremely difficult to help anyone from a position of weakness and doubt.

There are four important qualities that you must develop in yourself for your work to succeed; will, imagination, faith, and secrecy. Consider these as though they were muscles that need conditioning before performing a difficult athletic feat, and exercise them accordingly. Do not expect Olympic caliber results unless you are willing to put forth the necessary effort. Magic is *HARD* work, and you must be absolutely sure that you have trained your "muscles" to the best of your ability. Few of us would subject ourselves to ridicule by attempting a complicated gymnastic routine before we were certain that our training gave us the skills necessary to do it without embarrassment. The same is true of magic. Practice with your own problems before taking on the world's woes.

## Will

The will that provides the power behind magic is a bit different than your everyday determination to accomplish a task. While determination may allow you to overcome obstacles that come between you and your goal and is very much a product of conscious effort, magical will has its roots in the true intentions of your mind at all levels. You can force yourself to go back to work despite being physically ill enough to remain in bed maybe just one more day. You cannot make yourself well enough to return to work as long as part of you is enjoying this brief vacation from job you deep down feel is a drudge. Therefore, the first step toward developing a powerful magical Will (to differentiate these from the common terms, I will capitalize the four requirements of magic.) is to thoroughly understand yourself. You must know what truly motivates you, all your likes and dislikes. Make a list and be absolutely honest; no wishful thinking allowed! Make no moral judgements about yourself as you compile your list. Most of us would love to think that Mother Teresa has nothing on us when it comes to total dedication to helping mankind, and few of us enjoy admitting that we just don't like many of the things society says we're supposed to. No one wants to be labeled a misfit or misanthrope, but not to worry; nobody has to see this list except you. You should be starting to understand a little about the last tenet concerning secrecy by now. No ritual or rite, nor any of the training or preparation, and certainly not the elaborate self analysis need be revealed to anyone, not even members of your own coven. More on this later.

Magical Will is the expression of the innermost desires of your entire being in such a way that this Will becomes an almost physical force pushing its way through the cosmos, Will is to magic what inertia is to Newtonian physics; the propellant behind your work, the irresistible force that cannot fail to move mountains, if you so Will it.

This may sound like a tall order, but keep in mind that we are talking about goals, not accomplishments. Every bodybuilder is not going to become Mr. Universe, but every one that tries will be stronger for the effort.

Methods for developing the Will are as common as books on the power of positive thinking. Where Wiccan and other magical systems differ from the common approaches to empowerment is that magic requires a total commitment of body, mind, and spirit to the task at hand while insisting that you accept your weaknesses as well as your strengths rather than discipline yourself to overcome those traits you may feel are negative. To deny your true self will surely ruin any rite you hope to perform. Borrowing an axiom from the old ceremonial magical grimoires, what you summon to your Circle will typically come in the form you find most terrifying. Know what you fear and be ready to deal with it. Deny your true self, and failure is inevitable. Stepping between the worlds touches the witch deeply, to the very core of existence. You will find yourself in a place where symbols replace words, and these symbols are raw and direct. What you attempt to hide will be right in front of you, defying you to get past it and accomplish your work. You have undoubtedly noticed that many of the altar tools double as ancient weapons. While none of these can replace a powerful Will, they can boost your confidence, the effect being that of walking in a bad neighborhood after dark with a gun as opposed to being unarmed.

Magical Will has its roots in the "child" mind. It is the sense of wanting something with all your being without regard to rationalization. Just as the child who wants a new toy gives no thought to the cost or usefulness of the desired article, the Will cannot be tempered by logic or directed away from its goal through appeasement. This is why it is so important to reflect on any magical rite you intend to do very thoroughly, consulting every available resource before you begin the actual work. Once stirred, the Will possesses tremendous momentum. You must be absolutely sure of your intentions and the probable outcome of that intent before you begin. The Will is a sleeping dragon that, once aroused, cannot be stayed from its course easily. If you have ever been obsessed with an unattainable goal, like having a crush on one of your elementary school teachers, you have a good idea of how hard it can be to reason with the Will and put the idea out of your mind. In its most negative aspect, the magical Will can motivate acts of extreme violence as a means of achieving its end, and it will celebrate such pathological behavior by producing feelings of enormous satisfaction that serve to motivate further such actions. The Will can also foster addiction. A Will totally out of control makes puppets out of people so afflicted, their lives becoming a chain of obsessive/ compulsive behavior patterns that are almost impossible to stop. In part, these dangers are the reason that many religious traditions forbid their followers to indulge in magic or the occult sciences.

The Will uses fear to manipulate the mind, so to control the Will, you must first learn to control your fears. It is impossible to discuss each of the four elements of magic in an isolated way because each is dependent on the others. Fear can be eliminated as a motivating factor only by developing absolute faith in your ability to face and overcome that fear. Suppose you have had trouble falling asleep at night. You buy a sleep aid at the local pharmacy and find that it works quite well. Every time you use the remedy, you are rewarded with a good night's sleep. Not wishing to become dependent on an artificial means of achieving what should come naturally to you, you decide after a while to stop taking the sleeping pill. The Will, in its typical childlike manner, has found pleasure in all this wonderful sleep you've been getting, and it sets about seeing to it that its pleasure does not stop just because you have rationalized that you should not need to take anything to fall asleep. The Will attacks your powers of reason with the fear that you will immediately begin to suffer the most terrible insomnia of your life if you don't trudge through the snow and cold to the all-night drug store a mere ten miles away and replenish your supply.

Overcoming fear takes more than rational thought; it takes real work and determination, and it requires that you know the truth of the situation that you are in. Sooner or later, you will sleep, pills or no pills, because your body must rest. Only by having faith that this is so can you defeat the spoiled brat in your head that does not want to listen to reason. Each time that you fall asleep without assistance, you strengthen that faith until Faith becomes the equal of Will. You are now on your way to having a mind for magic!

## **Exercising the Will**

Before beginning these exercises, please remember that the object is to strengthen your Will, not to accomplish specific feats of magic. Just as it would be advantageous to condition the muscles used to perform a jump shot in basketball prior to actually attempting to score points, so must the Will be strengthened before it can be assigned a specific task.

It is not easy to isolate the Will from other mental activities, particularly Imagination. Therefore, you will be asked to visualize certain things that require use of the Imagination. However, these visualizations are to the true development of Imagination what a still picture is to a movie. You will be asked to hold an image in your mind without imbuing it with life. Likewise, the exercises for improving Imagination will involve the Will much in the same way a starter motor is needed to get a car engine running.

The first step in these and all subsequent exercises is to create a quiet mental environment through meditation. Any method that you have used that appeals to you can be used. What is important is that you achieve a state of calm that will enhance your ability to concentrate. Some people must have complete and uninterrupted silence to meditate, while others find a strong dose of heavy metal music produces the desired effect. Use whatever works for you.

My own method for reaching mental calm is to picture a scene in my mind that I have found

restful. When I am especially troubled and in the throes of mental activity and stress, I visualize an ocean tossed by great waves and proceed to gradually reduce those waves to a mirror stillness. My mind tends to follow. I have also found this method effective at reducing the influence of outside disturbances by making them appear as ripples in my quiet sea and allowing them to naturally subside.

Exercising the body prior to mediation can help to still the mind by producing a need for rest in the muscles that welcome the chance to relax and recover. Physical exercise can release chemicals into the body that increase the level of relaxation. Where the body goes, the mind will follow.

Set no time limits to your efforts. You will find that the Will responds to periods of exercise regardless of their length. You will know inherently when you have had a positive effect on the Will. It is not necessary to time your efforts or to set aside the same amount of time for each session. The Will knows no time but the present. It does not have the ability to measure time. Trust your judgement, not the clock, to gauge success.

Once you have reached the meditative state, assign your Will a job to do. Start with simple tasks that you know for a fact are possible. A good choice might be something that you have put off doing, like writing a letter to a friend. We all have such things that we procrastinate about without good reason, justifying their postponement with any number of flimsy excuses. Stir your Will mentally as you would a stew. Picture it beginning to take form as you stir, becoming a bubbling homogeneous mixture in your mental cauldron. When you feel the broth is done, prepare to add one more ingredient, the job you have chosen as the object of your Will. Picture yourself holding the task in your hands, like a final piece of meat that must be added to your Will stew. As those "reasons" you have used not to do the job arise in your mind, assign them to the stew as well, just as though they were spices for the broth that will dissolve in your tasty mixture and lend flavor to the dish. When you are sure that the stew is again a homogeneous mix and that the job and your excuses have become integral to the stew, picture the task you have selected as being already done. As you do so, partake of your stew with great relish, taking in its warmth and goodness, letting to rejuvenate you with the knowledge that you have accomplished that which has long been impossible for you to do. Eat as much of the stew as you like, knowing that you are charging yourself with energy with every bite. The more difficult you regard the task, the more stew you may want to ingest. Great tasks require great strength. When you are done eating, know that you have fed on the energy of the Gods and that nothing can stand in the way of someone so nourished. Empty your mind of all thoughts other than your desire to accomplish your work in its most basic terms. Say to yourself,

***"I WILL HAVE THIS THING DONE THAT I HAVE SET MYSELF TO,  
NOTHING CAN STAND IN MY WAY!"***

It may help to visualize yourself as a child having cleaned the plate in order to have dessert. You will not be denied your pudding, having eaten your veggies to the last bite. Be convinced that this is how the Universe works. Your success is as inevitable as the action of gravity on a falling rock. It should be absolutely inconceivable that your Will might be daunted.

End the exercise by returning to the meditative state, secretly pleased with yourself that you have accomplished your aim. These exercise is are successful if you feel that you are strengthening your Will, but magic will be the true test. Be confident that when you need it, your Will stands ready and strong.

Repeat this exercise as often as possible. Just as with weight lifting, you will exhaust your resources through your efforts and will rest to allow your mental faculties to recover. Trust yourself to know when you need rest, but try to exercise as often as possible without undue strain. Progress depends on repetition.

A second exercise for strengthening the Will involves addressing its individual components and attributes. This exercise should be done in Circle. Cast and charge the Circle as you would for personal use as opposed to elaborate ritual. It is not necessary to raise the Cone or to call to the Quarters except in the most general way. You should, as in the previous exercise, relax your mind and enter the meditative state. Once in this comfortable state of mind, plant the seed in your thoughts that the Universe and everything in it is composed of the four basic elements and that they are represented by the four quarters of the Circle. Now use your conscious mind to attribute the aspects of your Will to these four elements as follows, From the North, know that the Will gains structure and form. It is this that allows you to bend and shape the Will just as you can with anything that has physical structure. From the East comes inspiration, the tool that aims the Will at a particular target, cutting through all opposition. From the South comes the Fire that is the

energy behind the Will, a force so powerful that, allowed to go unchecked, it would permit the Will to consume all obstacles and controls, including yourself. The Will burns with this energy that exceeds that of a nuclear reaction. Only by controlling this power can you direct the Will. Control comes from the West in the form of Water, the symbolic liquid of the Universe that can absorb all things yet remain the same. It can quench any fire, and leave the object so doused hardened and ready for anything.

Work your Will through these stations and experience their effects as you proceed. Know that without your Spirit to move the Will along this circular path that it would not move of its own accord. You are the driving force behind its motion. You determine what is achieved at each station and when it may move on.

You do not have to stop at one circumambulation through the Quarters. You may want to out your Will through several cycles as different aspects relating to each station occurs to you. Be sure to begin and end at the same point each time: the North. It is at this Quarter that Will becomes a tangible item and therefore most useful to you. It is much harder to obtain light from the idea of a lamp than from the lamp itself. Your Will must have a form you recognize as useful to be of service to you.

The first exercise possesses all the correspondences of the second. Examine the former closely until you understand how this is so. Your effort will act as a model for assigning attributes to the four elements when you are constructing your own rituals.

Do these exercises as often as you like, but do allow for rest periods. Much like their physical counterparts, these exercises should drain you of energy, and you must recover before trying them again. As you become adept, use more complex problems for the first exercise. You will soon reach the level that is needed to conduct magic.

Note that the Will is not tempered by reason and takes no account of the problems that may result from your successful efforts. This is why you must give careful consideration of your goals with regard to their possible consequences before beginning to work magic. Once the actual work has started, there is no room for second guessing. Doubt is the enemy of Will. You must be as sure as you can be that what you intend will be for the good of all or, at least, that you intend no harm whose consequences you are not ready to accept.

One more useful exercise that is far less formal than these two involves the development of psychokinetic ability. While this may seem to be no more than a parlor trick, the benefit is that it provides an opportunity to work your Will in direct contradiction to the rules of the rational mind. Take a piece of high grade typing paper, the kind that will not be easily soaked through by water, and crumple it up. Place the paper in a bowl of water so that it floats freely about the bowl. Now, using only your mind, will the paper to float in a given direction. It may take some time for you to succeed, so be patient. When the paper appears to be following your direction, reverse it. Continue this exercise until you have convinced yourself that the paper is not merely floating about randomly but is actually moving according to your efforts. Repeat this exercise as often as you can. Keep in mind that you are not attempting to rival Uri Geller with your psychokinetic abilities but that you are developing your Will toward much more difficult duties.

Whenever you perform these exercises or any others, log your results. Record your impressions of the effort you have had to put forth and the results you feel you have attained. Since you will probably not want to use your Book of Shadows for something so seemingly insignificant, keep a separate journal similar to the kind that you would use to assess your workouts at the local health club, being sure to note your progress.

## **Imagination**

Imagination is something all of us are born with but few of us retain past childhood to the degree necessary to accomplish anything with it. Unlike most of the natural talents that come to us as infants, like walking and talking, and that are sharpened with age and steady practice, the ability to imagine (pretend) is discouraged as being an escape from reality that must be left behind with childhood as we mature. While the exact age when this happens may vary, virtually all of us have been admonished at one time or another to stop pretending and live in the real world. Unfortunately, it is exactly this talent to visualize and create with the mind that allows us to exist in a stressful world. That we can pretend that there is something better is the key to achieving it. The first depictions of hunting rituals on cave walls that showed the desired result

of a hunt yet to come, a quick kill and food for the tribe, are the product of Imagination, and the earliest humans held them to be just as important as any other skill in obtaining food. This did not come about as a matter of faith, but from the observation of results. Early humans had no place in their lives for nonsense. What did not provide for survival was quickly discarded, and what worked was perfected through scientific methods virtually the same as those used by modern scientists.

Since Imagination is a universal human talent, not much effort is needed to rejuvenate it, and the exercises involved are most enjoyable. Creativity is a function of Imagination, so those who are artists, musicians, poets, and the like may seem to have a slight advantage over the rest of us, but, in fact, creativity is not limited to artistic endeavors. Architects, engineers, theoretical physicists, and daydreamers are equally well endowed with the creative spirit.

The most difficult part in enhancing the Imagination to the point where it can be used as a magical tool is that the old admonitions to stop pretending and live in the real world die hard. Imagination is a most personal mental function. One person's fantasy is another's fallacy. Expect to be called crazy when you try to explain your most original thoughts. Come up with enough of these brainstorm and you may earn the label "eccentric" or "lunatic." By current standards, which label you earn is directly proportional to how financially successful your idea may become. (Pet rocks: eccentric or crazy? Enough said!)

The need for secrecy in your magical work should be becoming obvious to you by now. If for no other reason, it can prove impossibly difficult to help anyone when you are viewed as the friendly, neighborhood weirdo.

Daydreaming is an act of Imagination that provides an escape from circumstances that the mind finds boring and tedious. Listening to long, irrelevant speeches or performing repetitive physical chores lead the mind to look elsewhere for entertainment. This kind of imagining may be rooted in some activity you especially enjoy or may whisk you off to a fantasy land where all is as you like it. The latter is a reflection of the Macrocosm in your Microcosm. You are God of your own world; you make all the rules and are responsible for its very existence. It is this part of the Imagination that must be strengthened to facilitate magical work. Your ability to visualize circumstances as you would have them be is key to not only to spellwork but to magically arranging your life as you wish it to be.

The first exercise is to simply daydream. The subject is unimportant, as long as it pleases you. Try to avoid daydreams with negative connotations, like imagining what's going to happen when the police catch up to you for all those unpaid parking tickets. Keep things light and simple.

Imagination is best strengthened by adversity, so not only is it unnecessary to find a quiet place where you can meditate and cogitate in peace, it may prove more effective to daydream in spite of the noisome world around you. Do avoid daydreaming during activities that may require your full attention at a moment's notice, like driving your car. Insurance companies frown on explanations for accidents that involve swerving to avoid hitting a dragon.

Perfect places for whisking yourself off to your own little world include political speeches, testimonials, and any time spent in a waiting room or line. Allow your mind to drift from its awareness of your current surroundings to some place it finds more interesting. Add features to this landscape at will. There are no restrictions of color or form. It's your world, and pigs may fly against a purple sky with two suns of different colors that shine brightly on a sea of chocolate. There are no limits except those you impose, and you may change even these at your whim.

Once you have become adept at imagining such a place, you should gradually increase the number of rules that apply to it. This does not mean to restrict your fantasy land with iron borders of reality. What rules exist are yours to choose, and the selection is best made by observing how your fantasy universe functions without your conscious attempts to restrict behavior. Your landscape and the actions occurring within it may seem random, but they are actually the result of your mind doing its best to please itself. The restrictions you observe may have no equivalent in the "real" world, but this does not matter. What is important is that you make the rules for this universe you have created, and that once you have codified these laws, your universe and all its inhabitants obey them. In this way, your dream world will become more real to you. Soon you will find that you can produce many fantasy universes just by mentally running through the rules governing their existence. In such a way was the Universe created by the All. Once the rules are put in place, the universe can function on its own without your constant input, and you can sit back and enjoy your creation without having to constantly interfere with it. Practice this as much as possible without arousing the suspicions of those around you about your mental well-being. Just remember

that you did not create THIS Universe, and you may be called upon to participate in one of its many activities, like making a living or staying focused during a business meeting.

Another similar exercise involves creating a private space for yourself that serves to isolate you from the disturbances of the outside world and provide a place where you can feel at home with yourself without the need for physical barriers. This place can be a subset of your imaginary universe or can exist as a whole separate entity, reserved for those times when you just need to be alone with your thoughts. The more detail you put into your private space, the more you will enjoy being there. It helps to remember when you were not quite old enough to decorate your own room or may have had to share a bedroom with a sibling or two. Try to recall those wonderful plans you had for YOUR OWN ROOM, where parents had no say and your word would be law. When you enter the room of your imagining, you should definitely have the feeling that the rest of the world has been shut out.

Training the Imagination entails learning to visualize to the point that your mental images take on a reality parallel to that of the physical universe. Just as with any exercise, it is easiest to start small by picturing a familiar object and endowing it with properties that appeal to you.

Please note that although these exercises will dwell on pleasant scenarios and desirable circumstances and attributes, it is equally possible to create a Universe that is unappealing and has many negative qualities. Such imagining is extremely useful as a training ground for life's more trying times. A warrior's skills are not sharpened in an amusement park, nor can a witch prepare for magical work on the physical plane by practicing in candyland.

## **Methods of Visualization**

Everyone dreams. Therefore, everyone has the ability to visualize. The skill may be acute in some and weaker in others, but the talent itself is necessary for survival. Without the ability to visualize what will happen if you step off a high cliff or venture into a bear's cave, a human has little chance of living long enough to reproduce.

The dream state during which visualization occurs is dominated by alpha brain waves. There is certainly enough literature available on alpha that further exposition of the basic principles involved would prove redundant. Alpha is the subject of much serious psychological and medical research, and I recommend that your reading on the subject include the more technically oriented material in addition to the general information available in the more popular literary forums like New Age magazines and elementary psychological texts. Just as a medical doctor would not limit his professional reading to generic accounts of health problems from Readers' Digest, so must the witch seek knowledge from the highest sources. You will never find such efforts to be a waste of time.

While achieving alpha is not only easy but inevitable during sleep, reaching the same state while awake is more difficult, since brain activity is dominated by beta waves when the mind is engaged in the everyday activities of gathering and processing sensory input. The alpha waves (and others) are still present, but they are given a lower priority by the brain as a matter of survival. Imaginary dragons are far less dangerous than the bus that is bearing down on you at fifty miles an hour while your brain works out which way to run.

The first step toward increasing alpha wave dominance and enhancing visualization is to quiet the beta mind by removing as many sensory stimuli as possible. While most of us do not own sensory deprivation chambers that would allow us to disconnect our minds from sensory input, it is still possible to achieve a similar effect by finding a quiet place where we will not be disturbed. This does not mean you must locate the perfect environment for meditation before you can ever hope to improve your imaginative skills. If this were so, most of us would never meditate at all, let alone improve our talent for visualization.

The brain does not require conventional silence to recognize that it is in a place that will permit it to let its beta guard down and allow alpha waves to dominate mental activity. What the brain recognizes as quiet are circumstances that do not provide variation in sensory input. The beta mind is attuned to recognize change and react accordingly. If the senses detect no change requiring the mind to respond, it quickly becomes bored. It is exactly this state of boredom that results in a reduction in beta activity, permitting the alpha activity to take priority. This is why so many methods of meditation rely on repetition of a word (mantra) or action, like counting breathes, to help practitioners to calm themselves and reach the

desired level of mental relaxation. Mandalas function in the same way on the visual plane, replacing the multitude of changing visual stimuli with one that remains constant. These techniques can also guide the practitioner toward a particular direction that the meditation is intended to take, such as personal pathwork, Otherworld journeying, or they can be used as a means of targeting energy for healing or any other purpose.

Shamanic drumming, which seems anything but calming to the novice listener, uses insistent repetition to induce the trance that helps the shaman to move from this reality into that of the Otherworld. Gregorian chant and hours of prayer recitation serve a similar end; the quieting of the mind that it may be in harmony with forces other than those of mundane existence.

If you already employ a method for meditation that enhances your ability to visualize, do not feel obligated to adopt mine. Simply follow your own path to arrive at the point described in the exercises that follow. What is important is that you expand your skill to the degree necessary for magic and ritual. Some Eastern schools teach meditation as an end in itself, and the benefits of these endeavors with regard to personal health and well-being are well documented. The major difference between disciplines such as zazen and transcendental meditation and those explained here and in other Western magical texts is that the goal is to provide a tabula rasa with which to conduct magical work or upon which information from the Otherworld may be written rather than to achieve a state of "no mind" as a means of reaching nirvana. Both involve the exclusion of the endless chatter of the beta mind to produce mental piece.

The first step in developing the Imagination is to be able to visualize a familiar object and gradually add detail to it until it bears no particular resemblance to any of its "real" world kin but takes on an individual identity based on attributes endowed by you.

Start by putting yourself in a meditative state where alpha waves dominate the brain's activity. You can use the same method outlined in the exercises on Will, picturing a place that you find especially relaxing and mentally transporting yourself there. One advantage to this technique is that it acts as a warm-up for the further visualization you will be attempting. Its disadvantage is that it assumes that you already possess some talent for visualization.

A simple method of reaching alpha is to close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing until it becomes quite slow and regular, with no hitches during inhalation or exhalation. Once you have regulated your breathing to the point where its newly established rhythm does not require your full attention, proceed to empty yourself of all worldly cares and physical tension by giving them a form you find comfortable to both contain them and permit their ready disposal. Rocks are very useful for this chore. Holding a rock in your hands (real or imagined), mentally endow the stone with any problem that might be bothering you, no matter what it is, and drop the rock from your hands. Try to see the rock falling into a pool of very deep water, even if you are dropping a real rock from your hands to the carpet in front of you. Feel free to place as many difficulties as you like into the stone. You may want to start by holding a number of rocks in your hands, particularly if you feel you have widely divergent troubles that would be hard to confine to the same stone. As the stone breaks the surface of the water, be sure that you are getting rid of that problem or set of problems so that your tranquility cannot be disturbed by such thoughts. You may wish to use a brief banishing charm to help you, or you may recite to yourself one of some antiquity that activates water's natural ability to absorb and hide anything, "Water bind it, no one find it!"

When you have disposed of the last of your troubles in this manner, know that you are now pure and ready to use your Imagination without fear. If you can, picture yourself bathed in white light and feel it cleansing you inside and out.

See the world around the light encompassing you as being shrouded in a deep fog. You can make out no features. Everything is hidden by the fog that raps you in a comforting blanket. You cannot see past the fog, but you have no fear of what may be out there because both the light and the fog that surrounds you are like a warm coat on a cold night. The fog is gray.

As you strain your eyes to see through it, the fog turns a beautiful crimson all around you. Your whole world is a velvety red mist. This is followed by the fog becoming orange, as richly hued as the most delicious fruit. Just as that color is about to manifest as a taste on your tongue, the fog changes to a brilliant yellow that possesses all the warmth of the sun. As you bask in this sunshine mist, the color turns to forest green, complete with the musty smell of Spring woodlands. The scent fades as the green fades to sky blue that seems at once to be all around you and to go on forever. This brilliant blue resolves into the deepest indigo you can imagine, a perfect blend of royal blue and purple that reminds you of an evening sky's horizon, touched by the last light of the sun. As you watch, the purple seems to take over from the blue,

turning the fog to sharp violet, a color almost beyond your perception, edging past the upper limits of the visible spectrum. Sit and enjoy until you feel ready for the next step.

Without any special effort, allow this violet landscape to fill with the white light that has surrounded you. See the light expanding until there is no more color but brilliant white that disperses the fog, leaving a world brightly lit but without features. This world is where you will create, for in this world, you are the Supreme Being. It is you that has brought light to the Void and will fill that Void with your creations. This universe obeys your laws, for you are Law personified.

To return from your private universe, reverse the above process, first recalling the white light to yourself and your immediate surroundings. Then picture the fog returning, this time starting as violet and turning stepwise to each color in reverse order until you are enclosed in red. At this point, mentally remove the color from the fog, leaving the gray blanket that you began with around your body which is still enveloped by white light. Dispel this fog and see in front of you the pool into which you dropped your stones. If there are some that you feel you must retrieve from the water, do so at this time (some problems do require that you deal with them on the mundane plane and should be taken back with you when you leave the meditative state. If you tossed your worry about paying the phone bill into your magic pool, leaving it there may result in your forgetting to pay it altogether!). If this does prove necessary, provide yourself with a positive affirmation that you will be able to handle the problem by saying something like. "I take with me my trouble, but my trouble will not take me. By my Will, I'll find a way to make this trouble go away." Before opening your eyes, ask the white light to stay in you until you can travel to your world again, "Stay within me, Sacred Light, as I return to the world of day and Night." Open your eyes, feel refreshed, and get something to eat or drink to ground yourself (this is a good practice after any ritual or magical operation that involves travelling between the Worlds. It is very easy to remain floating in a mental haze if you don't do something to drop anchor upon returning to port.)

The next step is to begin to fill your universe with occupants. Start small, with something that does not require a lot of detail that can lead to disturbance of your alpha state. The beta mind has a long evolutionary history of responding instantly to any stimulus and will welcome the opportunity to participate in measuring the exact dimensions of your castle in the air while at the same time making it vanish in a puff of intellectual smoke. It is usually wise to select for initial visualization something that appeals to basic human needs, like food. (Sex is a basic human need, yes; but it is also fraught with complications that are a bit too stimulating for the novice.) It is best to pick something whose name is a bit vague and open to individual interpretation with respect to its exact appearance and physical properties. Start with something you like for a number of reasons and endow your mental image of the object with the attributes you like best. The more senses you can involve in your visualization, the more vivid will be your image and the more "real" it will become. Again, food is a good choice, because you can tell when you've got it right when your mouth begins to water, and you return from your little alpha vacation with a terrific craving for that food. You may want to be sure you have some on hand before you begin. Rushing around town trying to find chocolate covered strawberries at four in the morning is not conducive to mental balance!

Suppose you pick as the object of your exercise an orange. Once you have reached the alpha level by performing the aforementioned exercise or by your own method, picture an orange floating in front of you. Turn it round in your mind until you know its every feature. Note its color. Smell it. Toss it up with your mind and catch it the same way until you have a good idea of its weight. Turn it on end. Is it a navel orange or a Valencia? Does it say Sunkist on it? Is its surface rough or smooth? Does it have any blemishes? Squeeze it gently to gauge its ripeness. Does it feel full of juice? Does it have any bruises?

Note that until now you have been allowing the orange to exist on its own, letting each of its properties come to you through observation. You have created the orange, but it demonstrates the characteristics of an orange on its own. The more things you observe about the orange, the more real it becomes. You are a benevolent creator, permitting your universe to go its own way once you have provided it with the basic rules of existence. Congratulations! You have achieved Godhead. It is not at all necessary for you to dictate every detail of the orange for it to exist. "As above, so below." The Universe owes its creation to the All, but it lives its own reality and contains infinite possibilities for how its existence will unfold. Thus, with God, all things, good and bad, are indeed possible.

Enjoy your orange as completely as you like. When you are ready to return from alpha, allow the orange to drift out of sight until your original blank fog is all that remains. Count yourself back to normal consciousness and ground yourself, preferably by eating an orange.

When you next eat an orange, try to recall the features of the orange you created and compare the

two. Note these comparisons in your log. You will need them for reference following the next phase of the exercise.

Proceed with this exercise as you did the first, including visualizing the orange. However, this time you will deliberately endowing your creation with every detail of its existence. For each attribute you noticed in the first endeavor, enhance your orange with your ideal. Make the orange as orange as you like. Make its smell absolutely irresistible, its touch promising juicy delight. Know that it is the sweetest, best tasting orange you have ever seen, free of blemishes and descended from Olympus itself rather than Sunkist. When you are sure have the perfect orange, savor its beauty for a while. Let your mind become convinced that this fruit has had no equal since the beginning of time. This may sound grandiose, but bear with the plan.

When you have tired of this example of citrus perfection, return to the conscious state as before, leaving your orange to its own devices. Ground yourself as usual.

The next orange you eat should pale in comparison to your creation. The world does not produce perfect oranges, it grows real ones, complete with all the flaws inherent to existence on this plane. Do not be disappointed. You are learning the difference in what you might seek through ritual and magic and what results you may actually get. One important principle of all magic and ritual is that all things have an existence unto themselves within their universe, and any change you would make in those circumstances must function within the nature of that existence and not in spite of it. A true grasp of this law requires careful examination of the law Hermetic law of cause and effect. Chance is merely undiscovered cause. All things happen because something else has happened first to direct that it be so.

The kind of visualization needed to work magic falls between the two extremes of these exercises. You will want to project upon the screen of your mind the circumstance you wish to achieve with all the detail that you can to insure that your operation is a successful one. You must, therefore, be able to determine what limits you will be working with to avoid attempting to force Nature aside. There is no more direct path to disaster than to place yourself above Universal Law, and you have to realize that your perception of anything is inherently flawed by the limits of your faculties and that these limits are not a sign of weakness to be overcome but are essential to your own existence in the Universe. (You cannot see Otherworld beings, but you know they exist. Think of what it would be like if you alone could see them. Try to explain swerving your car into a ditch to avoid hitting a dragon to your friendly neighborhood cop!)

To use visualization to work magic, first learn the nature of the situation you are attempting to influence. Learn all you can about what may have caused the present circumstance and how far you can alter those circumstances while remaining true to the nature of the situation.

Healing spells serve as a perfect example of the type of magic that is often performed in contrast to Nature's plan. While healing is always a good and right thing to do, it may not be suitable under all conditions, no matter how badly you may want to help. Living means dying. All biological organisms fail eventually, even those as seemingly immortal as the ancient redwood trees. The human body deteriorates with age, sometimes through the painful effects of disease. There is no harder thing than to watch helplessly as a loved one passes from this life. As witches, we are tempted to try anything to postpone the inevitable, and our own feelings of impending loss can overcome our faith in the continuity of the spirit and reduce our sensitivity to the pain that life is now bringing to our loved one. Magic is a powerful tool, and its effect at the hands of a skilled practitioner can usually hold off Death for a while, but such meddling can cause terrible pain to the very person you are trying to help, so severe that it may reach beyond the body and tear at the mind and spirit.

This is not to say that you should throw your arms up in hopeless resignation whenever a nasty illness descends upon someone you care about. You are a WITCH. The name itself implies wisdom. Use yours to know when fight and when to let go. Death has its place and time, just as do all the events of our lives.

You will find that working against the forces of nature provides no reward and minimal success. If you choose to fight the tide, be prepared for hard work and know that should you succeed in that particular operation, a counterbalancing will come as surely as the sun at dawn. Be prepared to duck the pendulum's swing. Nature will return to equilibrium. If that means you must suffer some consequences for your actions, steel yourself against them, avoiding those you can and enduring the rest without complaint.

Practice the exercises for Will and Imagination as often as possible. As your muscles need repetition to perform in a coordinated fashion, so does your brain. You are walking neural paths that are very much like seldom used trails in a deep forest. You will be hacking your way through many barriers,

some as thin as cobwebs, others as formidable as deadfall and strangling vines. Be patient with yourself, and know that no one travels these routs without difficulty.

How quickly you reach your goal is far less important than that you clear the way thoroughly for future travels. Concentrate on removing the blockades, not on circumventing them. Heed the advice of those whom have traveled these roads before, and always be attentive toward help from the Otherworld.

## FAITH

Faith is the foundation of religion and can vary from a blind belief in elaborate dogma to simple positive thinking. Faith expects the believer to suspend rational thought and rely on the intuitive association of historical events as taught by the recognized religious authorities to arrive at a set of spiritual tenets. In most religions, this process gains reinforcement through the assimilation of the individual into large groups of like-minded people.

Humans are social animals that tend toward self-doubt when isolated from others who share their feelings. This is especially true when the individual can provide little logical support for their personal world view.

This insecurity prevails in matters of philosophy and, maybe more so, in manifestations of destructive behavior patterns. Twelve step programs are filled with people who thought they were the one and only who drank too much, ravaged themselves through drug abuse, or lived in the constant gloom of chronic depression. Recovery begins for most when they realize that they are not alone.

Finding such group support is not entirely a good thing, however. It is just as easy to find an assemblage that is indulging in the same kind of negative conduct that helps the individual to justify even the most heinous acts. The shared tales of misery brought on by an alcoholic lifestyle that help an AA member toward sobriety sound quite different through the mental haze and slurred speech of fellow drunks at the local bar. The very reasons that one should stop drinking reinforce its continuation by assuring the drunk that he is not alone in his troubles.

Under the influence of the group mentality, individuals will believe almost anything, no matter if this dogma diametrically opposes that of the general population. While people enjoy the approval of others, they also like to feel special compared to the great mass of society. Some achieve this status through the pursuit of harmless eccentricities and unusual hobbies. Others take a more destructive path, identifying society or some segment thereof as the enemy.

Certainty that this enemy intends to destroy them and, more importantly, their doctrine, inspires these aggregations to commit atrocities against the perceived antagonists and their allies.

Faith that their cause is just and that the threat to their way of thinking is genuine overrides all logic. Founded on a mixture of pseudo-history, myth, and outright lies, these organizations quickly dispose of society's mores and replace them with their own. Unity increases as the group feels more threatened, typically finding a conspiracy around every corner. Nothing links people more firmly than persecution and paranoia. Add a sympathetic, charismatic leader to the mix, and this little band of misfits will commit acts of terrorism without regard for the consequent loss of life on either side.

Faith has been the formula for holy wars, political terrorism, and persecutions of every sort. Armed with a fundamentalist doctrine that views all who do not share their faith as the only true path to salvation, many self-proclaimed guardians of that faith have never lacked for followers willing to torture and murder in the name of their personal version of the Almighty.

For people who claim such a reverence for God and creation, these Fools (re: Tarot trump=0) seem determined to destroy it!

Faith can lead one to the absolute height of spiritual accomplishment or to the Kabbalah's kingdom of shells.

Wiccan philosophy finds its strength in antiquity. The earliest witches discarded that which had no practical use. A witch believes in observation and extrapolation based upon the principles that govern everyday life.

As a witch, you will learn to regard yourself as a scientist, dedicated to the accurate accumulation and analysis of data toward practical ends. What separates you from the nuclear physicist next door is that you will explore areas that are not limited to the phenomena of the mundane world. While the conventional scientist trusts only that portion of the mind that reasons, you will use intuition and Otherworld insight in

addition to logic, expanding your knowledge accordingly.

For a witch, faith comes from the series of general conclusions about the Universe that arise as a result of the Wiccan version of the scientific method. Witches believe in little that they cannot measure by some means, though these measurements need not be limited by mathematics.

Witches believe in eternal life because Nature abounds with examples that prove the case. A gray, dead forest returns to life with the spring. Offspring resemble their parents throughout the wild and seem to carry with them some essence of their ancestors. No one teaches an ant to dig or a fish to swim. There must be some way for this information to be passed on. Genes encode instinctive behavior. That code is a series of chemical bonds. So are all the functions of the brain. The debate over determined versus learned behavior, to a witch, seems ridiculous. Why argue over something whose expression depends in either case on the vibrational patterns of molecules and the chemical bonds extant therein?

Nothing enhances faith like proof. Witches constantly strive to systematize magic and ritual to repeat successes and discard methods that do not work. The measure of these successes involves how the work influences the intuitive mind as well as its physical effects. Not only must a spell or ritual produce the desired modification to the object of the magic, the work must also feel right in the making on both the rational and intuitive levels.

Ritual methods must satisfy the heart and mind to be effective. When this is so, the witch becomes totally involved in the work at hand. With each success, faith in those methods increases, and the witch's confidence builds.

Magic sometimes fails, yet faith in the system remains strong. Missing a foul shot can be discouraging, but it seldom results in the player shunning basketball forever. As practicing a physical skill improves confidence in one's ability to perform that act, so does repetition of rituals and spells bolster the witch's faith that these operations will be successful.

The purpose of keeping a journal that documents every detail of magical work and its result is to increase the witch's faith in his/her ability to perform such work. Using the Hermetic principle of cause and effect, the witch can review any ritual and eliminate those portions that are ineffective.

In Wicca, faith has little to do with believing in some remote authority figure. An old Celtic Book of Shadows states that a witch best honors the gods by mastering them. This mastery depends on the witch's ability to interact with forces and entities on other planes of existence, to both learn from them and use them to specific ends.

The burden for working magic lies with the witch. Faith grows as the witch becomes more knowledgeable at contacting and employing those sources of power that assist the witch in reaching the desired goal.

Thus, for the witch, faith involves improving self-confidence through measured success and learning by experience what Otherworld resources may be called upon to help. Obtaining this assistance depends on the witch's ability to harmonize mentally and spiritually with the archetypes that represent the forces to be employed.

This next series of exercises are designed to improve your ability to contact the Otherworld. Through these efforts, you will begin to recognize those archetypes and entities that are most attuned to your personality and needs.

Among the personalities and powers in the Otherworld, there is much duplication of correspondences and skills. Therefore, do not be concerned if you find you have no affinity for a particular god, goddess, or hero. You will be attracted to some of these beings and repelled by others, whether through your research or by direct contact with them. Learn to use your own judgement to determine which of these are friend or foe. You will seldom find it necessary to establish a working relationship with an Otherworld representative abhorrent to you.

Be aware of one caution as you study about archetypes. Some psychologists hold the view that all such beings are the product of your mind's attempts to personify different aspects of the subconscious. These writers are especially fond of the words "merely" and "just". They decry all belief in independent entities as unscientific nonsense. Suspend your judgement of this philosophy until you have gathered sufficient personal experience to confirm or deny these opinions. Keep in mind that calling a screwdriver by another name makes it no less effective at driving a screw.

Before trying to reach an Otherworld personality, learn as much as you can about the nature of that entity. Did this individual once live on this plane, or has the Otherworld been its permanent home? What sort of behavior can you expect?

Consider knowing the information on the following list essential prior to contact. Some overlap exists between historical and mythical figures (i.e. heroes versus gods). When in doubt about whether an individual is of this world or the Otherworld, assume the latter. Remember that life in the mundane world is finite and brief, while that in the Otherworld is timeless.

Note the attributes that best describe the personality you will contact:

- 1) God, hero, or archetype?**
- 2) What are the specific talents you seek?**
- 3) How ancient is the entity? (Some that have lived on this plane in extreme antiquity may be too out of touch with current worldly problems.)**
- 4) Is the figure associated with tragedy, hostility, or vengeance? (These are best avoided unless your needs are quite specific to their traits. Be wary also of tricksters, traitors, and those adept at deception.)**
- 5) Does the entity require tribute, sacrifice, or binding promises on your part that you are not willing to give?**
- 6) Can you expect direct intervention from this power on your behalf or advice on how you should proceed on your own to resolve your difficulties?**
- 7) Are you attracted by what you already know about this individual? Do you feel that you would like to maintain permanent rapport, or do you wish immediate help with the task at hand?**
- 8) What is the status of the personality, and what rules of decorum must you obey? (Kings expect royal treatment. Warriors enjoy battles and banquets. Bards expect lively conversation.)**
- 9) Is your Otherworld friend given to melancholy or mirth? Will you be expected to be casual in your conversation or dignified and distant?**
- 10) Is your contact known for any negative characteristic that could cause you harm? (Envy of your existence on this plane is a particularly dangerous trait. Beware of those showing a strong attachment to worldly pleasures.)**
- 11) Should you desire the help of more than one individual, are those you will be contacting compatible? While it may be entertaining to witness the bickering that can take place between age-old enemies, you will accomplish little by inviting adversaries to participate in the same ritual.**
- 12) Does the help you need fall within the major talents of the party you intend to invoke?**

Be as specific as possible when requesting aid. If you wish to learn a skill, focus on someone proficient at teaching that capability rather than summoning who merely possesses that talent. A warrior can fight but may not be able to instruct you in the martial arts except by example. The difference is that of going to a kung fu school instead of attending a Bruce Lee film festival. Inspiration is not the same as qualified tutelage.

For these first exercises, you should have no special chore in mind that requires help from the Otherworld except a desire to establish communication between you and an Otherworld entity. What you will be doing is the equivalent of answering a personal ad in the newspaper, hoping to find someone compatible with your interests based on the brief description in the advertisement.

Once you have chosen a personality that you wish to contact, you should prepare yourself to meet that individual.

Try to make a good first impression. Use what you know about the individual's likes and dislikes. Make the entity feel at home by providing a comfortable environment and educating yourself in subjects of mutual interest.

Do not be disappointed if you find that the first contact seems shallow or that you have made a wrong choice of acquaintances. The analogy to the personal ads is intentional and accurate. The literary sources on Otherworld characters magnify the positive and downplay the negative except for those entities universally recognized as evil or destructive.

Make your own evaluation of your compatibility with the entity. As with any stranger, your initial encounter will be superficial. Trust comes with time. Do not be surprised if all your questions are not answered during your first encounter or that you find yourself the subject of the same sort of inquiry. Otherworld beings are as curious about the events and personalities of this world as you are of theirs.

You may actually feel as though you may be providing more information than you are receiving. Otherworlders are neither omnipotent nor omniscient.

Whenever you are asked to provide information about yourself or the events of the mundane world, be truthful. Your honesty may be tested by one who already knows the correct answer to the question posed to you. Lie, and you will never be trusted again. At the very least, your requests for future aid will go unheeded. At worst, you may find that word of your untrustworthiness has spread throughout the Otherworld, making you persona non gratia forever.

### **The First Exercise**

When attempting to reach Otherworld personalities, it is wise to first cast a Circle. Unlike the barrier used in ceremonial magic, your Circle acts as a bridge between the worlds. After you have charged your Circle, repeat to yourself the affirmation,

*"I am in a place that is not a place  
At a time that is not a time.  
I stand between the worlds  
That I may meet with (name of Otherworld individual)  
For the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_."*

It is not necessary to state a clear purpose for introductory meetings, but you will want to use this form of appellation in the future, since it allows the individual to accept or decline your invitation to help.

Restructure the words as you please. Always use your own sense of poetry for any such operation. The way the words work together, especially when spoken aloud, is at least as important as their precise meaning.

Otherworld entities enjoy free will and are never to be ordered to obey in the manner of the demons of ceremonial magic, but they do respect command and self control. They also have a deep love of poetry. Keep these in mind whenever you are composing a spell, calling, chant, etc.

Once you have stated your invitation and intent, enter alpha by whatever means you normally use. Envision yourself as a student anticipating the arrival of a revered teacher who is also a trusted friend. Now is not the time for mental reservations. Remain as open as possible, and be comforted by the knowledge that you can easily break off contact if the entity proves hostile in any way.

Hold in your mind the idea that you are an empty cup waiting to be filled with divine knowledge. Surround this image with a landscape that you feel will suit your guest, Add as much detail as you please, and do not limit your imaginings solely to the visual.

Embellish your surroundings to appeal to all the senses. Prepare a sensory banquet for your anticipated friend that includes favorite foods, smells, and sounds. Let yourself enjoy your creation as well. There is no better way to establish rapport between new acquaintances than shared pleasures.

Once you are satisfied that you have done all you can to provide for the comfort of your guest, relax and wait. Amuse yourself by imagining the delight of your friend at the accommodations you have made. You should feel the same thrill that comes with watching a friend open a birthday present from you that you know is absolutely perfect.

Allow plenty of time for this exercise. Some Otherworlders exhibit caution when approaching someone new to them. Those that have lived on this plane did so during times when carelessness often proved fatal. Warriors and such are especially wary of traps.

Otherworld beings that have never lived in this world, and those whose contact is seldom sought from this side of existence experience the identical trepidation that you would feel if you were invited to

their world.

Be patient. If you have ever tried to entice a wild animal to you, you have an excellent idea of what to expect.

Since this exercise aims at developing faith both in yourself and in the existence of the Otherworld, bear in mind that the answer to your invitation may be, for the time being, "No." Your anticipated visitor may be engaged elsewhere, or the circumstances presently may not be right for a visit. Should you fail to make contact, do not be disappointed. Instead, be analytical. Have you met all the prerequisites? Are you in the proper state of mind for communicating with the Otherworld? Have you inadvertently included something in your rite that is offensive to your guest?

One common error that can cause failure to communicate is to try reaching a higher entity when one lower in the Otherworld hierarchy will do. Unless you feel a special affinity for such an exalted personality, refrain from jumping rank. The higher the source of Otherworld knowledge, the more arcane it will be. Understanding this information often necessitates having a sufficient background in the field. You would not expect to grasp calculus without knowing basic mathematics. Communication with lesser beings provides the foundation for understanding the more complicated lessons to come.

It is also important to refrain from offending those Otherworlders you may view as less significant. These beings have personalities similar to humans, and they can become very uncooperative with those who circumvent them by going to a higher authority.

You will know when you have reached the individual you seek. The arrival of the least Otherworld personality effects the seeker the way flipping on a light switch illuminates a darkened room. You will experience the distinct sensation that you are not alone.

Many who have made such contact report a feeling of being watched, while others experience a warm, welcoming presence where moments ago there had been emptiness. What you perceive depends on your personality and on the type of character you have summoned.

Although the exact nature of these encounters with the Otherworld vary with the individual, they all possess a common thread; the feeling of being in the presence of an entity that has an independent existence and a personality distinct from that of the seeker.

You may have many questions for your guest or you may have none. What is important in these beginning exercises is that you know without question that you have reached a being that is not the product of your imagination.

This certainty typically manifests intuitively, but it can be measured rationally. In your research, you may have read about your guest's physical appearance and character, behavioral tendencies, and special attributes. Confronting the reality upon which the literature is based can provide surprises. Not everything finds its way into a book!

Note these differences from what you expected. Pay special attention to those characteristics that seem out of place with the exalted descriptions in the texts. Otherworld figures have an affinity for humans in part because they share our traits. We laugh, cry, love, and hate for the same reasons. Remember, as above, so below!

Some expect adulation, others friendly conversation. Those who are bards delight in heroic poetry and in satire. Warriors love a good fight, admire courage, and often thirst after fine ale.

Do not pay so much attention to the details of your encounter that you miss the richness of the experience itself. There are many in the Otherworld who seek your friendship and welcome your attention. After all, the witch has always been an ally, a willing intermediary between this world and theirs.

Feel free to play the skeptic. Be courteous, but ask any questions you please. Take care to remember and record anything you are told, even if it seems irrelevant at the moment. Time has no meaning in the Otherworld. The present, the past, and the future are all one. A comment that seems nonsensical now may have deep meaning to you someday.

When you are satisfied that your business with your guest is ended, express gratitude for their coming and bid them to depart in joy and peace. Close your Circle in the usual manner and record the details of the visit in your journal.

Try not to edit your commentaries. It is better in the beginning to record too much than too little. Experience will guide you toward what is important. Until you have entertained many of these visitors, be verbose.

Having described your experience in detail, you should now begin some detective work. Review your reading on the character you have contacted and seek new sources of information about the myths and

attributes associated with your new friend.

Compare what you learn from the literature with what you wrote in your journal. You will often find that your record contains certain details that match what others have written about the character, possibly including facts that you had no way of knowing beforehand.

It is through this process of affirmation that faith will develop and become strong. As you continue to contact Otherworld beings, reduce the amount of background research you do prior meeting each new entity. Note how frequently what you experience during your encounter coincides with what you glean from the literature after the fact.

Be scientific and skeptical. The more you question your results, the stronger your faith in the existence of the Otherworld will become.

Should you be one of those rare people who already has a sure and steady belief in the Otherworld and its inhabitants, congratulations on your dynamic insight and superior spiritual development. Please do the exercises and analysis anyway. The foundation they lend to faith can be like a bright sun on a dark winter's day.

Another exercise that bolsters faith involves exploring the geography of the Otherworld. If you have ever been alone in a strange city, you know how disoriented you can feel until you have become familiar with the terrain. While maps and guidebooks are handy tools in these circumstances, nothing takes the place of a stroll around the neighborhood to familiarize yourself with your new surroundings.

You can find descriptions of the Otherworld and its various realms among the myths and legends of every culture. Although the details may differ depending on who provided the written record, the descriptions are variations on a theme whose pandemic nature would make Jung proud.

Almost without exception, Otherworlds share the following characteristics:

***1) The Otherworld is inhabited by entities that range in stature from gods to simple elementals, angels to demons, legendary heroes to the forgotten dead, etc.***

***2) Different regions of the Otherworld exist to accommodate the variety of inhabitants. Some cultures hold that these areas follow a hierarchy from good to evil, while other traditions make no distinction regarding the regions except that one may be more suitable for a particular being than another. The Christian heaven, hell, and purgatory house different souls classified according to a moral code. Many pagan traditions dictate that all the dead go to a portion of the Otherworld reserved for them regardless of their conduct in life and that this area is not the same as that inhabited by the gods.***

***3) Journeys to the Otherworld and conversations with its inhabitants can endow the traveler with insights that aid the solution of problems in the mundane world. Knowledge gained during these excursions may facilitate spiritual growth or may provide practical solutions to crises such as surviving a harsh winter or avoiding the destructive force of a natural disaster.***

***Witches and shamans routinely seek Otherworld assistance for healing and to tap ancestral sources of expertise.***

***4) The landscape and population of the Otherworld share many attributes with the mundane world but may also contain geographical anomalies and chimerical creatures that exist on the physical plane only as the products of the imagination. That these bizarre features bear great similarities across cultural lines reinforces the theory that humans possess a collective unconscious whose fears and dreams are inherited throughout the species.***

***5) The Otherworld has a gate and a guard that prohibit casual access to its secrets. Escape from the Otherworld is equally difficult. Travel to the Otherworld requires careful preparation, usually spiritual in nature, and the voyager must recognize that there is no guarantee of return.***

***6) Prospective travelers to the Otherworld may solicit the help of a guide or may have one provided to them. The form these helpers may take varies from the spirit animals of the native Americans to Dante's Virgil. Those particularly welcome can expect considerable help with their journey.***

The attraction of a voyage to a place that promises enlightenment is balanced by the possibility that there may be no going back. Walking between the worlds creates a state of mind that is recognized on this plane as eccentricity by friends and as insanity by strangers.

Do not concern yourself with these fears when practicing the exercises. You are not leaping headlong into the Otherworld when contacting an entity or viewing a landscape. Consider the difference between full entry into the Otherworld and these simple exercises as being the same as comparing a trip to the zoo with wandering the African svelte alone and unarmed.

In this exercise, you will be required to use your Imagination. You may wish to refrain from attempting this work until you are sure of your ability to visualize a multitude of features at once.

This work may be done in Circle or out. If you feel more comfortable surrounded by your magical barrier, cast a Circle as your initial step. However, you may wish to enter your visualized landscape and cast your Circle within it once you have arrived. This latter method of mentally consecrating your sacred space on a separate plane is excellent practice for those whose circumstances limit their ability to construct a physical Circle. Privacy and space can be rare commodities, and these restrictions should not hinder our personal endeavors.

Constructing sacred space within the Otherworld also attracts certain of its inhabitants like fish to a lure. Be wise in your choice of companions. Some of these individuals see your presence as an opportunity to share wit and wisdom. Others are tricksters who welcome the chance to try out their pranks on an unsuspecting stranger.

Once you have decided if and where to cast your Circle, put yourself into the alpha state and remain there until you are completely relaxed. You should be very close to falling asleep before you begin visualizing a landscape. The sensation you experience should be that of controlled dreaming.

You may, in fact, doze off during this exercise. Do not be concerned. Enjoy your dreams, try to remember them, and start again some time when you are fully rested.

Before you start your journey, you may want to set your mind on travelling to a specific geographical feature, like the shore or the mountains. This is not absolutely necessary, but it can facilitate visualization.

Once you have reached the proper degree of relaxation, begin to visualize a panorama before you. Imagine that you are looking upon a scene hidden by a mist that is gradually lifting, revealing the features of the landscape slowly so that you have the opportunity to study each one in detail. Continue to watch from a distance until the fog has completely lifted, letting you see everything clearly.

When you have fixed this vista in your mind, enter it. Allow yourself to feel the brush of grass against your legs, the warmth of the sun on your back, and the refreshing breeze upon your face. Smell the flowers on the wind. Let your senses enjoy every detail of the place.

Pay attention to every sight and sound. Note the presence of any animals, including birds and insects.

Although rare, you may also discover other higher forms of life sharing your vista. For the time being, refrain from initiating contact with them directly. If they address you, be cordial and explain why you are there and that you mean them no harm. Thank them for any help they may provide and be on your way. The goal of this excursion is to convince yourself that the Otherworld is indeed real, and this is best accomplished through exploring on your own for the time being.

Find a place within this territory where you would like to establish a base of operations for future visits. You might choose a cave, a grove, or any other location where you feel comfortable.

Whether or not you have cast a Circle at the start of the exercise, you should cast one here. Compass readings have little relevance in the Otherworld, so you will have to employ other means of orienting your Circle to the four quarters. Look around you. You will find that the vista itself will tell you where each cardinal point lies.

The attributes of the elements associated with each quarter become actual physical features in the Otherworld. There may be mountains to the north, perhaps covered in snow. The east may be forested, the leaves of the trees constantly rustling in the wind, while the south may smell of desert and dried river beds or show the wavy distortion of heat rising from a parched prairie.

To the west, you may see a lake or hear the sound of a rushing stream or ocean breakers.

If there are structures present, a fortress may lie to your north, while the east may be delineated by a windmill. To the south you may find adobe huts or something resembling an Egyptian pyramid. Expect sea birds to the west or perhaps a distant sail.

Once you have chosen a place and become oriented to the cardinal points, cast a Circle and proceed to fill your space with anything that you think will make this area your own. The only limits to what you may include among these comforts is your Imagination. Erect whatever structure pleases you and supply it lavishly. This is no time for austerity. You are making a home for yourself in the Otherworld, and one of its essential features should be that it satisfies your every whim like no place in the mundane world can.

The limits of personal wealth do not apply. As Faery gold cannot be brought into the ordinary world without turning to worthless leaves, so is your money useless here. All the gold in the world will not buy what your imagination can create for free!

If you enjoy books, you can have a library that rivals the Library of Congress. If music suits your tastes, provide your new home with the best sound system money can't buy or, for that matter, imagine that your entire home reverberates with your favorite tunes constantly.

This is your escape from the mundane world, your sanctum that none can violate. Make it suit you in every way.

Do not feel like you have to get your decorating right the first time. You will have the opportunity to make improvements with each new visit. Enjoy yourself.

The creation of this personal space is common to many meditative teachings and pathworking methods. If you have any difficulty making such a place for yourself using the methods described in this book, please explore other ways of achieving this goal. The rewards are well worth the effort.

Once you have finished your place to your liking, stand back and take it all in. Study your new home and the vista around it. Become familiar with the landmarks. Fill yourself with pride in your accomplishment. You have journeyed to the Otherworld and created your own private world within it. You are beginning to understand what it means to be created in the image of the Almighty. As the All creates, so have you!

When you are ready to leave your landscape, retrace your steps to the place from which you first viewed the area shrouded in mist. Picture the fog again descending on your vista, each feature gradually vanishing until you can see nothing but the mist. At this point, slowly bring yourself out of alpha.

When you are ready, open your eyes and reacquaint yourself with the mundane world. Allow plenty of time for readjustment before wandering around. This exercise can leave you quite "spaced out". It is no accident that shamans who frequent the Otherworld and prefer to live between the worlds appear a bit distant and out of touch with common reality.

*Eat, rest, write, and think.*

Give the events of this trip time to sink in before trying the exercise again. Read your journal notes and see if anything arouses particular memories or emotions. Reflect on your journey as you would a vacation. Putting mental energy into your creation strengthens its being. You will soon come to think of your landscape as being as real as anyplace you have visited in the mundane world.

A reminder about your journal; refer to it often, and resist the temptation to edit it in any way. It will not be long before the meaning of some nonsensical entries become clear. Avoid rewriting first impressions to improve style or grammar. No one should read it but you. so even the spelling mistakes don't matter.

Travel to your Otherworld landscape as frequently as you like, remembering to allow enough time between visits for reflection. You should familiarize yourself with its every detail as you would a new neighborhood.

When contacting Otherworld beings, you may invite them to your vista and entertain them in your special place. Make the necessary changes to your abode to make your guest welcome, but keep in mind that it your home ground. You should always feel safe there.

You will find your sanctum especially useful for hosting Otherworld personalities that have a reputation for being difficult or acting imperiously. You rule your domain, and most Otherworlders will respect your authority and behave cordially under your roof.

Nonetheless, beware of bards and boastful warriors. They will eat your food and drink your wine, all the while indulging in sarcastic wit and endless bragging about their respective talents. You may find yourself challenged to battle these types with word or sword, a messy end to any meeting!

## Faith and the Journal

Your journal will become your personal Bible. What you experience and what you believe will make up its contents. Therefore, you should have some means of measuring your progress toward your spiritual goals.

Starting at the back of your journal and working toward the front, list what you hold to be true about the world you cannot see. This can be done at any time, but it will be most effective if you make this list prior to making contact with the Otherworld.

Most people come into the Craft with some sort of belief in the supernatural and magic. Write these down in brief so that they can be reviewed quickly and serve as a checklist.

After you have recorded the results of your exercises and any other rites you have performed for a few weeks, compare your entries to the material in the back of your book. Note how many of your original beliefs have been confirmed by your experiences and what new beliefs you could add to your list.

False assumptions are a fact of life. Nonetheless, you should discover that much of what you thought to be true conforms to your direct experience.

Continue this comparison as you progress. Add to the original list any postulate or theory that arises from your exploration into Wiccan realms. This is the first step in using scientific methods for evaluating magical and spiritual work. Note future affirmations or repudiations of these theories. From your journal entries and this type of analysis, you can construct your own concise Book of Shadows, filled with ritual methods and results that you have proven to yourself is true.

*There is no better way to build Faith.*

Will, Imagination, and Faith are three of the points of the pyramid that support the Cone of Power, the witch's means of projecting magical force and of reaching beyond the boundaries of the mundane world. One more corner remains to be filled.

## Secrecy

This cornerstone of the pyramid requires no arcane skill or elevated mental state. No exercise will improve your ability to meet this requirement.

*We all know how to keep a secret, and most of us are terrible at it!*

During the Burning Times, secrecy was key to survival. Witches kept nothing about their persons or households that might draw suspicion upon them or their families. Ritual tools were disguised as ordinary items. Instruction in the Craft was passed on orally to trusted family members. Written records were indeed rare. Those that did exist took the form of arcane poetry, its true meaning couched in myth and hidden in coded verse.

Divulging any information, true or fabricated, invited the wrath of the witch hunters. Many victims of the hunters had themselves acted as informers, the logic being that, since all such knowledge was secret, only a witch would know such things. The viscous lot who fed off the miseries of the persecutions had no intention of running out of targets for their torture.

Witches protected their identities and defended their fellows, sometimes by force of arms. It remains a sad fact that this hysterical destruction of life took ten innocents for every witch. While the witch could prove a dangerous adversary, the unsuspecting old widow did not.

The secrecy necessary to empower magic is not the same as that which hides information, however. The pyramid predates considerably the persecutions and was in place when the witch was a public figure available to all after the manner of the tribal shamans of extant primitive cultures.

The power that drives magic and ritual comes from the witch and depends on inner spiritual strength. While the witch may summon many forces to aid this work, the foundation is the witch's own constitution, fortified by an indomitable Will, a vivid Imagination, absolute Faith, and the ability to house and hold all the energy necessary to succeed.

The witch acts like a storage battery. An automobile engine provides enormous force to propel the vehicle. Without a charged battery, that engine will not start. Sitting in a parking lot with the motor off, listening to the car radio and leaving the headlamps on will drain the battery. Forced to share its precious power to nonessential tasks, the battery becomes unable to perform its key function.

If you expect to maintain the inner strength necessary to act as a witch, keep that power to yourself. Follow these guidelines:

- 1) *Refrain from involvement in petty problems, especially those that are beyond your immediate control.*
- 2) *Cultivate patience in the face of unexpected disruptions. Is it really so important that your favorite TV show has been pre-empted for an infomercial on the health benefits of sawgrass?*
- 3) *Do not bind yourself to unimportant events. Being unhappy when your favorite football team loses is normal; becoming depressed about it is not.*
- 4) *Never discuss the details of your work. Your spiritual strength cannot be described in words without being diminished. Try telling a blind person about a color, and you'll get the idea.*
- 5) *Be content with yourself. Do not seek the approval of others.*
- 6) *Affirm your own worth. Do not label yourself to achieve status in the eyes of others.*
- 7) *In this work, your opinion is the only one that matters. Seek the council of others whom you respect, but make the final decision yours.*
- 8) *Accept responsibility for every action without excuse.*
- 9) *No one ever told a secret without expecting to improve their own status. In the Circle, you are perfect. How much more status do you need?*
- 10) *Finally, SAY LITTLE, DO MUCH!*

All people possess magical abilities. Not everyone chooses to use them. To the witch, the tenets listed here become second nature, and they do so through hard work. The witch accepts freely the burden that comes with walking between the worlds.

Do not let your conscience torture you because you failed to adhere to these ten guidelines. Guilt creates doubt, and doubt ruins magic. You are on a path of spiritual development. If you wait until you reach inner perfection before trusting yourself to work magic, you will be waiting a very long time, perhaps several lifetimes.

Constantly criticize your actions toward improving yourself, not toward crippling yourself with guilt. All of us carry enough guilt around with us to hinder the most powerful magic.

Maintaining the kind of secrecy about your work and beliefs described here will allay the effects of guilt. Mistakes direct us toward the right path. They should not hobble our spiritual progress.

To rid yourself of the damage guilt can do, it is useful to affirm your worth and inner status. The following words are drawn from the teachings of Lady Laurie Cabot. Say them to yourself daily and know that you are telling yourself the truth:

**"I am PERFECT,  
made of Light and Life,  
a perfect being  
living in perfect love and perfect peace,  
and this is SO."**

*These few words will help you to erase the guilt you have carried with you from childhood. You*

*are not born into original sin. You are as perfect as you need to be to follow your spiritual path.*

You now have the inner skills you need to proceed with your development as a witch. Practice using these tools often.

## Chapter 4

### **BASIC RITUAL, PART 1: Casting the Circle**

The witches' Circle is a doorway between the worlds. While it affords some protection from negative influences, its primary function is to act as a sacred space where you can commune with gods and the universal sources of power. The Circle is the transformer that converts the raw energy of the Otherworld so that it can be readily used in the mundane world. You control this transformation. You focus the energy toward a specific task.

In practical terms, the Circle is a band of energy that surrounds your workspace. This energy

field has been measured and photographed. The charge separates you from the physical world and bars intrusion by influences that would hamper your work.

The Circle is a gateway for the passage of power and wisdom from one plane to the other. Unlike the Circle used in ceremonial magic, the witches' Circle enhances union with the Otherworld, while the former isolates the magician from direct contact with the intelligences that inhabit different planes.

There are two basic methods for casting a Circle. One is meant for those operations that must be done quickly or for solitary rites that do not demand a formal setting, like daily meditations and practicing one's skills.

The second method is for sabbats and esbats, or whenever you feel a need for a more formal magical setting.

For either method, use a linear tool to draw the Circle. You may trace a physical circle on the ground around you, or you may inscribe it in the air. Most witches use the athame to cast the Circle, but the wand or your finger are equally effective.

Some witches pick the tool they will use based on the nature of the work to be done. The wand or staff represent fire, while the athame or sword command the element of air in most traditions. Should a rite involve the elements of water or earth, the Circle is typically drawn with a bladed tool, with special attention being given to aspurging or presenting the shield or pentacle to the quarters.

In its abbreviated form, the Circle may be cast by inscribing the air in a clockwise (deosil) direction while saying, "I charge this Circle that it may protect me from all energies positive or negative that may come to do me harm. In the names of (goddess) and (god), so mote it be!" This Circle is useful for simple tasks that require you to focus yourself and where interference from outside sources may prove disruptive to your concentration.

You may expand upon this short version with anything you'd like. Feel free to call to the quarters any Otherworld influences that might be of assistance. This Circle is for your personal use and comfort. Add whatever pleases you.

The more formal Circle takes more time to construct. The specific method depends on the tradition being followed. The instructions given here are drawn from Celtic and British traditions but may be adapted to any school you choose to follow by simply substituting the names and phrasing of that tradition for those in the text.

***1) Prepare your altar, making sure that everything you will need for the work you are performing is in place. For complicated rituals, use a written checklist. Nothing ruins the mood like having to break Circle to search for a lighter.***

***2) Condition the space that will contain your Circle in keeping with the rite. Burn incense conducive to those forces you wish to employ. Decorate your altar with the appropriate colors.***

***4) Prepare yourself with a cleansing bath. Add salt and any herbs that correspond with the nature of your work.***

***5) If you do not practice skyclad, dress in garments that you reserve especially for ritual or in something that makes you feel extremely comfortable.***

***6) Be sure that all the items you intend to use have been consecrated in the past or, in the case of new tools, be prepared to dedicate them to the rite. This includes candles, writing implements, parchment, and everything else that you expect to serve you.***

***7) Orient yourself to the quarters by using a compass, the stars, or the sun. Don't let small deviations trouble you. Magical north is much more important to your work than magnetic north.***

***8) Bless and consecrate yourself for the rite. Compose your own charge for this purpose. My personal favorite is the "three monkeys" blessing: "Hear me, O Mighty Ones, bless me that I may hear no evil (cover ears), see no evil (cover eyes), and speak no evil (cover mouth), and be purified in Your sight. In the names of (goddess) and (god), so mote it be!"***

*This should be done kneeling before the Circle in the eastern quarter. When you have finished and feel sufficiently prepared, enter the area where the Circle will be cast by stepping in with your right foot first. When you have finished your rite, you will leave through this same quarter, also right foot first, in keeping with the old saying, "As we enter, so we depart. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again."*

*9) Light the altar candles unless your work contains instructions against doing so. Taking up your incense burner or a lighted candle, cense each quarter, ending with the same quarter that you started with. Some traditions begin in the east, others in the north, while still others favor beginning with the direction whose element corresponds to the type of energy to be used in the rite.*

*10) Return the censer to the altar and take up the cup of water. Aspurge each quarter in the same manner.*

*11) Return the cup to the altar and pick up the athame. immerse its point in the water saying, "I exorcise thee, O creature of water, that thou cast out from thee all the impurities and uncleanness of the spirits of phantasm. In the Names of (goddess) and (god)."*

*12) Place the point of the athame into the container of salt, saying, "Blessings be upon thee, O creature of salt. Let all malignity pass henceforth and let all good enter in. Ever are we mindful that as water purifies the body, so salt purifies the soul. Wherefore do I bless thee in the Names of (goddess) and (god) that thou mayest aid me.*

*13) Transfer three measures of salt to the cup of water and stir it with the athame three times, concentrating on the purifying effect the mixture is having on the blade.*

*14) Beginning at your chosen quarter, inscribe the Circle with your athame moving deosil, picturing a spark of blue light emanating from the point and surrounding as you proceed.*

*15) When you have completed your circumambulation, return to the altar and prepare yourself mentally to invoke the forces at the quarters. You may wish to dedicate yourself to the rite at this time. Use any words that have meaning to you, inviting the gods to watch as you align your body, mind, and spirit with the forces of the Otherworld.*

*16) Take your athame to the first quarter and salute. There are many formulas for this procedure, but they all involve showing respect for the forces you are about to invoke and end with the athame pointed toward the quarter.*

*17) Invoke the forces of the quarter. You may call a specific entity or the entire array of beings and energies associated with that element. Remember that you are issuing an invitation, not a command.*

*A common form of invocation is:*

**"Here ye O Mighty Ones,  
Dread Lords of the Watchtowers to the (cardinal point),  
I, (your Craft name) do summon you,  
And invite your presence  
At this my Rite (Sabbat, Esbat et al.),  
That my rites be witnessed  
And my Circle be blessed."**

Follow this invocation by inscribing a fiery pentacle in the color representing the quarter, starting at the uppermost point and descending to the right. Follow the diagram in the appendix.

Make your motions grandiose, expressing your commitment to the work and your inner strength to those you are inviting to attend.

End your invocation with a clap of the hands or by ringing a bell, signifying that you KNOW that your invitation has been accepted.

Repeat this procedure at each quarter, travelling deosil. Finish where you started with a final salute and return to the altar. Say, "All ye I have summoned are welcome."

*Your Circle is now complete, and you may begin the rite.*

## Closing the Circle

To close the Circle, stand at the altar, facing the first cardinal point and say;

**"Here ye, O mighty ones,  
I thank you for your presence at my Circle,  
And ere ye depart to your lovely realms,  
I bid ye hale and farewell."**

Facing each of the quarters in turn, draw a banishing pentagram in the air with your athame, starting at the lower left hand point and moving toward the uppermost point. Follow the diagram in the appendix.

End with a final salute to the first quarter, saying;

**"Hail and farewell, all."**

Pointing your athame toward the first cardinal point, move *widdershins* (counterclockwise) about the Circle, visualizing the blue energy field that has surrounded you being withdrawn into the athame or simply winking out.

When you have again arrived at the first quarter, raise your athame above your head and repeat;

**"The Circle is open,  
But never broken.  
Merry meet, merry part,  
And merry meet again!"**

**Exit the Circle where you entered, stepping out with right foot, as you entered.**

Your Circle is a matter of personal preference. You should find some combination of these two methods to your liking. Each Branch of Wicca has its own method of casting a Circle. The elements that they have in common are recognition of the four cardinal points and the belief that the Circle acts as a bridge between levels of existence. As you progress in the Craft, you will replace the words and ways of others with your own. Until that time, borrow freely from every available source that suits you.

The Circle should make you feel that you are in a safe place. Your emotional response should be similar to what you felt like as a child when you had found the perfect hiding place to escape from the world of parents and pestering siblings.

The sanctuary of the Circle will shut out distractions. While you should cast the Circle somewhere you will not be disturbed, such surroundings are not always available. You should learn to achieve peace of mind under the most distracting circumstances and be capable of casting a Circle

anywhere. Practice by meditating with the television on or, if you live in a city, open a window and let traffic noise in.

Keep practicing until you can reach alpha and cast a Circle on the astral plane. This capability will prove quite useful when an emergency arises that requires your immediate attention or when you are in a hostile environment.

Use the short form for inscribing such Circles. If time allows, you may wish to call to the quarters or evoke a helpful entity. Otherwise, find a location where you will not be directly addressed and proceed with your work.

As a witch, you must learn to function magically in the mundane world. You will find yourself pressed into immediate action and must prepare for these occasions diligently. Learn to ignore the confusion around you and work your magic.

Laurie Cabot recommends establishing an "alpha trigger" that will transport you instantly to the alpha level under any circumstances. This trigger acts like a posthypnotic suggestion planted in your mind during a normal Circle. When you are in Circle and at alpha, order yourself to return to alpha every time you perform a particular voluntary action, like crossing your fingers or folding your hands together so that the fingers interlace. The trigger should be something that will not attract attention.

Once you have used the trigger, picture your astral self casting a Circle, reciting your version of the shortened charge and any chant or calling you deem necessary.

When your work is completed, you may return to the conscious state by undoing the trigger.

Should you feel the need for protection from outside forces that seem deliberately directed at you, or if you are about to enter a hostile environment that threatens your wellbeing, you can add two more points to your Circle and make it a protective sphere.

Once you have cast the Circle, stand at its center and inscribe another Circle, beginning at the spot directly over your head and proceeding along a line through the northern point and returning through the south until you are again pointing at the zenith above your head. As you do this, picture yourself being surrounded by a sphere of blue light that will act as a barrier against all harm.

Unlike the Circle, which is meant to stay in one place, the sphere can accompany you anywhere. This protective shield will repel any effort to assault you spiritually or mentally.

The sphere can prove especially useful when attending family gatherings where dear old Aunt Emma feels compelled to point out the error of your Wiccan ways condemns your soul to Hell. The same holds true for preventing co-workers from subjecting you to assaults founded on envy.

Whenever you feel the need to isolate yourself from the bad influences of those around you, use the sphere.

## **Chapter 5: The Essays: An Introduction**

Since a Book of Shadows is typically written in a format that is too personal for verbatim transcription, I have converted my own important (to *me*, anyway) philosophical insights of the past twenty five years into expository form so that the reader may have the opportunity to study and criticize these ideas intelligently.

The information in these essays is not to be taken as gospel. You are welcome to subscribe to points made in these writings in whole, in part, or not at all.

The conclusions drawn in each of these essays are almost completely the result of working in Circle. All came about by contact with and awareness of the Otherworld and its great teachers.

For those concepts that defy description by the most elegant prose, I have used poetry, language in its most symbolic form. Those of the Otherworld communicate through symbols that have meaning to our unconscious minds. I hope that my poetry helps to bridge the gap between word and symbol sufficiently to aid you in your own Otherworld encounters.

While you will certainly find similarities between these texts and others, please understand that my resources for this material are the many journeys I have made to the Otherworld and the personalities I have encountered there.

### **Essay 1: On the Nature of Diversity, Social and Sexual**

I preface these remarks by explaining that all biological organisms, including the best and the brightest (whales and at least a few humans), owe their inherent characteristics to two things; genotype and phenotype.

Genotype refers to the accumulated genetic information of a species that separates it from other species and into certain categories within the species, such as male and female.

How this information becomes interpreted in the structure and function of the individual life form defines phenotype.

The endless debate between those who believe that certain behavioral traits are inherited like eye color and those who insist that behavioral patterns are due mostly to environmental factors is irrelevant to this essay.

Biologists divide organisms according to genus and species. A genus is defined as a group of organisms that share sufficient elements of genotype to permit reproduction of like individuals. Organisms within a genus whose phenotype have a great many similarities belong to the same species.

Hard as it may be to believe in this era of raging feminism and chauvinistic male posturing, human beings are all one species, *Homo Sapiens*, the hominid that thinks. From a biological point of view,

all other differences involving sex, race, and any other characteristics are meaningless.

The diversity among members of the same species results from natural selection; survival of the fit within a given environment. The more diverse a species is, the more likely it is to propagate over a wide range of environmental conditions.

Enough science; now for the rant...

When I first began to explore Wicca, I already had some background in ceremonial magic and Eastern religions. In my search for the roots of the beliefs and philosophies of these traditions and those of the Judeo-Christian tenets that were my natural heritage, I came upon a doctrine that preceded all of these by thousands of years and remained alive today, a philosophy that held the Earth in high regard, not as an enemy to be conquered and controlled, but as a nurturer to be cherished.

This prehistoric religion recognized the unity of all creation. Early humans saw their counterparts in nature and drew strength through their ability to systematize their surroundings to provide a satisfactory environment for propagation of the species. If these people had a creation myth comparable to Genesis, it would undoubtedly acknowledge that all we know came to be through natural laws as provided by the All, that indescribable universal power that came before differentiation of the physical universe and through whom all things are possible.

That these ancient tribes esteemed the feminine aspects of nature reflects their simple observation of where new humans (and everything else) came from. Man may provide the energy for procreation, but woman carried the seed. The Sun pours its energy on the leaves of a tree and makes it grow, but without the tree to bear the seeds of the next generation, there will be no more trees, and the Sun will shine on a barren landscape.

The female represented all tangible things, including the Earth herself. The bodily form of the human male was no exception. While his procreative energy made him certainly masculine, his physical being he owed to the female who carried him in her womb. Therefore, ancient societies were often matriarchies owing to the importance of the female in continuing the species.

The Sun was male, providing heat and light. The Moon was female, receiving that light and projecting it to drive away the dark of night. Fire was decidedly masculine, consuming that which the feminine Earth brought forth.

The forces of nature were male, but their culmination resulted from the influence of Mother Earth. Hurricanes were female, while the heat and wind that stirred them were the result of the male forces acting on the Great Mother.

We have not escaped this kind of thinking despite centuries of patriarchy. Hurricanes (until recently) take feminine names. Cars, boats, and virtually any machinery that seems to have a personality all its own are called "she", while stylized drawings of the Sun or the blustery north wind have male faces.

The current trend in Wicca leans decidedly toward the feminine side of the Craft. To the general public, the word "witch" connotes a female endowed with magical powers. Males were sorcerers or warlocks, the latter a Scottish term of negative connotation.

The "New Age" brought with it a tendency toward political correctness sometimes at the expense of truth. Recent Wiccan writings dwell on the Craft's link with feminism. Some authors downplay the masculine role to the point that the God is ignored almost completely, all power residing in the Goddess. Those sources that acknowledge the God depict the male witch as a very "nineties" sort of person who is in touch with his feminine side; a gentle, caring man dedicated to pacifism and nurturing, who must view himself as subordinate and inferior to the female witch. To act his part, he must abhor violence and abandon all warlike tendencies, accepting that his spiritual advancement depends on his ability to exorcise from his personality all that passes for traditional male behavior.

The true male witch is now and always has been a warrior and hunter. While he may emulate certain feminine characteristics that would allow him to assume the place of nurturer should it be necessary, and while he must value peace and nonviolence as traits that insure long term survival of the species, he should not be expected to refrain from violence that protects his kith and kin, nor should he be forbidden to kill so that his family can eat.

Any loss of life brings regret, as do acts of violence, especially toward one's own kind. Native lore demands that the hunter give thanks and render apologies to prey as a sign of respect for the great sacrifice that animal has made so that the hunter and his family may survive.

As for warfare, substantial anthropological evidence exists indicating that battles between primitive tribes seldom involved fights to the death except when survival depended on acquisition of

essential resources through the expulsion of the opposition.

Warfare consisted of a show of force by each side accompanied by much posturing and spear rattling, but very little real combat, particularly among groups closely associated by blood or geography. Those conflicts where much killing occurred usually involved usurpation of territory by tribes not native to a given region. Strange customs and appearance stirred fear and hatred to a homicidal level, much as they do now!

Among ancient cultures, there were many warriors but few soldiers. Warriors fight to survive and to maintain the integrity of the family unit. A warrior recognizes the need for nurturing and the need for protection through force of arms. He does not do battle for the interest of people that are not part of his immediate group or clan, nor will he take up arms to defend a philosophy dictated by some remote ruling class. Soldiers fight because they are told to do so; warriors are motivated from within.

A warrior obeys his Spirit. A soldier often kills in spite of his.

Each sex can assume the part of the other when circumstance deem it necessary for survival. Ancient tales resound with the feats of female warriors, especially among the Celts, who considered women to be the complete equal of the male in battle. Likewise, there are stories of men bringing prosperity to all through their nurturing bond with the land. The High Kings of ancient Ireland were measured by Nature itself. Bounty resulted from the beneficence of the king, who must be free of physical or mental defects. Unnecessary conflicts, gratuitous violence, and dishonorable dealings meant a poor harvest and desolation. Treachery and cowardice robbed the richness from the land itself.

Human history teaches that we must be capable of assuming any part that circumstance makes necessary to insure survival and propagation of the species. However, we must recognize that males and females differ in more ways than simple reproductive anatomy and that these traits were molded by natural selection. On the evolutionary scale, human intelligence is a quite recent development. We presume much when we attempt to reason away behavior forged by the need to survive as a life form.

People are human first and male or female second. Men may not give milk, but they know enough to take a foundling infant to someone who does. Females may not possess the physical strength of their male counterpart, but they can defend their children with a ferocity that compensates for that deficiency quite adequately.

Wicca, as the most ancient of religions, finds strength through human diversity, sexual and otherwise. The greatest test of a witch is accepting fully one's self while acknowledging the talents of others. Wicca has no hierarchy beyond that which exists in individual covens; no central authority to issue dogma; no infallible source of wisdom endowed by the gods. No Bible dictated from on high.

The High Priest and Priestess of a coven draw their power from experience and teach all freely and without reservation. Their position is that of servitude to the other coven members who may require the assistance of a more practiced hand in their spellwork and spiritual development.

Males and females share an equal responsibility in Wicca toward other witches and humanity in general. That each thoroughly learns the role of the other fosters respect for both sexes.

Through the Circle of the Year, certain times are tied to the masculine and an equal number are attributed to the feminine. High Priest and High Priestess divide leadership, with the male typically ruling over the late Autumn and Winter, those being the times when survival depended on the hunt and the ability to secure and maintain suitable shelter in the face of competition from other animals and other tribes.

The Priestess held sway over the Spring, through Summer, and into the first harvest, when the Earth could be coaxed to give up Her bounty to those willing to sow, tend and reap, and keep herds.

To prosper as a species, humans needed both the hunter and the farmer, the natural motility of man and the domestic talents of woman. The sexes are indeed equal in their contribution to human success.

Nature does not recognize as true either the contrived superiority of the male or the kind of feminism that brands all male behavior ( particularly the more violent urges) as antisocial and inferior. We are here because of our diverse characteristics, not in spite of them.

The truth of this view does not demean those witches who choose to concentrate on one side or the other of this essential duality. The choice of a meaningful spiritual path in Wicca or any other philosophy is absolutely personal. The tenets of Wicca require solely that your selection harm no one.

Witches may debate their personal views as an entertainment, but they are not evangelical. Diversity exists among members of the same coven. The individual talents and beliefs of each member increase the power of the group in addition to providing fuel for philosophical discussions ( read "bull sessions") lasting far into the night.

Wicca is an ancient religion in resurgence. As its popularity increases, so do attempts to codify its beliefs, an indeed Herculean task, considering that some form of Wicca exists in every culture and epoch of humanity.

Christians and Buddhists have many sects, each claiming to possess the genuine Truth of the faith, an argument sometimes settled in blood. Imagine the problems in trying to unify the practices and beliefs of a religion that by its very nature endows individual adherents with absolute control over their own spiritual progress.

Modern witches must accept responsibility for their own spiritual maturation without regard for those who would proclaim themselves to be keepers of the Grail and descendant from the "only true Wicca". Beware those who would assume authority over your spiritual growth at the expense of inner truth.

To the novice, study exhaustively. If you have chosen a tradition that seems to suit you, immerse yourself in it, but remember that Wicca is an eclectic philosophy. Take what's true from wherever you find it, and leave the fancy fiction alone. You will KNOW the difference.

**Should you come upon one who claims power,  
A keeper of the Eternal Truth,  
Measure the lessons he teaches,  
Against your own precious roots.**

**Beware ye! O Seeker,  
Of prophets so bold.  
If their tales were the Truth,  
You'd not need to be told!**

**If I am of iron and you are of wood,  
Which one would do this gate the most good?  
I am much stronger, or so it is said,  
But salt and some water will leave me quite dead.**

**And you, little splinter, laugh in rust's face,  
Just a few termites, and you'd be erased!  
But join us together with bolt and with brace,  
And we, in our difference,  
Will make a strong gate.**

## **Essay II: A Theory of Creation**

Speculation on how the Universe came to be has preoccupied theologians, scientists, and philosophers from the beginning of these disciplines. The very first theoretical discussion ever held between two human beings probably concerned creation and ended in disagreement. Cogitation, meditation, and calculation provide explanations ranging from existence of a divine plan to simple chance. All current theories rely to a lesser or greater degree upon circumstantial evidence or faith.

Scientists peer around each corner for the next, and hopefully, the last piece of the cosmic puzzle, while theologians seek their answers in the distant past. For the philosophers, time stands still while they reason the truth.

For the witch, the answer to this wonderment lies in its usefulness in understanding how the universe works. Any conclusions about the nature of creation must result in a better grasp of the laws governing its structure, thereby illuminating the cause of any given observable effect. Since Wicca owes its sustenance to its practicality, its view of Creation employs a mixture of myth and empiricism that provides a model for universal structure and function that may not explain every detail of the mechanics of creation but does provide a model that enables us to find our place in the overall scheme.

Control implies understanding. Magic is impossible for those who do not comprehend the law of cause and effect, and magic that does not work has no value. The prime responsibility for any witch, ancient or modern, is to study what forces result in certain consequences and to distill these observations into a reliable method for controlling those forces to achieve a desirable outcome.

The limits of power, magical and mundane, are set according to our grasp of the structure and function of the universe. We may postulate the nature of mechanisms that exceed our immediate ability to observe them directly by understanding analogous processes open to our examination. A witch must learn constantly and be willing to abandon conclusions disproved by new evidence without prejudice.

Seek many opinions, draw swift conclusions, but weigh them carefully against the truth as dictated by the facts of the matter.

That said, I will now strut out my own pet theory about creation, and how our origin may have been viewed by early man, leaving it to the reader to decide whether my words elucidate great truth or merely provide more fertilizer for the fallow fields of nocturnal debate!

My explanation of creation should stir you to ponder the question on your own and develop your own premise for how our universe works. A personal creation myth that improves your grasp of the law of cause and effect will increase your magical abilities considerably. Remember that the myth need only make sense to YOU. Avoid fantasy and include as much practical knowledge as you can, but do not feel bound to uncover the Truth in all its illustrious detail. To prepare a meal, you do not need to know your way around every kitchen, just the one you'll be working in. Only the ingredients and tools remain the same.

While most cultures have a creation myth of one kind or another, the Celts do not. The Celts view time as nonlinear, with the past, present, and future interwoven like the complex knotwork so common in their traditional art. From the Celtic perspective, creation is an ongoing process permeating all planes of existence.

The absence of Celtic dogma explaining how the universe arose allows each person to apply an individual perspective to this mystery without fear of flying in the face of dogma. Since identification of cause and effect for any given phenomenon enhances control over that event, investigative science and magical practice encourage exploration of certain aspects of creation relating to how the various components of the universe interact and what laws govern those interactions.

As a practical matter, knowing the exact mechanism of creation would be unnecessary unless you had in mind duplicating the event on precisely the same scale. Feeling omnipotent lately?

That the Celts recognized no particular plan for creation does not mean that they had no interest in the principles by which the universe functioned. The Celts knew that most great mysteries could be solved in a way useful to human existence by studying the nature of their immediate environment and themselves, and extrapolating those principles to apply to everything in this world and the Otherworld.

The Celtic pantheon subscribes to this microcosmic world view. The Celts recognized that people were neither omnipotent nor omniscient. Therefore, their deities may be archetypal of human behavior, but they are not all powerful and often know little about matters not directly pertaining to them. In fact, it is said that the gods' favor may be one through bringing them up to date on current events in the mundane world.

Wicca recognizes that creation involves a basic duality. The Goddess and the God personify

these forces, ascribing the active principles to the male personality and the receptive, passive forces to the female. This convention likened the birth of the universe to the birth of a human child. Some aspects of human reproduction were observable, while some were not. The ancients discovered quite early that knowing every detail of pregnancy meant little to the production of more humans. Thus, the universe need not lay bare all of its secrets for humans to live within its laws.

Early cultures held centrist beliefs about most things, believing that the key to understanding the elements of their world lay in self-knowledge. By learning about human nature, the structure and function of the entire universe and all of its parts could be discovered by inference. The Hermetic principle of "as above, so below" was in use long before Hermes documented it.

Do not make the error of assuming that prehistoric man lacked intelligence. In fact, the need to cope with environmental pressures without the grand technology of our modern age definitely would have selected against survival of the stupid. Staying alive long enough to reproduce required sharp powers of observation and constant learning. Nature forgives few mistakes, and the penalty for most infractions is death.

While Wicca had no practical use for knowing the exact means by which the Universe began, the nature of the forces involved came under intense study. The earliest witches subscribed to the modern scientists' creed that thorough investigation and experimentation resulted in understanding, and that all that stood between a mystery and a known fact was the application of the scientific principles to each individual step of the process at hand until every cause and effect involved in the final outcome was known and categorized.

Unlike the scientist who may spend a lifetime quantifying a single step in a much larger process in an attempt to understand the whole, the witch focused efforts on grasping the whole first and the intricacies involved last. Bound to the need to describe findings in a common language recognized by all others researching similar puzzles, the scientist relies on logic and mathematics. The witch used these tools as well, but also employed intuition and guidance, considering these equally valid.

To the witch, practical knowledge meant grasping a subject with all the faculties, not just the intellect. The linearity of time hindered full understanding by limiting the investigative process to the present. The future could not be known, nor could the past with any great accuracy. Under such a system, all truth is partial and momentary.

By using intuition and travel to the planes beyond the mundane, the witch gathered information beyond the empirical and temporary, striking at the real, timeless Truth of the matter. This type of knowledge proved immediately useful to primitive cultures.

The witch did not limit study to natural events. Human behavior came under intense scrutiny. The very first leaders depended for their authority upon a deep understanding of human psychology. It is hardly coincidental that the bulk of knowledge passed on from primitive cultures to the modern age involves the inner workings of the human mind.

Inspiring group activities like hunting expeditions or tribal migration to unknown territory required qualities of leadership that would make present day evangelists and football coaches pale by comparison. To express such talent necessitated knowing the foundation of the psyche, not just a compilation of temporal facts and figures. Pollsters certainly had no place in Paleolithic society.

In summary, the scientist cannot possess complete knowledge of natural events without proof positive concerning the forces that produced the Universe, yet such incomplete knowledge finds expression in our technological world in the form of magnificent tools and toys. Such technology provides an immediate solution to survival by isolating us from Nature, a strategy whose flaws are the topic of headlines and doomsayers.

The cave man brought suddenly into the present is a popular theme of science fiction. These stories invariably dwell on the culture shock such a creature would experience viewing our many fine technological accomplishments, regarding us as virtual magicians, if not gods.

Consider that early man was not this idiot of fiction, but a reasoning human being who understood the importance of living in harmony with Nature, not in spite of it. There is a distinct possibility that he would see us not as gods, but as fools. Our technology has made us idiot savants, capable of incredible feats within narrow parameters, but unable to function beyond those bounds. Remove our crutch, and we fall.

Continuing the simile, we share the talents and failings of Dustin Hoffman's character in "Rain Man". We are brilliant and confident as long as our universe conforms to our particular linear concepts of

time and space. Any other way of viewing its structure and function makes us nervous to the point of intellectual paralysis.

Ancient man recognized these limitations as a product of his ability to perceive and process sensory information. The development of magic and myth as a means of explaining and dealing with the true nature of the universe indicates strongly that man knew his place in the natural order and did not assume to hold dominion over the universe.

The oldest myths and legends support the idea that primitive societies considered themselves a part of Creation, not in charge of it. The gods, though entreated in every conceivable fashion, had minds of their own, and the universe was their domain to manipulate as they saw fit, not a divine gift to the human species that they might become its despots. If man was to survive, he had to learn that Nature behaved according to a set of laws that did not pass away with time, but remained in effect through each epoch as though not a second had gone by since the dawn of the Universe.

While man saw time as lineal, the gods obviously did not. Much as in sports, the players changed, but the rules of the game remained the same, and the clock keeping time had relevance only to a single game in a single location.

Yet even these gods had limits. The Celts endowed their deities with human qualities, including the best and worst of human nature, magnified, naturally, by their deific status. The power of the gods came not from their perfection, but from their ability to think and act without regard to lineal time.

These gods did not create the Universe. They came into being with it. Their powers arose from the ability to function outside the parameters of time and space that limited man. They were not considered omnipotent, nor were they seen to be out of man's reach or completely beyond human control.

If you have ever been "owned" by a pet, you have an idea of why man thought it possible to direct deific force once a means of harnessing the power of these gods could be discerned. Prayer, spellcasting, and ritual became man's endearing meow for a bit more cream in the saucer.

The traits of omnipotence and omniscience man withheld for the living body of Creation itself, an Almighty that exceeded his conceptual grasp as he did that of the earthworm, an entity so far removed from his observable existence that imprecation seemed ridiculous, much the way a newly hired mailroom clerk for a giant corporation would assess his chances for a closed door meeting with the chairman of the board during his first week at work.

Early man did not feel in the least slighted. After all, this Almighty had populated Creation with all manner of forces that man could learn to use to accomplish virtually anything he desired. All he need do was practice and pay attention to the world around him.

The key word in working magick within the realm of Creation is "force". What, in prehistoric culture, may appear to be polytheism to the learned and pagan idolatry to the pious was in fact merely a convenience of classification. Surviving pagan lore indicates that the various deities represented separate aspects of a single being existing on a higher plane than humans.

A podiatrist and a brain surgeon are both doctors. Which one is most likely to remove a wart from your toe (and charge the least for it)?

Early cultures depended for survival on their ability to learn as much practical information as possible about their environment. While we may hold leisurely discussions couched in theoretical terms and seasoned with hypotheses that have no consequence toward our continued existence, such luxury had no place in the lives of our ancestors.

Technology allows us to skim through life oblivious to most of the forces of nature. The breadth of our knowledge has certainly increased, especially with the advent of the industrial age, but much of that knowledge would prove useless were we to be transported back in time more than a few hundred years. For the great bulk of human existence, industry and technology as we know them provided no sanctuary against the trials of nature.

The first humans had to gather information rapidly and regularly to keep pace with Mother Nature. Group discussions were long on facts and short on speculation. Remaining alive required cogent, concise analysis of data and accurate implementation of resulting plans.

As would any good scientific community, the first peoples sought to categorize everything around them into two basic groups; that which could not be controlled and those things that could be made to respond to some manmade force or action. Man recognized that having at least some control over his surroundings enhanced chances for survival and made every effort to find the means for moving as many

items as possible from the first classification to the second, adopting those methods that proved efficacious and swiftly discarding those that did not.

Every feature of the environment fell into one of these two groups, including the stars, the moon, and the earth itself. Constant study indicated that those forces that could not be controlled produced far less negative influence on overall survival if their behavior could be predicted.

Thus, the first wise ones became fluent in the language of nature. Like a skilled detective, the witch sought clues everywhere that would aid the prediction of natural events that could impact human efforts to survive. By studying the movement and position of heavenly bodies, it was possible to predict the seasons. Watching animals scurrying to gather food provided an indication of the coming Winter's severity.

All these observations led to one conclusion; that while man may perceive time as lineal, the forces and laws of Nature were definitely cyclic. The seasons and stars followed a circular path, always returning to their starting points.

Early man inferred from this that life itself must follow the same map; that death was not an absolute end of existence but merely a point on the circle of life. New life would follow death as surely as Spring does Winter.

Through observation and intuitive extrapolation, the first witches learned the basic truth of universal structure and applied it to humanity. How the Universe began became an intellectual puzzle for idle minds. How the whole thing worked proved far more important.

The Druids' reverence for trees makes perfect sense, since trees were easily the oldest observable living things, virtually immortal barring destruction by calamity or disease. The oak and ash stood as living proof that life did not end, and that apparent death was illusory.

While modern Wicca may include many divergent schools, the celebration of the Wheel of the Year pervades every tradition. All ancient teaching within Wicca took the form of symbols, and the circle is among the earliest.

From the Wiccan viewpoint, knowing the exact moment and mechanism of creation is insignificant compared to understanding the timeless laws and principles that govern the Universe.

Explanations that seek to assign creation to a specific time, place, and series of events err by assuming that all structure and function within the Universe obeys our sense of linearity.

To fully grasp the Universe and work magic within it, one must know the limitations of human sensory perception and not be deceived into believing that this perception represents the true nature of the Universe.

You may agree or disagree with this explanation of the origin of things, but retain the axiom that the Universe exists according to its own nature and not to any notion that you may ascribe to it.

## Essay III: Myth and Meaning

Myths are stories that define and explain human nature. They are lessons in fundamental psychology couched in fables and heroic tales, morality plays that attribute the ascension or fall of the various players to their deeds or misdeeds, personality traits, and the whim of the gods.

Variations of text and characters exist along cultural lines, especially concerning the nature of the gods, but the lessons remain remarkably consistent. In general, character weaknesses are punished, and strengths are rewarded, with the gods holding dual roles as participants and judges. The story lines frequently read like a guidebook to a maze, with the hero coming upon a new mystery at every turn.

The hero must overcome all manner of difficulties, from those cast by Fate into any life to the enormous blockades erected by one angry deity or another. Virtue usually triumphs, but may take many forms, from battlefield bravery to supplication before a divine power, and can demand heroic sacrifice of life and limb that humanity may escape some catastrophe.

In myth, courage, honesty, and true love overcome titanic odds (and sometimes Titans themselves), the hero living happily ever after. Juxtaposed to this eternal bliss are the tragedies that befall basically good people who demonstrate a single flaw that dooms them to a tearful fate.

Other myths follow the trials of the main character as he or she attempts to gain redemption for some slight against the gods, who are frequently portrayed as jealous of their fellows and mankind alike. The lesson here is that the reason behind some tribulations may lie beyond human comprehension or correction, and, though an exemplary life may not guarantee happiness, tragic occurrences should not discourage one's attempt to meet life's challenges in a forthright way, for redemption may come in many forms and in surprising ways.

Similar to the redemption myths are those involving rites of passage, where a neophyte must work through a maze replete with all sorts of challenges, with the last and most difficult being a test of the spirit from which the successful traveler will emerge cleansed of all foolish notions and possessing a new inner strength and wisdom.

These myths parallel initiation rituals of the mystery religions, including Wicca, and rites of passage in many cultures.

It has been said that all myths are one myth. The function of myth is to educate, not just to entertain. In the past, the storytellers who related the myths to the common people were expected to remember every detail of a culture's history and traditions and to recite that knowledge perfectly without the need for a written record. The Druids expected their bards to commit to memory voluminous quantities of poems, stories, myths, and songs without the aid of any formal documentation at all.

Other cultures considered it sacrilege to write down any portion of the myths and practices surrounding their mystery religions.

Civilizations such as that in Egypt recognized the value of maintaining a written record of their traditions still relied on storytellers' ancient tales for much of their background material.

Myths are meant to communicate value systems across cultural lines through the use of universally recognized symbolism. Courage is courage, fear is fear, and grief is grief, whether the tale is Greek, Norse, or Celtic.

The myths disseminated to the populus via oral tradition explained the nature of the human condition and taught ways of dealing with such problems whether through emulating the action of a particular hero or by being patient in the face of life's troubles, secure in the knowledge that no matter how bad a situation may seem, someone somewhere had experienced and survived just such a trial by exhibiting the virtues elucidated by the myths. More than providing the company that misery so dearly loves, the characters portrayed by the myths demonstrated by example that no situation was completely hopeless; the stories themselves acting as recipes for success.

Myths also provide clues for the working of magic. Almost without exception, myths have a magical component. Sometimes the gods choose to endow the hero with magical powers of one kind or another, usually through the use of a talisman or arcane incantation. These gifts of magic, whether temporary or permanent, are keys to success, the moral being that the listener may avail himself of those same magical tools to solve problems in his own life.

A common thread among tragic tales and those of great daring and triumph is that spiritual growth is always good regardless of the trials that must be endured to achieve it.

Initiation into mystery cults conferred upon the neophyte access to higher realms where one could learn magic through the teaching of various spirit guides. The more experienced the supplicant became, the greater the power that came into reach.

Wicca is certainly a mystery religion, and its rites of initiation across its many traditions include instruction to the seeker to take ultimate responsibility for spiritual development and learning the ways of the gods and magic. Fellow witches will happily assist the newborn Wiccan with the details of ritual composition and the ground rules for spellwork and pathwork, the burden of success lies with the initiate.

As myth reflects universal aspects of human existence known instinctively by all, so do magic and ritual have their roots in the inner workings of the human spirit. A caution common to initiatory rites states that what the seeker cannot find within will never be found without.

The spiritual foundation necessary to working magic and understanding arcane wisdom exists in all of us. As we are one with the Universe and, thereby, with the Universal Mind, the greatest secrets will not be found in the words of others, but in our selves. We are the repository of all knowledge and wisdom. We need only find the key.

Unlike a standard key that fits but one lock, the key to inner enlightenment is a skeleton key that fits but one hand. The great personal truth that unlocks our spirit may prove useless to another. Do not be surprised that your most eloquent presentation of what you have learned on a spiritual level is met with doubtful stares and even outright derision.

Remember that inner truth is in the mind of the beholder.

Myth and ritual show the way to the inner door by touching upon feelings held by all. Spirit guides and the great teachers illuminate the lock. It is up to each of us to fashion the right key.

To develop a greater appreciation for myth, try writing one with yourself as the main character. The story can be based on your own true life experiences or may be completely fanciful, filled with wishes and dreams.

In either case, try to learn from the myth as you compose it. Spend some time contemplating those revelations that are bound to arise in such an exercise. Examine your real or imagined actions in each situation. Do not criticize yourself, but do learn from your mistakes. Try to determine causal relationships and how those could have been altered to produce different results.

This exercise resembles playing a fantasy role-playing game with one important exception. You are both player and master of the game. If you have placed yourself in an imaginary story, you can use dice or a coin flip to decide which paths you take in the myth. As you become more adept at this exercise, you can invite a friend to act as master of the game, forcing you to confront situations in the same manner as you would in any role-playing game or, for that matter, real life. (Please note that it is important that any friend you invite to act as master be totally aware of the purpose of the "game" so as not to get carried away with the fantasy adventure aspect at the expense of learning basic truths about yourself and your behavior in various situations.)

Myths, whether your own or those of ancient origin, serve as proving grounds for your emotional stability in the face of stress. The source of this stress may manifest as tremendous grief over a mountain of sorrows or as a huge, toothsome beast hungering for your blood. Death, despair, courage, and triumph fuel the stories. You must decide how you **PERSONALLY** would react and what road you would take to ultimately victory.

Interacting with myth is to magic and ritual what military basic training is to performance in combat. While no one can be absolutely sure of their reactions to any stressful situation, practice certainly helps.

Working magic requires concentration under adverse conditions. If everything were under control in your life, the chances are that you would have no need to resort to magic to affect change. The state of affairs where you will seek magic's aid will typically be topsy turvey with emotions ranging from acute depression to extreme rage, and this assumes that you are not directly involved in the matter you are attempting to manipulate. When the battle becomes more personal, the barriers opposing your will and concentration can prove formidable indeed.

To succeed in magic, *practice, pretend, and prepare!* Myth is a wonderful tool. Use it.

## Essay IV: The Gods

The gods of Wicca are not statues, nor do they take the form of the stylized pantheon of the Greeks and Romans. They bear many names and hold sway over the various components of nature, yet they are but one god, parts of a single entity beyond the comprehension of human mental processes.

We can no more determine the true nature of that entity than cats can decipher calculus. We simply do not have the tools necessary to describe such a force. However, we can and do acknowledge that this Supreme Being does exist, for the evidence is all around us.

Speculation about whether this being allows the Universe to follow its own path within the laws that define its existence or acts as a master puppeteer, intent on controlling the destiny of each monad within the macrocosm, has fueled theological and philosophical debate for centuries.

The issue will not be resolved here.

Faith is a matter of individual belief. No one has the right to dictate how another must view his personal god.

General Wiccan interest in these matters begins and ends with whatever practical advantages humanity can realize from learning about the nature of the All. The latter term, borrowed from Hermetic philosophy, refers to any personal concept of universal supremacy you wish to entertain, as long as you recognize that the term excludes *NOTHING*.

To paraphrase the Bible, ***with the All, all things are possible***. That means both the good and the bad, the tragic and the comic, the catastrophic and the ecstatic.

Wiccans have no churches. To a witch, the idea of building a house for a supreme being would indicate that the deity existed apart from the witch and could be contained in such a structure, rather than inhabiting *all things*, from the rocks in a river bed to every kind of living creature, including man.

Since the All can be found everywhere, ***witches hold all of creation in reverence***.

Most people are aware of the respect ancient hunters gave to their prey, apologizing for killing it and explaining to its spirit the need for its sacrifice that the hunter and his family and tribe might survive.

Witches extend this recognition of the life force beyond animate objects.

To the witch, everything is "alive" to some greater or lesser degree, and, therefore, worthy of respect.

Hermetic philosophy teaches that all things vibrate and that the observable universe is composed, not of matter and energy, but of a single plasma whose perceived forms result its frequency and amplitude of vibration. This view coincides with the modern science's theory of quantum physics and with the ancient adage "as above, so below".

One axiom of magic states that to have power over a given entity, one must learn its name. This magical name is not an arbitrary moniker applied for the convenience of conversation, but reflects the true nature of the thing in question. To learn a magical name, one must become the object and experience life from its viewpoint.

***You must learn the name the object calls ITSELF!***

For example, suppose you encounter your neighbor's dog during your morning jog and wish it to tag along with you. Calling the animal "dog" will not produce the desired result, although that name certainly defines the beast. Calling the dog by its given name, Rover or Spot or whatever, will prove much more effective at securing you a partner for your jaunt.

Note that the dog's name has been given it by a human. Being the wonderfully bright creatures that we are, we tend to choose pet names that reflect the nature of the pet.

Seldom, except to exhibit our sarcastic wit, will we call a pet by some name that does not fit its perceived personality. There are very few black dogs called "Snowball".

Magical names come from many sources, including psychic contact with the object in mind and through revelations during Otherworld travels and meditation. However, most names result from our observation of traits exhibited by a particular entity.

The ancient gods possess names derived from human contact with those deities. Simply put, humans named their gods.

Names allowed man to categorize his gods based on their authority over particular aspects of creation. Rituals were recipes for contacting the appropriate deity to the work at hand. One did not petition a solar deity for rain nor a sea god for a good corn crop.

Ritual work became god-specific. One would bedeck the working area with decorations corresponding to the tastes and affinities of the particular entity being solicited for help. Whether these devices had an effect on beings living on a different plane was speculative. However, there was no question that stimuli matching the work profoundly influenced the seeker by producing an excellent atmosphere for contacting the entity in question.

The gods became tools for survival. The ancients recognized that these gods were mere fragments of the All. Propitiation of the All seemed inappropriate, like our taking a traffic ticket to the supreme court. It seemed much more reasonable to request the aid of that small portion of the All that held responsibility for that facet of existence one hoped to influence.

Judeo-Christian belief to the contrary, the ancients did not worship idols. Only those of great ignorance believed idols to possess power.

Statues representing the gods held no special power. These representations made visualization easier for the common man and witches alike. The notion that the representation itself possessed the ability to act on nature would be laughable.

Respect for such objects arose from a recognition of the craft that went into making an image of a god. The artists and craftsmen who made representations of the gods did so with reverence, hoping through their efforts, to express love and to honor the actual deity, not to capture the godforce in a piece of stone.

Even the great natural phenomenon's like volcanoes and great trees expressed the characteristics of the gods. They were not thought to harbor the gods, nor were they themselves deified, except by the ignorant.

It is written that a witch best loves the gods by mastering. To the Wiccans, both ancient and modern, the gods, the angels, and all of the various inhabitants of the nether planes exist for our use. They are not so far removed from our version of existence that we cannot request their help. Not only will they listen to our imprecations, they also care dearly for us and the plane upon which we live.

These entities reward us by assisting us in our troubles and punishing us when we damage our world and scar the Great Mother. They do not seek worship, nor would any witch abase her/himself before them. They respect those who take responsibility for their own actions and accept the obligations rendered

through the actions of others of our species.

To the gods, we are one tribe. The ravagers of the environment are our responsibility. We may choose to punish these imbeciles or repair the damage they do. Either way, we must accept the debt they incur as a parent does the wayward child.

In the eyes of the gods, we are all High Kings. As we prosper by joining with the land, so will the land (and all of creation) prosper with us.

The gods have no sympathy for hermits who choose to ignore the rest of humanity and divorce themselves from the world's troubles. Ascetics certainly have a place, but they remain ultimately members of the human tribe.

Witches approach the gods as equals worthy of honor and respect. Such lofty status must be earned and demonstrated every day in all the witch undertakes.

Those true to their responsibilities will find the gods friendly and willing to help. While the least of the gods possesses more power than the most exalted witch, the gods honor character, not preternatural potency. They understand that you live on a plane different from their own, where godlike power would be inappropriate. It is as though a track star were to meet a great author bound to wheelchair.

The author's inability to compete in a track meet would not diminish your respect for him one bit.

The gods exist because we need them. Without them to bridge the distance between us and the All, we would be cut off from any contact with the divine creative force. No other being suffers this disassociation from the other levels of existence. Why should we?

Bond with the gods and work with them daily. Learn to recognize their influence on your life. You may call them guardian angels, spirit helpers, Faeries, or gods. You may address them through elaborate rituals, quiet meditation, or simple prayer. If you will listen, they will answer.

## **Essay V: The Bible and Wicca: A Brief Commentary**

The Bible is the most popular book in the world. It is the most widely read and the most often quoted text ever written. Yet it remains misunderstood even by its most staunch advocates. Its misinterpretation has been the result of ignorance as much as intent.

The Bible presents a chronicle of human existence from the first days of creation through the final destruction and subsequent resurgence. Its goal is to provide man with a means of living successfully and without strife in this world. Its stories by no means cover every detail of the scientific origins of the Universe, nor do they account for every event in human history. The Bible is not meant as either a scientific treatise or an historical compilation.

The Bible is a philosophical work without parallel. The tales in it are teaching tools. They provide guidance to man in his darkest times. They describe the human condition and, through the words of the prophets, identify the crises that will arise to threaten man's existence.

Its most important teachings direct humanity away from those patterns of life that will prove destructive and toward those that will ensure survival. Whether the Bible is the word of God is for theologians to debate. Suffice to say that it certainly is a dialogue between man and his higher power.

One thing rings true throughout the testaments. The Bible in no way advocates the establishment

of a priestly class as essential intermediaries between God and man. In the Bible, the Almighty never needs an interpreter to express God's wishes. Though individuals like Moses and the prophets have acted as agents for God, they are not selected for their status as priests and rulers of the church that happens to be in power at that particular time. Instead, these individuals seem chosen for their simplicity and their tendency to stand outside of orthodoxy. They teach; they warn; they pass on the word from above, but they do not establish themselves as overlords to whom loyalty and obedience must be given if man is to remain in God's good graces.

The Bible's greatest teacher, Jesus, mentions the establishment of his church through Peter, the rock to serve as its foundation. Jesus himself never advocates the raising of great cathedrals, the tithing of followers for the financial needs of the priest class, or the removal by one single step the grace of God from the common man.

The most important teachers in the Bible seldom taught in temples. They taught outdoors, not unlike the druids, and the witches before them.

The Almighty is everywhere and within everyone. The kingdom is not apart from man or any other part of creation. God is in all things, great and small. To advocate the ruin of any portion of creation without just cause is an affront to God, and it is God who determines what is just under the Laws that define Creation. The Laws of the Almighty are not hidden from man, except by the preaching of those who would bend the Laws to their own intentions.

Man has dominion over the earth. That is, man has a custodial responsibility to the earth. It is up to him to preserve it from harm.

We are alone among species on this planet that routinely accept other species into our lives for their safekeeping. We keep pets, care for houseplants, and create safe havens for animals and plants of all sorts. Even the most cruel of us has a soft spot for some other living thing outside our species. After all, Hitler had a dog!

The story of Noah demonstrates man's duty to the other species living on this planet. Instead of puzzling over its veracity and searching for slivers of wood on obscure mountainsides, man must recognize the responsibility given him by the Almighty.

This planet has a finite life. It will one day become a place that cannot sustain life. We, of all the species on the earth, possess the unique ability to leave it. When this planet is on the verge of becoming a dead rock in space, it will be up to man to build a second ark, one that will carry all of God's creation on this world to another where life can continue.

The same will hold true for the next world and the next, *ad infinitum*, after that.

It is absolutely untenable to think that any capability that man possesses is unintentional; a mistake by God. We alone can move into niches remote from this world. Our intelligence is not a waste, nor is it outside of the Almighty's intent for creation.

A time will come when we will have to leave here and take everything with us. Those among us who insist that "environmentalism" is an evil plan and that the planet is ours to exploit should more carefully read the last book of the Bible that they are so fond of quoting when they profess their hopes for being snatched up in the "rapture" they feel will come at the end of the world. In Revelations, it plainly states that those among us who are truly doomed are those who defile the earth for their own gain.

Since the time of the founding of the first priest class in Israel, the organized church has discouraged belief in angels. The most recent opinion trumpeted from the broadcast channels of the fundamentalist Christians, those who claim to be contact with angels are discoursing not with the agents of the Almighty, but with fallen angels under the direction of Satan.

Not only does the Bible provide numerous stories of angels acting as messengers bringing God's word to man, but it also claims that angels had intimate contact with humans quite often. This contact included, according to the Bible, taking humans as mates and producing offspring.

Angels are beings living on another plane. They do not differ in that respect from the pagan gods. Early man did not deny the existence of a supreme source for Creation. Rather, he saw existence as a continuum, with angels, gods, Faeries and other mythic forms of life being part of that continuum, inhabiting those regions between the Almighty and man, and quite capable of interacting with man after the same manner that man could interact with lower forms of existence than himself.

*(For a complete description of the planes of Universal existence, I recommend reading "The Kybalion" by Three Initiates published by Yogi Press. This short work describes the Hermetic view of the*

*Universe and elucidates the nature of each level within the planes up to and including the Almighty or, as the creative force is called in the text, the All.)*

Without citing every example of how the Bible reaffirms the tenets of Wicca with regard to how man should treat his environment and one another, I caution the Wiccan not to disregard this wonderful book as a source of direction in daily living.

The message of the Old Testament is one of history and the trials that befall us all, regardless of faith. The New Testament explains how love can carry us through these trials and promises better times to come from the open expression of that love.

No commentary on the Bible from a Wiccan point of view would be complete without an assault on the passage in the King James translation that seemingly justifies the killing of witches.

During the time of the translation, the word “witch” was interchangeable with the word “poisoner”, the word that actually appears in the original text.. The translators felt that they made no error by their statement that “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Even today, “witch” and “witchcraft” carry negative connotations reinforced by the popular media.

*(To study the Bible, use a translation that is as close as possible to the original. I recommend the Jerusalem Bible. This rendition is intended for serious students of theology and contains a wealth of footnotes explaining possible errata and potential alternate meanings for difficult passages.)*

There is a tendency among modern Wiccans, particularly those who come from a Judeo-Christian background, to step away from the Bible as a guide to living. I advise strongly against this. The Bible contains great wisdom. A witch, by definition, is a seeker of wisdom. Never disregard any tool that can further that quest.

**Take from every text  
Learn from every source  
Life's lessons are learned by all  
Give an eager ear  
To every great teacher**

## Essay VII: The Essence of Magic

The number that conceals the inner teaching of the Circle is seven. The seven points of the Circle actually describe a sphere, which is the true construct of the Circle. These seven points are the four Quarters, the etheric Center, and its zenith and foundation rooted in the firmament. Each point is dual in nature and possesses a unity that is the point in and of itself; that is, its true nature within the framework of the All from which all attributes arose.

From this unity the characteristics of each point are manifested according to the principle of polarity. These divisions are six in number, three to each pole along the plane of existence for each element.

In the center of the Circle is the Ethereal World; at the zenith, the realm of the Sky Father, the Upperworld, the Spirit; at the other pole, the Earth Mother, the Underworld, the Mind. In the very center is man, the microcosm; the assemblage of all these things in one organism.

Man is composed of the Elements, their Otherworld natures, Spirit, and Mind. (While it is true division may of itself act as a central point for further subdivision, such is the food for individual meditation and consideration that may change depending on presiding conditions. The purpose of this essay is not an exhaustive explanation of the Universe but rather the nature of the Circle as it functions as a tool of Magick.)

Each Quarter has its constructive and destructive aspects, as do the other three points. The working of magic demands thorough understanding of these aspects and how they may be used as tools to accomplish the desired work, for they do not exist in and of themselves but are parts of the greater whole, that which is the entire creation through the Law as dictated by the All.

This understanding comes to each in his own way. Some find it through contemplation, others through revelation. Some learn from the microcosm, others from tutelage from the Otherworld and its multitude. *Truth remains Truth.*

No matter the source, this knowledge is not for keeping, but for sharing; not necessarily through teaching but through actions that bring this Truth into manifestation in the mundane world. It is the obligation of the enlightened to use Law against law and Light against dark that all may find the peace that comes from heeding the Word of the Almighty.

The Circle is the gateway between the worlds; a rift crossing all that exists. The gods find in it a place where they may communicate directly with their spawn, man and his cognitive world. It is a haven for all the beings that lie beyond our limited senses.

It is imperative that the witch make all due effort to consecrate the Circle with the intent of making it a place absolutely safe from threats and intrusions from the mundane plane so that the physical senses can relax from their constant vigilance so necessary to protect one from danger on the physical plane. In the Circle, the witch must feel secure, readying herself for communion with the Truth and its messengers.

In the North is the foundation. Its nature within the All is immutability. Its positive aspects are steadfastness, firmness, and the All made manifest in form. Its negative aspects are stubbornness, inflexibility, and form as it exists as fuel for decay and destruction.

From its positive nature comes the root for Will, the base upon which the Self stands to know the gods, magic, and creation in all its glory without fear of falling beyond the mind's ability to understand these things into madness.

In its negative aspect, it is that which blinds the ignorant to the true nature of existence, limiting them to what knowledge may be gained through direct observation only. It is a wall between the mundane world and the glory of the All in full manifestation. Those behind the wall believe themselves to be the center of their own universe. To them, nothing exists beyond their own perception. It for these lost spirits that saviors come to be, that they may find a path to the Almighty that is within their own comprehension.

From the East comes Inspiration. Its nature within the All is that which is beyond comprehension. Its positive aspects are intuitive knowledge, imagination, and as a reminder of constant change. Its negative traits include all the destructive forces of wind and storm; chaos itself.

The goal of the witch and magician is to provide structure to air much as the universal laws reduce chaos in the universe.

Music is one way that we establish control over air. By setting up certain vibrational patterns to produce sound, we provide a degree of structure to air that renders it useable to us. The same is true of the

spoken word and, for that matter, any sound that we make, be it the pounding of a drum or the ringing of a bell.

The more structure we can apply to sounds, the more control we gain over the forces of air. Single words become joined in prose, then are manipulated to become poetry. Percussive sound gives rise to meter, then to melody. The resonance of the spoken word with its accentuation and inflections becomes, when united with melody, *song*.

Each step provides a higher level of control over air and, consequently, the workings of the psyche. Structure increases, and the seemingly random elements of intuition are eliminated much as dissonant notes are removed from a chord to achieve harmony. Thus do we face the powers of air while retaining our sanity.

Air fuels the imagination indiscriminately. The witch must find structure within its limitless number of ideas and take unto herself those that can be employed to the betterment of the mundane world while disregarding those that increase chaos.

The witch must measure the intuitive paths carefully, for to err in judgement will lead to madness.

There are many tales of individuals driven to insane behavior by the powers of air. Those among us who have wandered in the wilderness, away from their own kind, and have returned as prophets and holy men recognized the dangers of air, succumbed to them for some time, and finally gained the inner control that permitted them to deal with those powers without becoming mad.

***Thus, recognize that, without the foundation provided by Earth and the rectification given by Water, the forces of Air can tear the mind apart and rip the individual from the fabric of society, leaving him a hermit, doomed to possess great knowledge that can never be shared; wisdom hidden in the guise of madness.***

In the South dwells Fire. It represents the human faculty of thought in all its forms, positive and negative. In its positive aspect, Fire is the parent of invention, logic, and creativity. The negative side of Fire includes its destructiveness and its ability to relentlessly consume any available fuel.

Within the All, Fire is the force behind Creation, much as Air is its directing element.eafw

Fire is the force the gods and angels use to destroy that which defies the Law. Fire is also the light these agents of the Almighty cast upon the deepest secrets of Creation in order that we humble humans might learn them.

To work magic, the witch must establish control over Fire.

Just as the negative forms of Air can produce madness, so Fire left to its own devices will manifest in the individual as all-consuming passion that knows no reason and respects no law. Fire at its most destructive is the root of behavior branded “insane” according to the legal definition, since its incredible force can drive one to behavior that otherwise would obviously seem criminal. In the most dramatic cases, uncontrolled Fire is fed by the similarly uncurbed forces of Air, creating a literal mental firestorm. This monster has motivated more than one individual to commit incredibly heinous crimes, including rape and mass murder.

The witch must learn to harness the enormous energy that resides in human passion, whether born of desire or hatred, sorrow or joy, and use it to power magical works. Anyone wishing to perform magic needs to cultivate a state of mental calm that allows one to detach himself from the most ardent of emotions and employ them as fuel for the intended operation, much as someone who lights a fire in a fireplace throws enough logs into the hearth to produce a warm flame without providing so many logs that the fire can escape its confines and burn the house down.

The source of this tranquility resides in the elements of Water and Earth. Earth is the foundation of all work; Water the repository of mental peace.

Fire can illuminate, and Fire can blind. It can convert base substance into precious works of the magical art, or it can destroy the most intricate designs and plans. Because we are of the material world, it is imperative that we understand Fire in all its aspects, lest we find ourselves fuel for its rampage.

Meditate on Fire. Learn its attributes well. Carefully consider what is required to control this most ruinous of elements. Remember that Fire is in constant motion. Establish control over Fire by using the other elements and your own clarity of thought.

To know Fire, know your true Self. Strip away the lies and false fronts. Bare your faults, your emotions, your passions and your fears, for Fire can employ any and all of these as fuel to escape its confines and burn you badly.

The element of Water resides in the West. This is the Quarter where the sun sets on the physical

world, where the hectic energy of the day surrenders to the tranquility of nightfall. Within the All, Water represents the interface between Being and Non-being. To paraphrase Genesis, the Almighty, in the beginning of Creation, found its image in the waters. Water is the mirror of Creation, that element we look to when we need to evaluate ourselves and the world around us.

In its positive aspect, Water represents tranquility and malleability to the circumstances that surround us. It is the universal solvent, capable of rendering the most complex troubles into their basic elements. It loosens the knots that bind us to our problems and allows us to sort them out with through careful contemplation.

Water's negative side includes storms, massive waves, and destructive floods. On the metaphysical plane, these forces are those that upset clear thinking. When they are at their fiercest, these forces cause mental confusion and disorientation that can disrupt the simplest magic.

The witch need not establish active control over Water. Of all the elements, Water is the least susceptible to manipulation. It is far more important that the witch act as an observer. It is not by happenstance that many divinatory techniques call for pondering the images that arise when one looks into a reflective or refractive surface (skrying, mirror gazing, crystal gazing, etc.). Water shows the true essence of the matter at hand. It is the witch's task to scrutinize these images and properly interpret them. This last requires an open mind, cognoscenti of an infinity of possibilities and free from prejudicial interpretation.

Mastering Water depends on allowing Water to express itself and gleaning from that expression meaning that will direct the witch toward a proper course of action.

Water, in its placidity, can be used to control Fire. Quiet contemplation extinguishes the destructive elements of passion and emotion.

The prerequisite for performing a divination prior to working magic that is mentioned in so many texts invokes the calming influence of Water into the mix of emotions that drive a magical operation. Through divination, the witch can assess the consequences of magic and decide intelligently what course of action will prove most beneficial while incurring the least amount of harm. Water provides insight into those hidden factors that can unfavorably influence the work.

For every magical operation, Earth provides a firm base from which to launch the work, Air excites the imagination toward envisioning the goal, Fire burns away the obstacles between what is and what is intended, and Water reveals the consequences of the work.

Ether occupies the center of the Circle. It is the paradox within the All, being changeable in nature. Since the ether is in constant change, it cannot be the All, which is unchangeable in itself, yet it is part of the All, as no thing can be excluded from the All. However, unlike the other elements, Ether's main characteristic, its only attribute whatsoever, is Change. Ether has no substance, yet it is all substances at once. It exists in no particular phase, being neither solid nor liquid, nor pure energy of any particular sort. Instead, Ether is all phases of existence at once. Ether cannot be held or contained, touched, or detected by any of the senses used to identify the other elements.

Ether is the very stuff from which all things are ultimately composed by transformation among the phases of being; liquid, solid, gaseous, and energetic. It is the unmeasureable raw material from which all measurable and observable materials are made through change.

Ether is the substance from which magic is made. By understanding the effect of each of the other four elements upon a situation or phase of existence, the degree and direction of change toward that which the magician Wills can be calculated and the appropriate amount and degree of force applied to affect the desired change.

Ether "travels" along the vertical axis that runs from the absolute to the infinite directly through the magician's body as he resides in the center of the Circle.

The key to working magic is knowing the influence of the elements on the matter at hand and understanding how to bring those elements into a new sort of balance so that the manifestation of a spell stays within the natural laws. This is the reason for having key elements to the work represented in the Circle. It is also the reason behind working within prescribed planetary hours, seasonal rhythms, lunar phases, and the like.

Science provides an exact velocity necessary for any object to escape the planet's gravitational field. The figure depends on many factors, the most important being the mass of the Earth itself. Other variables contribute to the equation as well. In order to achieve space flight, all of these variables must be accounted for in the calculation of the speed an object must reach to achieve escape velocity.

It is exactly so with magic. While the factors involved are not the hard, fast numbers of astral

physics, they must be taken into account for a spell to succeed. Thus, the magician meditates and uses other intuitive tools to supplement simple reason. This is not to say that it will be forever impossible to quantify precisely the many causes and effects that contribute to the magical process, and it may be argued that until such quantification takes place, magic will remain an imprecise science.

Suffice to say that not knowing the mathematical values for all the contributing factors to a spell will no more hinder the spell than not knowing those same mathematical elements involved in walking upright will keep a two year old from learning to do so!

Neither reason nor intuition are in themselves gods. There will always be need for both in any human endeavor. Calculus will never completely describe the Almighty.

## **EAFW2**

*The Kingdom of Water  
Is a house of mirrors  
That dresses its guests in the trappings  
They themselves take to heart  
As Truth*

*Dress yourself only in those garments that truly fit you. Abandon those that do not, lest you achieve an unhappy end.*

## **Chapter 6: Fundamentals of the Craft**

This chapter explains the basic tools and methods used in Wicca. Most of this information comes from the Celtic tradition. I encourage you to explore whatever brand of Wicca appeals to you and to draw analogies between that system and the one presented here.

***Keep in mind that no one has a monopoly on the truth.***

If you find yourself uncomfortable with any method recorded in this book or elsewhere, you will not be able to make it work for you. Feel free to modify any rite to suit your taste. Positive emotional content will accomplish more than the "right" words ever will.

Your magic, your methods, and your mind belong to you alone. Take my instructions for what they are; a compilation of personal knowledge arising from many years as a practicing witch, *not a set of commandments set in stone.*

If you are new to the Craft, I strongly recommend that you investigate as many sources of Wiccan lore as possible before you choose your own path. Take to yourself what rings true and disregard that which does not.

Do be advised, however, that what seems nonsensical to a neophyte may have great meaning to a

more mature Wiccan. Don't be too surprised when you find that some piece of former fancy suddenly becomes very real.

While you are learning, *please refrain from criticizing the beliefs of others*, no matter how tempting it may be to feed your ego on their apparent folly. You are responsible for your own spiritual development, as they are for theirs. Often that development requires learning from one's mistakes.

In all, *concentrate on what's right for you, and let others do the same.*

If you are already well versed in Wiccan lore, you may still wish to scan this chapter and compare the material to your own practices. Do not, however, discard your own methods for mine unless you are absolutely sure they meet your needs better than those you are currently using.

## The Circle

The Wiccan Circle demonstrates many of the basic tenets of the Craft. Virtually all rites and rituals take place within the Circle, including spellwork.

Note that this does not imply that you *MUST* cast a Circle for everything you do. Pathworking, meditation, and visualization are examples of operations that need no Circle. As with all things, do what feels comfortable to you.

The Circle corresponds to the Wheel of the Year. The cardinal points represent the four important sabbats, while the points exactly between these denote the solstices and equinoxes.

This arrangement does not demean the status of the solar calendar. It merely points out that the lunar holidays represent the "between times", just as the Circle itself lies between the green world in which we live and the Otherworld of spirits, elementals, Faeries, and the various folk that populate that realm.

Witches recognize that the "between times" enhance their ability to cross over the bridge to the Otherworld. Dawn and dusk, midnight and midday, and midseason are popular times for conducting rituals aimed at connecting with the Otherworld.

The Circle itself exists between the green world in which you live and the Otherworld in its many forms. It is, as the ancients described, "a place that is not a place in a time that is not a time."

When you are in the Circle, you have rid yourself of the boundaries of time and space set by the laws of the physical universe. Past, present, and future, here, there, and somewhere else flow together in an endless knot. All time becomes now. All places are within the Circle. You are **ONE** with everything, and nothing exceeds your grasp.

The Circle concentrates energy within itself and bars errant forces from interfering with the work. At its most mundane, the Circle affords the witch mental privacy.

In this regard, absolute physical privacy provides an ideal environment for working magic, but the world around us presents few opportunities for such seclusion. With practice, you will find that retreating into your mentally cast and charged Circle puts just enough of a barrier between you and worldly distractions for centering yourself, tapping your psychic resources, and performing minor spellwork.

Casting this type of Circle requires little effort but a lot of imagination and practice. Every crowded airline terminal, sporting event, and waiting line presents an opportunity for you to test your concentration and resolve. You will find that this type of Circle rests and recharges your mind, allowing you to resume your affairs in the green world with new vigor.

This kind of Circle is one of three. A second type functions as both a portal to other planes of existence and as a powerful wall of energy that cannot be breached by forces that could wreck your work or cause you harm.

Uses for such a Circle include protection against psychic assault, intentional or incidental. The latter sort of attack is much more common than the first. Few people launch psychic attacks because the energy expenditure is staggering, and the results are usually disappointing at best and self destructive at worst.

Incidental psychic attack occurs when spellwork directed at another target takes the form of a shotgun blast instead of a well aimed pistol shot. Love spells are a common source of this scatter gun effect, because these spells turn the target's affection to the magician and away from others that may have a strong bond to the love object. Thus, along with the "turn to me" effect of the spell comes a "stay away" impetus directed toward those whose ties to the target might interfere with the desired result of the

spellwork.

Naturally, this effect magnifies with the degree of romantic interest the inadvertent victim might have in the target.

The upheaval caused by the spellwork may manifest in many ways, all of which will prove unpleasant, and these energies linger long after the actual spellwork has been completed.

Since this sort of negative energy lingers long after the actual spell has been cast, it is imperative that this energy be prevented from upsetting any work within your Circle where you will be opening yourself to its effect more thoroughly than in your mundane activities.

Obviously, no one can be absolutely certain what negative energies may be floating around just waiting for you to provide a window of opportunity to cause disruption. Therefore, most witches tend to cast a protective Circle all of the time, eliminating any chance of encountering these troublesome forces.

Another kind of Circle specifically aids contact with the Otherworld. Here, the Circle acts as a door to other realms of existence.

To understand how this Circle works, imagine that this portal is very much like an automatic garage door. Opening the door requires little effort, and the speed of that opening is governed by the mechanisms involved. Once opened, a wide gateway exists through which all manner of Otherworld entities and influences may pass. However, the door is equally slow to close should you wish to prevent something from entering. Therefore, this Circle provides poor protection from negative influences.

To use this Circle comfortably means that you must be prepared for anything that may find its way to you.

The key to handling these situations is to avoid panic. Here is where the witch becomes a warrior. Be absolutely confident in your ability to deflect and defeat these negative forces before you risk an encounter.

Such confidence comes with practice and experience. There are no short cuts. Strengthen yourself by meditating on those negative situations you know to exist in your life and some you imagine could happen. Place yourself in a mental scenario where you can work out a successful battle plan to defeat these forces.

This mental wargaming works equally well for planning positive spellwork. By picturing the results of your work, you can identify any unwanted results and prevent them by restructuring the spell.

Once you feel strong enough to defeat any negative forces that might cross your psychic path, this type of Circle will provide you with swift and easy access to the Otherworld which you can explore at will.

It sometimes helps to picture your defensive ability as a weapon in your possession during all your journeys. When threatened, you merely have to draw your weapon to discourage those forces that intend you harm.

Two things to keep in mind if you choose this method. First, be sure you are absolutely willing to use your armament without hesitation. Second, shoot to kill. Leave mercy and understanding for later. Eliminate the bad guys first!

The choice of weapons is yours. Pick what makes you feel most protected. (If you choose a weapon analogous to one of your magical tools, keep in mind that they are separate entities with very different tasks.)

Witches utilize a third sort of Circle for the celebration of the Sabbats and Esbats as well as detailed rituals and spellwork.

Covens routinely use this Circle, in part because its structural complexity encourages group participation which helps bind and focus coven members to the work to be performed. While the actual charging of the Circle usually falls to the High Priest or Priestess, the rest of the coven may busy themselves with the placement and lighting of candles, preparing the altar tools and decorations, and the various physical duties that accompany this formal Circle.

Ironically, this most complicated of Wiccan Circles is also the best documented. Virtually every how-to book on Wicca provides some version of the words, methods, and tools required to construct this Circle.

Despite its seeming complexity, beginners should use this Circle almost exclusively until they fully understand the reasons for the various correspondences, charges, and methods involved in its construction.

This kind of Circle acts as a learning tool from which the neophyte can discover many mysteries

of the Craft. Also, although the simpler methods for making a Circle may seem more expeditious, their integrity depends on the operator's awareness of the aspects of the more formal Circle critical to its structure and function.

One compelling argument for employing the more complex way of casting a Circle is that it improves focus, thereby enhancing magical and ritual work. The detailed effort necessary to cast the Circle rewards the practitioner with a mental and spiritual state conducive to performing any rite successfully.

Each step of a ritual puts more distance between the worries of everyday life and magical matters.

When circumstances permit, many witches will use the more complicated formula for work as simple as daily meditation precisely to create a gap over which mundane concerns cannot cross.

The choice, as always, is yours, but, no matter which method you use most frequently, do take the time to learn what the Circle in its most complete form represents.

There are many other varieties of Circles, ranging from the simple ones used by the shamans of some cultures to focus energy to the ostentatious multiple Circles employed in ceremonial magic. The former function similarly to the "portal" Circle, while the latter are certainly the epitome of protective Circles.

Shamans seek to bond with the forces of Nature in all its realities. The ceremonial magician prefers a protective barrier from within which various entities and powers may be commanded without risk of physical and psychological harm.

Research these, and add to your own methods of casting Circles as you see fit.

One caution, though; if you intend to follow a particular tradition in your ritual work, refrain from mixing too many elements of different cultures, and be sure you know the attributes of those you intend to use.

No one tradition is superior to any other. It is far more important that you understand what you're doing than that you pick exactly the right godform from some list of obscure deities.

Practical Wicca resembles a good stew. Borrow freely from any source, but learn to recognize what ingredients just don't belong in your cauldron!

## **Casting the Circles**

### **A Simple Protective Circle for Daily Rituals and Meditation**

Cast the Circle beginning at the cardinal point that most represents what you intend to do or the forces you wish to contact. ( For example, begin meditative Circles in the West.)

Inscribe the Circle in air with any convenient tool or with your finger, working in a clockwise direction. Picture yourself drawing a band of blue light all around you. Use the following charge as you go:

"I cast this Circle  
That it may protect me  
From all energies positive and negative  
That may come to do me harm.

In the name of (goddess) and (god),  
So Mote It Be."

When you have completed your work, open the Circle starting at the same point you began. This time, move counterclockwise, picturing the blue light being sucked back into your tool. Say:

"I dissolve this Circle  
that has protected me  
from all energies  
that might have come to do me harm.  
In the name of (goddess) and (god),  
so mote it be.  
The Circle is open but never broken."

*Leave the Circle at the point where you entered.*

Note that this Circle does not require elaborate preparation or specific tools, making it ideal for "emergency" use in less than private settings. As with almost every rite and ritual, this Circle may be cast on the mental plane rather than the physical if necessary. It is perfect for shutting out the world in tense situations, allowing you to gain focus, or where a little instant magic might be needed.

A word about the difference between invocation and evocation compared to invitation. Seldom will you use this simple Circle to invoke or evoke Otherworld entities. However, inviting them to attend your Circle can provide immeasurable help with whatever you intend, including meditation. Since you are inviting their presence rather than summoning them, you need not formally dismiss them before ending the Circle. In fact, some may want to stick around just to see how you're coming along or to lend a hand in that business meeting you just could not face without centering yourself with a Circle first.

## 2) The Portal Circle

Before casting, remember that this type of Circle provides almost no protection. Keep yourself open to contacts, but be prepared to defend yourself. Drive off unwanted entities and influences immediately and forcefully.

Starting at the cardinal point appropriate for your work, inscribe the Circle clockwise, saying:

***"I charge this Circle  
that it may be a portal between the worlds  
a place that is not a place  
in a time that is not a time  
In the names of (goddess) and (god)  
So Mote It Be!"***

As you do this, picture yourself being surrounded by a ring of pure blue light emanating like a lightning bolt from your tool.

Have with you in the Circle anything that will aid your traversing the barrier between planes and will attract the forces you wish to contact. Commonly used items include incense, herbs, foods, crystals, tarot cards, and artwork.

You may wish to consult lists of correspondences, or you can rely totally on your own good sense and imagination.

It is more important to leave out anything that might hinder your work than to include every single item of correspondence. For example, should you desire contact with the Faery folk, avoid having iron tools in your Circle and use a nonferrous tool to cast the Circle (a wooden wand is a good choice).

When you have completed your work, thank and dismiss any and all contacts that you would rather not have around you when you leave the Circle. Go to the same cardinal point where you inscribed the Circle, and, using the same tool, take up the energy by travelling in a counterclockwise direction. Picture the light that has surrounded you coming back into your tool as you say:

***"I discharge this Circle  
And close the portal between the worlds.  
In the names of (goddess) and (god),  
So Mote It Be!"***

### 3) Casting the Formal Circle

The first step in this method involves charging and purifying everything that will be in the Circle, including yourself.

Make an inventory of what materials you will need for your work. Pay particular attention to those things that must be in the Circle, and put them in place. Nothing disrupts concentration like having to leave the Circle for some forgotten necessity.

While your usual tools will maintain their charge as long as you do nothing to remove it, be ready to charge any new or unique item before using it in the Circle. This can be done immediately after the Circle has been cast.

Prepare a ritual bath to remove lingering energies that could hinder your work. Add salt to the water as a purifying agent, along with any herbs and scents that correspond to the rite. A good general recipe for cleansing the body, mind, and spirit consists of one part hyssop and one part blue vervain. Place the herbs in a muslin pouch, tie it securely, and drop it into your bath water.

Adding herbs directly works as well, but loose herbs will tend to plug up your drain, so be practical.

Do not use a metal tea ball to hold the herbs. Metal can alter the electromagnetic properties necessary for purification. (This holds true when making herbal medicines as well. Wherever possible, use nonmetallic containers and tools.)

You may add to this basic mixture any other herb, perfume, or mineral appropriate for your work. For instance, should your rite involve attraction, place a lodestone in your bath to improve your natural magnetism. If you wish to divine the future or peer into the depths of some problem, a clear quartz crystal added to the bath will clarify your vision.

During your bath, relax and concentrate removing from your entire being all influences and concerns that could interfere with your intentions. Let yourself drift away from these matters and toward the rite at hand.

Do not rush! Take all the time you need for both the bath and for any other phase of the rite. Remember that the intricacies necessary to prepare and construct the Circle help you to focus on your work. Take each step carefully, giving your full attention to every detail.

When you are satisfied that the bath has done its work, drain the water as you sit in the tub, picturing all your worries and troubles going down the drain with the water. Allow the tub to empty completely before you rise and dry off.

At this point, you should be ready to proceed immediately to your work area and cast the Circle. Do not undertake any mundane task not related to the rite. If you have not yet done so, now is the time to prevent interruptions by unplugging the telephone and silencing the doorbell. If it appeals to you, play some suitable music. (Do not feel bound to purchase the most exotic pagan album you can find for this purpose; anything will do as long as it puts you in the right mood.)

Your altar should be set up with a full compliments of tools and items essential to the operation. When placing articles on the altar or about the interior of the Circle, remember to maintain balance. The placement should have a certain symmetry pleasing to the eye.

Upon the altar should be a cup of water, a cup of salt, at least one candle of a color corresponding to the rite, and your Book of Shadows. All items you will use in your work should be arranged in a symmetrical pattern on or about the altar according to their specific cardinal alignments. For complicated rites requiring many tools, draw a schematic layout of your Circle prior to the work that includes their placement. Remember to maintain balance among the elements represented by these objects. Balance improves energy flow, no matter what element may dominate the actual rite.

Suppose you perform a Fire-oriented spell meant to communicate your anger at a given situation. Without providing a Water influence to cool your passions once you have projected your energy into the spell, you will find yourself hanging on the verge of anger long after your work is done. Those who have the displeasure of your company over the next few days will not find your acid mood appealing at all.

The following alignment of the cardinal points is generally thought to be correct for most operations. Some traditions vary slightly from this arrangement. One common variant associates the sword with Fire and the South, attributing the wand, staff, or spear to the East and the element of Air. As usual, the choice is yours. Do what feels right to you.

| <b>Direction</b> | <b>Element</b> | <b>Personal Tool</b> | <b>Coven Tool</b>      |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>East</b>      | <b>Air</b>     | <b>athame</b>        | <b>sword</b>           |
| <b>South</b>     | <b>Fire</b>    | <b>wand</b>          | <b>staff or spear</b>  |
| <b>West</b>      | <b>Water</b>   | <b>cup</b>           | <b>cauldron</b>        |
| <b>North</b>     | <b>Earth</b>   | <b>pentacle</b>      | <b>shield or stone</b> |

Remember that these correspondences represent examples used by certain traditions. Experiment as you see fit. Use what makes sense to you. If you abhor violence and its tools, you may never feel comfortable about using a sword or a shield in your rites. Find substitutes that convey the same spiritual message as these items without creating negative vibrations for you.

The tools designated as coven items may also be used by the solitary witch. They just tend to take a bit longer to come into your life, whether by happenstance or by your own manufacture. They are also much less portable.

In addition to this list, you should also have within the Circle a cup or bowl of water on the left side of the altar and a similar container holding salt equidistant to the right. If you have a binding cord (see the next chapter for a complete list of witches' common tools and their uses), you may choose to wear it about your waste or curl it neatly near the center of the altar. Your Book of Shadows should be in the center of the altar where you can read from it easily under candlelight. Anything that will be placed in some specific location during (not before) the rite should also be centered. Do not be concerned if you run out of altar space. Just expand into the working area of the Circle itself. Do not, however, place anything outside the Circle that would require your breaking the Circle to retrieve.

A word about constructing formal rites and Circles; the gods have a wonderful sense of humor and laugh heartily when we screw up by spilling something or having a candle that just won't stay lit. While each step of a rite is important and should receive the utmost care and concentration, do not be shattered by your mistakes. Just pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go on!

The exact procedure that follows assumes that you will use the athame to inscribe the Circle. You may use the wand, staff, spear, or your finger to perform this function equally well. The goal is to project a stream of energy that will surround your sacred space. How it gets there is up to you.

Before entering the sacred space, kneel just beyond the approximate border of your Circle at the cardinal point where you will begin its inscription. Say the following self-blessing, accompanying the

words by covering the in succession the eyes, ears, and mouth, after the fashion of the old statue of the three monkeys striking similar poses:

**"Hear me, O Ancient Ones,  
Bless your witch (Name)  
That I may see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil,  
And be purified in your sight.  
So Mote It Be!"**

*( Note: This blessing may sound a bit silly, but it serves the same psychological function as the old custom of self-flagellation and prostration; it humbles you before the gods, a reminder that you are not their lord and master come to bind them in servitude to you, but an equal on the mortal plane, seeking their help through friendly imprecation and cooperation. Feel free to explore the comparative effect of the old ways if you please. After all, it is written that "You must suffer to learn." ).*

Rise and enter the sacred space, right foot first, as dictated by ancient custom and at least a little superstition about leading with the left (Latin: sinister). Proceed directly to the altar.

Light the altar candles from right to left, as the sun travels. Use the last candle to light the candles at the cardinal points, beginning usually with the East (most Western traditions) or North. If your rite is especially bound to a particular direction, start there. Specific needs outweigh custom.

Once the candles have been lit, attend to any other preparations, like lighting incense or opening books to appropriate pages.

Now that all the practical work is done, the ritual work begins.

Take your censer or candle from the altar, beginning and ending with the same cardinal point where you first entered the sacred space. Always travel deosil.

Return the candle or censer to the altar. Take up the cup of water in your right hand and place it in your left hand. In the same manner as you have censured the Circle, asperge each cardinal point by wetting the fingertips of your right hand and sprinkling a little water outward toward the point.

Finish where you started, and return the water to the altar.

Kneeling before the altar, take up your athame in your right hand and place its point into the container of water. Concentrate on dispelling all impurities from the water and charging it with positive energy. Say:

**"I exorcise thee,  
O Creature of Water,  
That thou cast out from thee  
All the impurities and uncleanness  
Of the spirits of phantasm.  
In the names of (goddess) and (god)."**

The water is now the Wiccan equivalent of holy water. All you see in the water's reflections will be true and without distortion by conflicting influences. The water will remain true to your task.

Place the tip of the athame into the salt. Say:

"Blessings be upon thee,  
O Creature of Salt.  
Let all malignity and hindrance pass henceforth,  
And let all good enter in.  
Ever are we mindful that as water purifies the body,  
So salt purifies the soul.  
Wherefore do I bless thee  
In the names of (goddess) and (god)  
That thou mayest aid me."

Take three measures of salt with the tip of the athame and place them in the water. Stir the mixture three times with the athame, concentrating on the divine energy that you have put into these elements and their purifying effect on your athame.

You will now inscribe the Circle with your athame. If you have a cord, you can place the athame through the looped end and set the opposite end at the center of the Circle, using the cord to set dimensions and ensure a round shape, or you may draw the Circle freehand by pointing your athame where you intend the boundaries to be. In either case, picture the athame projecting a ray of blue energy out some distance from its point. As you travel deosil around the sacred space, you are enclosing yourself in this Circle of light.

If you wish, you may recite one of the abbreviated charges mentioned previously.

As usual, end the Circle where you began. Take some time at this point to visualize the Circle of light. You may want to return to the altar and focus yourself.

In any case, do not proceed with the next step until you have a clear mental image of the Circle. Be patient. Take all the time you need.

The next step will be to call to your Circle the entities and forces common to such matters. Make sure your house (Circle) is in order before you invite the guests. Mistakes amuse the gods: *mental messiness does not!*

Beginning at the cardinal point where you commenced drawing the Circle, salute the forces of that region with your athame, holding it in your right hand. The salute may take any form that pleases you. What is important is that you show respect to the entities you intend to call forth and that the salute be the same for each quadrant.

After saluting, call to the forces of that quadrant in a powerful voice from the very center of your being saying:

" Hear ye O Mighty Ones,  
Dread Lords of the watchtowers of the East (West, South, North),  
I, (your witch name), summon you  
And command your presence

At this, my Circle,  
That my rites be witnessed  
And my Circle be blessed."

(Note: The word "command" appears here instead of "invite". This is an older form of the Call to Quarters and is usually reserved for work involving invocation, where the witch **must** be in complete, unequivocal control and in situations needing immediate action. The Ancient Ones will understand your wording implies no threat.)

Say this charge at each quarter and follow it by drawing the invoking pentagram appropriate to that cardinal point (see Appendix 1). End each summoning with a hand clap or the ringing of a bell. Visualize the forces rushing toward your Circle, eager to participate in your rite.

Each of the four quarters is associated with a particular element. You should picture things representative of that element as you repeat the charge and draw your invoking pentagram.

In the northern hemisphere, the north corresponds to earth, the east to air, the south fire, and the west to water.

Use symbols for these elements that have meaning to you. Should you require the aid of a particular element, visualize those attributes you will need for your work. These may be constructive or destructive depending on the nature of the rite.

Earth can be a strong foundation on which to build or a shaking mass capable of crumbling the strongest edifice that might stand between you and your goal.

Similarly, Air can bear your thought projections on a gentle breeze or become a cyclonic monster sweeping away forces opposing you. Fire can illuminate or consume utterly. Water can float you away on a peaceful lake or become a tidal surge that smashes any obstacles in your path.

Magical literature contains hundreds of attributes for each element. Feel free to borrow from them, but remember that the most potent aspects will come from inside you.

Don't be put off by the demanding nature of the calls to quarters. While the words to these charges may seem more suited to the sort of demands issued by ceremonial magicians than to a witch professing union and respect for all things, keep in mind that at least some of the forces you are calling upon are rough and raw in nature and respect authority above all else.

Be aware that some of the lower entities associated with the elements are mindless and impersonal. They respond to authority, so take charge of them from the outset. Not to do so is to risk exposing your very existence to their unfettered assaults. Without you to command them, these forces can wreak random havoc on you and yours. Command and control render them useful tools. **Take charge!**

Unlike the ceremonial magician, a witch's summons carries authority without making threats. It is extremely important to remember that as you bind, so will you be bound.

Ceremonial magicians typically threaten reluctant entities with harsh punishment from on high in the form of endless imprisonment in a horrible place and bolts from the blue inflicting eternal suffering should the entity being summoned refuse to obey the magician's every command.

***Witches command without threats.***

The higher beings will not be insulted by your summons. They are well aware of the mischievous and sometimes destructive nature of their lesser cousins.

The higher entities brought forth by the charges are typically friendly and willing to help with any task. They relish attention and bestow great gifts upon those who still practice the old ways, acknowledging their part in the scheme of the Universe. While they have been personified by many cultures, they are in fact aspects of the All; the Almighty that defines the existence of everything. The names and characteristics attributed to these forces are a convention that allows man to understand the nature of these powerful entities in human terms. The appellations and descriptions applied to these "beings" are analogous to the text of a repair manual for an appliance that defines the structure and function of each part of the device along with a list of tools and methods for fixing it, all presented in terms that the reader can understand. The most complex grimoire is no more than a means for man to comprehend and

contact the correct aspect of the Almighty to perform a particular task.

The most important aspect of casting a Circle is that it must represent *to you* a sacred space, apart from the mundane world, a gateway between the planes where the troubles of everyday life have no meaning. When you are in the Circle, you are beyond the reach of temporal forces; you are in a place that is not a place at a time that is not a time.

Beyond the basic casting ritual, use whatever methods you find efficacious to shut out worldly worries and open yourself to communion with other realms of existence. Chants, dance, meditation, and song are all powerful tools for focusing the energy you will need to perform any rite. Do what feels right for you.

Once the Circle has been cast and the forces summoned, it is time to begin the actual work of the ritual.

Please remember to have everything you need within the intended boundaries of the Circle. Leaving the Circle once it has been cast and charged can be very disruptive to your concentration, thus jeopardizing the success of the rite.

To compose your ritual, you may draw from existing sources, compose your own version, or use a combination of the two. The most important consideration is that the ritual have profound meaning to you.

Your ritual must inspire you to achieve your goal, whether your aim is to commune with the gods, mark the sabbats, or work magic.

Wisdom dictates that the neophyte employ methods and words that have proven successful in the past. Using the old ways and words of power provides an excellent education in the workings of the human psyche.

As you begin to accumulate knowledge of your inner self, you will find rituals of your own composition easier to formulate.

Eventually, most practitioners end up using a hybrid of the traditional and the personal. Such is the reason for keeping your own Book of Shadows.

Your work completed, it's time to close the Circle.

The first step in ending any rite is to take the energy that might be left over from your rite and ground it. Magical energy left unattended has the same potential for destruction as a loose live wire.

A common practice is to project the energy in the direction of anyone needing help with some unspecified trouble by using a charge as follows:

" I send the power that's been raised  
By the magic done today  
To anyone in need of aid.  
*So Mote It Be!*"

Energy can also be grounded by using the Great Rite, which involves ritual sexual intercourse. This method requires a partner with whom you have a strong emotional bond. The physical act itself must be true lovemaking; that is, the physical manifestation love. Such emotional content propels energy toward anyone open to receive it.

Once freely practiced among Wiccans as a means of empowering magical workings, the rite is less common in these modern times and is usually reserved for the most difficult spells.

A third way to ground energy entails returning energy to Mother Earth to serve as a reservoir for other magical work.

The energy raised in the Circle exists as discrete quanta and remains that way when returned to the earth, making it more readily available to those in need of it for their own rites.

No special chants are necessary for this operation. Merely picture your Cone of Power returning through you from the crown of your head and flowing from your spine back into the earth.

A final step in grounding is to eat or drink something, which returns you from the altered mental state typical of ritual to your everyday mode of thinking like the human animal that you are.

Any time you elevate yourself beyond the mundane plane of existence, indulging in satisfying your instinctual needs like eating, drinking, or reproduction will bring you back to the "real world." Failure to remove yourself from your walk between the worlds can leave you very spacey and out of touch with physical reality. Contact with your non-Wiccan friends while in this state may leave them wondering about just what kind of drugs you've been taking.

Your work done and all excess energy disposed of, it is now time to close the Circle:

*1) Dismiss any entities that may have helped you in your rite with hearty thanks. There are no set words to use. In fact, you should phrase your gratitude based on the help provided. Do not try to be poetic here. Keep your prose simple, direct, and sincere.*

*2) Thank and dismiss the guardians and beings of each quarter, starting with the direction you chose to initiate your Circle.*

*Athame in hand, salute the quarters in turn, ending where you began. At each quarter say:*

"Hear ye, O Mighty Ones,  
I thank you for your presence at this, my rite,  
And ere' ye depart to your lovely realms,  
I bid ye hail and farewell."

*After stating this dismissal, draw a banishing pentacle, picturing as you do the gate to that quarter closing and collapsing upon itself as the entities retreat to their homes.*

*Repeat the process at each quarter.*

*3) When you return to your starting point, offer one final salute, saying as you do:  
"Hail and farewell all."*

*4) Pointing your athame at the boundary of your Circle, move widdershins, picturing the light that has served as the barrier of your Circle returning to your blade.*

*5) Upon completing your circumambulation, raise you athame directly over your head and say:*

"The Circle is open,  
But never broken.  
Merry meet, merry part,  
And merry meet again."

*6) Extinguish all candles except the one you may be holding to light your way. Certain ancient authorities caution not to blow out candle flames because you may lose some of your life source. If you agree, use a candle snuffer, or, for you G. Gordon Liddy types, your fingers.*

**7) You may now leave the Circle, stepping across its boundary with the same foot you use to enter the Circle. Wiccans typically put the right foot first.**

Once you leave the Circle, concentrate on replenishing your energy with a meal. Magic can drain you as certainly as running a marathon. Napping and free-form mediation will help restore your reserves. Try not to review your activities in the Circle for at least a day. You have been to work, and now it's quitting time. Enjoy yourself and get some rest.

A word about movement within the Circle: some authorities insist that you must always travel deosil from point to point and that any circumnavigation around the altar also be clockwise. Others recommend that banishings, dismissals, and rites involving decrease (i.e. waning moon rites and spells to diminish disease or negative influences) are best performed widdershins. The choice is yours. Only you know what best attunes your faculties to the work at hand.

## **FORMULATING AND CHOOSING THE CORRECT RITE**

To find what works best for you, keep detailed records of your experiences. Leave out the wishful thinking, and stick to the facts. You will soon know what you must do to successfully perform your rites.

***EXPERIMENT!  
DOCUMENT!  
REVIEW!***

Repeat what works. Discard what doesn't. When in doubt, let your heart guide your mind. The heart is the hotline to the spirit guides. The heart is the voice of your personal "silent witness", that part of you that knows all you do and all that you are. The heart cannot be deceived, not even by that oldest of liars, the ego.

Please do not feel that you must adhere to dogma when performing rituals. Your inner self knows more than any ancient source what appeals to you. This is not to say that you should chuck all the old ways and develop your own rites for every circumstance. pay attention to the old ways, but add to them as you see fit. Remember that the ancients did not hold fast to techniques that did not work.

Take advantage of their experience. Use their lessons to enhance your own efforts.

Wicca is a personal philosophy for spiritual attainment, and no two people need follow the same path. *All roads lead to Rome...*

## **The Role of the Male Witch**

Within Wicca, the male role typically falls into one of three categories; warrior, sage, and consort. Though not mutually exclusive, most male witches migrate toward one or the other depending on age, personality, and experience.

The bulk of present literature on the Craft slants toward the empowerment of the female within society and how that empowerment can be obtained through Wicca.

Wicca stands as an extremely effective method for females to gain authority and has done so for eons. Historically, far more women have been accused of witchcraft than men, partially because men made the rules, but mostly because those same men feared any usurpation of their power by women.

Size and strength put men in charge. Neither is a protection against magic. The rule for dealing with any woman attempting to rise above her station was to accuse her of witchcraft and summarily execute her. Should a woman actually rise to a position reserved for the male, her persecution became a stiff warning to any other women tempted to do the same thing.

The execution of Joan of Arc is a perfect example of the consequence awaiting any like-minded female. Her very public success as a military leader assured her of a bitter end to a life of innocence and

devotion to her faith.

Church authorities saw women as temptresses, capable of deceiving the most devout priest into renouncing his faith to join her in unholy communion.

To these same authorities, the male witch represented a threat to one of the key goals of both church and state; the accumulation of wealth. With wealth came power. Those few men charged with witchcraft that escaped the "final solution" of a tortuous death saw their wealth and worldly goods stripped to nothing, a punishment that not only penalized these "devil spawn" but boosted the coffers of the governing bodies.

During the various eras of persecution, those males imprisoned and executed for witchcraft typically stood out from the community by being wealthy and, in the eyes of the ignorant, having no visible means of support. Thus the conclusion that such success resulted from communion with the dark powers, who were known by all to heap material rewards upon their chosen in return for their souls.

The annals of the Burning Times are full of tales of how the torturers and executioners were undoing the devil's work by making their victims suffer hideously that their souls might be saved and sent on to heavenly glory, the life of the condemned cut short to insure no further contamination that might lead to permanent damnation. ( And I bet you thought "I was only obeying orders" was a good excuse for exterminating the contaminators of the Aryan race...)

While there is no question that our male dominated society needed a slap in the face to recognize the importance of women, there is an equal need within Wicca to recognize the importance of the male witch.

Were you to survey the general population regarding the sex of a witch, the female image would overwhelmingly win. Among the ignorant, the witch is either an evil temptress capable of seducing the most faithful man or a hideous crone in a black cape and pointed hat stirring her cauldron of menace and cackling over the damage she intends to inflict on her victims.

The dawn of the "new age" has dispelled much of these stereotypes to the point where the well informed individual may subscribe to the idea of the witch as a healer living in tune with Mother Nature.

Still, many members of this enlightened minority view the witch as female. Some will persist in calling a male witch a warlock, a term with no validity in the Wiccan tradition.

A witch is a witch, whether male or female, and there are a lot of both around!

## **1) The Male Witch as Warrior**

The initiation of male offspring into the society of adult men is common to many cultures, and the practice persists to the present day among the most modern of societies. The rites of passage are generally associated with the onset of puberty and involve the education of the young male in the mysteries of manhood.

The precise nature of these teachings may differ depending on the traditions of the particular culture, but, in every case, the initiation marks the end of childhood and the beginning of manhood with all of its responsibilities.

These manly duties consist of engaging in activities that insure preservation of the tribe and its heritage in addition to simple mating and procreation, acts that are typically reserved for those young men who have acquired the necessary skill and knowledge to provide for a family.

One of the first duties of the young male is to protect his particular tribe from attack by competing tribes. In order to survive, ancient man had to protect those resources essential to survival from usurpers.

Unlike most of the tasks assigned to the newly initiated males, the penchant for doing battle, whether against animals during a hunt or against marauding humans, is a continuation of childhood play. Not to offend all those wonderful pacifists out there who feel that human aggression will vanish with the meltdown of the last Mattel GI Joe M-16 replica, but humans do possess a certain natural aggression essential to survival in what was once a much more hostile world. Little boys (and girls) like to play war, and the "game" does carry over to adult life.

The first role assumed by the adult male is that of warrior/ hunter. At the onset of puberty, a male abandons playing at hunting and fighting for the real thing.

For the first time in his life, he stops being a child. That is, he ceases to come under the almost exclusive control of his mother and is ready to learn the ways of the men of the tribe.

The same is true, of course, for the male witch.

The actual practice of witchcraft was once part of the mainstream of human existence. Males who showed a talent for the ways of the wise were expected to learn the martial arts as well as the more arcane skills associated with shamanism and the Craft. Those who were particularly proficient in the occult arts would receive training to sharpen their skills, but not to the exclusion of the basic abilities of the hunter/warrior.

A young Wiccan male should train to be a protector of the faith and the clan. He should make it his duty to stand between those who would destroy the old traditions and those who practice them. Historically, this responsibility meant putting one's life on the line for the survival of the coven and taking under one's protection the solitary practitioner in danger of persecution.

If you are a male Wiccan reading these passages, give them serious thought. How far would you be willing to go to prevent the destruction of the old ways or of a single, solitary witch? In ancient times, you might have paid with your life!

These days, fortunately, our battles are fought with words instead of swords. The commitment, however, remains a stiff trial. In the face of oppression of our religious freedom, many of us have had to open ourselves and our families to attack by the very enemies we hope to defeat. Law suits and civil disobedience have supplanted the blade and arrow, but the result for our families can be almost as disastrous as in the past.

In the modern world, there are few, if any, communities that view the witch or shaman as essential for survival. With the onset of the industrial revolution, mankind took control of the environment through the use of technology and applied science. Laudable in its accomplishments in some respects, this rise of industry and hard science separated man from nature and have deceived him into believing that he can control any aspect of his environment.

There exist, in fact, certain religious groups that contend that any attempt to preserve the natural order and work within environmental constraints is sinful. These same groups constantly rant against the Old Religion, calling witches Satanists. Given their head, these cults would bring back the Burning Times in a heartbeat. Some of their more deluded affiliates have perpetrated violence against those who do not share their beliefs, convinced that they are doing "God's work".

Presently, these latter are the exception and not the rule. However, their existence demonstrates that expressions of personal freedom can incite violence. Even in our "enlightened" times, the warrior is a necessity.

A warrior is neither an instrument of violence, nor a soldier who blindly obeys orders to destroy any opposition to the current power structure. Wiccans prefer to put as much distance as possible between themselves and those who might do them harm. A Wiccan warrior never initiates hostile behavior, yet he must remain capable of dealing with attacks against the Craft, no matter what form they may take.

The true warrior attempts to establish peace. Preservation of constructive social order in which a culture can flourish demands freedom from oppression by outside forces. The duty of the warrior is to assess how best to defeat those repressive elements, using every possible tool. To the warrior, violence must be the last resort, for, should combat be unavoidable, the warrior will be the first to put life and limb in harm's way.

For the young warrior, war ceases to be a game without consequence. The warrior's job is to secure an environment free of danger by the least disruptive means. No enemy was ever discouraged by weakness. While making every effort to avoid physical combat, the warrior must present an image of obvious strength, making perfectly clear the dire cost of any assault on those he /she protects.

Nuclear disarmament advocates aside, nothing deters violence like the promise of a blood price. When the cost of war outweighs its gains, war ceases to be an option to the resolution of human conflict. All territorial animals exhibit some ritualized form of behavior that indicates to other members of that species that trespass will result in dire consequences, reducing drastically the number of actual violent encounters.

Warriors keep the peace through apparent strength. They are secure in the inner knowledge that they are endowed with the capacity, through rigorous training and mental preparation, to render sufficient damage to an aggressor to make any attack foolhardy.

Violence is a part of nature. For one organism to live, another must perish. Without the warrior,

the tribe will die and leave all its wealth to whomever may prove the conqueror.

The price of violence is life itself.

The witch and the warrior must decide when it is time to risk this cost and when it would be wiser to walk away from conflict.

A warrior who has truly mastered his craft fights best by not fighting at all. Rendering one's enemies harmless achieves the warrior's key objective; a peaceful environment in which society may flourish without fear of destruction. Of course, such mastery takes practice and experience. Those apprenticed to the warriors' art can expect many hard battles along the way this goal.

The warrior's life is one of contradictions; fierceness tempered by compassion, courage compounded with reason, the willingness to sacrifice all for a just cause juxtaposed with the knowledge that the preservation of life is paramount, the skill to destroy the enemy bound to a complete understanding of that enemy's motivation in engaging in warfare. In all these matters, experience is the best teacher, and its lessons can be costly. Few who choose the warrior's path do so without regret. War presents far more opportunities for ferocity and terroristic behavior than does peace. Anyone can learn to fight. Few will learn to win peace without conflict.

In undertaking the role of the warrior, the male witch accepts responsibility for defending other witches against attack in any form. He must become skilled in the martial arts and must also educate himself in the ways and means of the law and the art of negotiation. He must become capable of battling any enemy, no matter what form an attack may take. He should feel equally comfortable in combat or in a court of law. Most importantly, he must understand and accept the sacrifice that is demanded of his chosen path. He is the barrier that prevents the Burning Time from coming again. He is guarantor of each and every witch's right to free practice of the Craft without fear.

He wages war and endures its consequences. Because of this, he should expect the aid and support of all Wiccans, whether they be part of his immediate group or not. Solitaries and coven members alike should lend their assistance to his efforts. He fights for all of us.

Violence is abhorrent to most people. It is absolutely normal for people to want to live in peace. However, humans strive to gain an advantage over the rest of their kind that will allow them to propagate and prosper. This is also quite normal. Those who would achieve such an advantage by inflicting bodily harm to their kind must be restrained from doing so. This is the task of the warrior.

## **2) The Consort**

The second role assumed by the maturing male is that of mate or consort. This has nothing to do with the randy behavior exhibited by teen aged boys overwhelmed by the sudden rush of hormones surging through their veins. Rather, the role of consort requires that the male reach a level of maturity where he has gained control of his sex drive and directed it toward a caring, loving, and responsible attitude toward his female counterparts.

One reason males seem to mature less quickly than females is that bringing the potent chemical forces that spawn the male sex drive under control is very hard work. It is no accident that males are encouraged to participate in physical activities that leave them exhausted, battered, and generally in need of bodily repair. Without this sort of dissipation, the biochemical blast of hormones would render most adolescent males helpless to control their sexual urges.

The role of consort demands that the male set aside his purely sexual attraction to females. A consort must learn to cherish his partner. He must replace lust with love. In his heart, he must understand that his mate's happiness is essential to his own.

Most importantly, he should recognize that these more mature feelings do not emasculate him. To the contrary, he will become a better and more complete male because of them.

A caring heart and masculinity are not mutually exclusive.

The creative union of male and female is the underlying principle of all existence. The combination of the two forces, whether accomplished through sexual bonding or platonic binding, produces a complete unit possessing all human traits. The joining neutralizes any weaknesses associated with the separate entities. All of life's tasks become easier, all troubles lessened.

As the bond strengthens, working magic becomes as simple as breathing.

For the male to enter into this creative union, he must learn to understand his limitations. Every

individual has talents. The key to a solid bonding between two people requires that each partner possess the ability to diminish the effect of those limitations. Thus, duality becomes unity.

Note that male and female are merely convenient labels for behavior patterns and personality traits. This has nothing to do with anatomy. This bonding may take place between any two individuals where one person balances the other. Certainly, during the Paleolithic period, sexual union and the resultant increase in human population were paramount to survival of the species. That is no longer the case. Thus, people are free to pursue partnerships that are independent of the need to propagate the species. Emotional ties have superseded physical desire. It is only through these ties that human beings will continue as a species, for we are a destructive lot. Caring for each other keeps us from killing one another.

A consort is far more than a sexual partner. As consort the male accepts the responsibility of combining with the female in such a way that the resultant pairing represents all characteristics of the human species. Neither of the pair is superior. They are equal parts of the totality that is Homo Sapiens. Exact roles and personalities mean little. What is important is the union of the two into a unity of humanity.

This combination of traits and talents can work powerful magic, for it is the microcosmic representation of the unity of the universe and creation itself. The "Great Rite", which involved physical coupling of the male and female, drew on this tremendous reserve of power through unity. Whether or not modern couples engage in intercourse is less important to magical results than understanding the nature of the bonding on all levels of the male and female psyches.

Key to a successful union is that each partner have the inner strength and knowledge inherent to their roles. This does not mean that all men must be one way and all females another. Much as a particular key fits a particular lock, so must the male and female complement each other. Success results from careful analysis and understanding of one's strengths and limitations.

## The Sage

To become a sage is to become wise. Since the accumulation of wisdom requires time, this stage is generally associated with older males. However, life experiences vary, and it is certainly possible for a young man to be regarded as possessing wisdom "beyond his years". In such cases, the role of sage may overlap that of warrior and/or consort. Young men having such wisdom are often described as poet-warriors. They assume leadership effortlessly. Without any formal recognition, they seem to automatically take on the burden of settling disputes or answering questions usually reserved for the elders of the tribe. They are recognized as "born leaders".

The primary difference between the decision makers and leaders of a particular social group and the true sage is that the sage makes decisions based on long experience, weighing all factors on the scale of logic and esoteric thought. A sage is adept at retrieving information from the Otherworld and regards advice from the spirit realm as completely valid for application toward the problem at hand.

The sage is particularly adept at consolidating knowledge from a number of sources to reach a correct decision. It is he that will tap the societal memory from this world and the next in order to bring the experience of ages past to bear on current troubles. Before the time of written historical records, the sage accepted the responsibility of being a repository for the accumulated knowledge of the tribe, whether through preservation of oral history or by contacting the vast bank of knowledge available from the Otherworld.

Those problems that occurred so infrequently that no living member of a tribe would have first hand experience with them would require the sage to tap the knowledge of ancestors and archetypes who would have solved such difficulties in the past.

The main difference between the sage and that repository of feminine wisdom, the crone, is that the sage would tend to immediately seek Otherworld advice and feel quite comfortable doing so. The crone regards all of the tribe as her grandchildren and recognizes the talents and flaws of each, loving all equally. She is comfortable with earth signs, plant lore, and the storehouse of knowledge that lies in the earth and the tribe itself. Should the sage render a decision that creates any conflict among the tribal members, the crone acts as reconciler.

The sage achieves his status through careful analysis of information from a variety of sources and

successful application of that knowledge toward preserving the wellbeing of those seeking his advice.

Sometimes, a sage may be the high priest of a coven, but more often he will be an elder, perhaps a former high priest who has matured past the role of consort to take on more sedentary duties.

To summarize, the sage's responsibilities include acting as a living library of tribal lore, an intermediary between this and the Otherworld, and a brehon or judge whose decisions reflect the wisdom of the ages.

While a high priest or warrior commander thinks tactically, the sage thinks strategically. His decisions reflect consideration for the long term effects on the individual or group that seeks his advice.

## **The Role of the Female Witch**

Much more information is available in the current Wiccan literature concerning the female witch. This is due, in part, to the natural tendency among knowledgeable authors to expose those aspects of the Craft that may seem contradictory to the societal norm of male dominance. Wicca is most certainly a philosophy that empowers females to a much greater degree than most other Western religious traditions.

The resurgence of the Craft in recent years owes much to the feminist movement. The Judeo-Christian concept of an omnipotent, distant male deity has been supplanted by a more personal goddess whose personification is the earth itself.

As with any contradictory philosophy, Wicca is offered to the neophyte as a means of escaping the dominant attitude of society in general. Those expounding upon the tenets of Wicca feel compelled to elucidate the feminine side of the Craft, almost to the exclusion of the male. Considering the dominance of masculine personalities within the mainstream religions, the feminine side of Wicca provides a refreshing alternative, but please keep in mind that Wicca does indeed acknowledge the importance of both male and female aspects in all things and that this acknowledgement transcends simple human sexuality.

The female roles in the Craft reflect the three faces of the Goddess; maiden, mother, and crone. While male roles may escape the time line of life owing to individual talents, the female path is closely bound to the natural cycles of life. Aging in the male is not necessarily tied to a man's ability to produce or nurture offspring. The female is born with a biological clock reflecting the cycles of the earth itself.

None of this has anything to do with wisdom or intelligence. It is certainly the case that women of any age may vary widely in mental capabilities and talents. The female life cycle as depicted by the triple Goddess has nothing to do with ability except in the strictly biological sense of reproduction.

Male roles are dictated by that which is best described as the workings of the mind. Those of the female are bound to the body as it reflects its relationship to the earth.

This does not mean that all males must rely solely on their intellect, nor that every woman must respect her "gut" feelings above any sort of reason. Males and females share talents, and the degree to which any witch uses particular skills to accomplish a task depends on the precise abilities of the individual regardless of sex. Just as women may become warriors, so may males bind themselves to the Great Mother and excel at earth magic. A woman may become a sage, standing apart from her "family" to render decisions and offer advice that seems to come completely from the intellect and to lack the quality of mercy one attributes to the more grandmotherly image of the Crone. Likewise, a male may take on the duties of the loving grandfather, a kind soul who loves every one of his generations unconditionally.

### **1) The Maiden**

The maiden is the young woman before the time of binding to the male. The maiden is the pubescent female who is becoming aware of her inner and outer beauty. She is acquiring the knowledge necessary to become a mother and wife. Her intuitive talents sharpen, and it is at this stage that she will learn most of the raw information necessary to attune herself to the earth and to the natural forces that will allow her to work magick of all sorts.

### **2) The Mother or Maid**

Under the tutelage of older women, especially those who have matured into the crone, she will learn to heal and nurture beyond her natural gifts. She becomes expert at harvesting and using herbs. She

learns how the earth's cycles reflect her own, and through this comprehension, she acquires a thorough understanding of basic human nature and the natural order of things.

She becomes capable of nurturing and raising a family. She learns how to unite with her mate beyond the simple physical interaction of the sexes. She recognizes that her own limitations and those of her life partner will be minimized by their union.

Her quest for a mate matures beyond the arena of physical attraction toward finding someone who complements her own capabilities.

Assuming a role does not limit the female to specific tasks while prohibiting her from tailing on others. Rather, she learns about her own abilities and sharpens them through observation, meditation, and practice. She retains her individuality. The only set guidelines for her development are those established by anatomy and physiology.

Sexism is a modern, misdirected concept and, as such, has no place in Wicca.

When the female has chosen a mate and is readout biologically and emotionally to reproduce, she becomes the personification of the Great mother. As the earth produces her bounty of life, so does the mature female.

This does not mean that physical motherhood is inevitable or some sort of duty. Women who never reproduce or who may abstain from sexual intercourse entirely can certainly adopt the nurturing role quite readily.

The human community needs ready in all of its forms to survive. A woman is free to select whatever role suits her.

We all know tales of spinster teachers and librarians who never marry. We pity them, often without understanding that these women may not have had their fate dumped upon them but, in fact, may have made a deliberate choice to provide a different sort of service to the human community. (The same is true of bachelor males.)

A brief aside about homosexuals in the Craft is in order here. The original tenets of Wicca arose during a time when reproduction was paramount in order to insure survival of the species. Thus, all behavior contrary to this goal was avoided. Where once our viability as a species depended on increased numbers, the opposite is now true. Wicca has always kept up with the times and its philosophy remains dedicated to human prosperity. Therefore, while Wicca neither condones nor condemns homosexuality, any behavior that limits population growth without destroying the species or debasing the individual is a positive step at this point in human development.

The maid/mother bears the burden of raising the young. They provide fair and equal distribution of community resources. They teach the young the ways of the tribe and the ways of humanity as a whole.

They also keeps the males from making a complete mess of things with their penchants for reckless and undisciplined behavior. Men will readily abandon a worthwhile project that requires patience to pursue any adventure. A deer in the bush means more to them than a crop in a field.

All things needing patience and a gentle hand, from children to crops, are the maid's domain. She teaches the importance of balance in all things.

### **3) The Crone**

Finally, after a long life dedicated to nurturing, the woman becomes the crone. Far from being an unattractive hag scorned by all, the crone is the Grandmother. She understands the transitions of life, because she has lived them.

Males, depending on how well they maintain themselves, can overcome the physical effects of aging and behave much as they had in their youth. Some continue to look and act with vigor until the very last moments of their lives, when age seems to catch up with them overnight.

The crone offers the guiding hand that ushers one along toward the close of life. She has the kindness that comes with age, accepting the transgressions of her "grandchildren" with the knowledge that such things have happened before in her personal experience and that they may happen again. She understands that the consequences of such behavior is seldom as serious as may first appear.

She stirs the cauldron of life, in which all are reborn. She is the embodiment of time, an ocean of wisdom beyond the comprehension of most who have not achieved her status.

More information on female roles is readily available in the current Craft literature. A selected

bibliography may be found in the appendix, along with a smattering of texts that cover the role of the male witch.

**You who value peace know well  
That war is everlasting Hell  
Ripping, rending, murder and maim  
All for some unholy gain.**

**Know then, too,  
That some are bound to fight for you,  
To keep the danger from your door,  
The price of peace is often war.**

## **A Few Favorite Chants for One and All**

**By these things I know thee nigh  
In earth and water, fire and sky.  
Dance with me, O Ancient Ones,  
Now the Circle has begun.**

**Gracious Goddess, Horned God,  
Witness what your love has wrought  
Magic, merriment, and mirth  
Waits not for Death, it's here on Earth!**

**We, your witches, celebrate  
That which hate can never take  
Lord and Lady, love and life,  
We raise a toast to Thee tonight!**

**Cerridwen, ride on the wind,  
Come bless my rite this night.  
You, the Crone who stirs the cauldron  
That promises everlasting life  
You, whose brew changed Taliesin**

**You who chased and changed with him  
The bard whose seed you finally bore  
I welcome you to this, my Circle  
Shapechanger, queen, and Wisdom's Light.  
Know that I would pay you honor  
On this merry magic night!**

**Herne the Hunter, draw you near.  
Guardian of woods and wolf and deer.  
Let me wear your horns tonight  
Work my Will by magic rite  
Fang and antler, rose and thorn  
We pass your gates to be reborn  
Robin and his merry men,  
Met you in a secret glen  
Lord of forest, field, and mist  
I welcome you in fellowship  
You the brand and me the mark  
I the hound and you the bark  
Sound you now within my soul  
Tell me of the times of old  
When men wore green to keep the seed  
And took what they did truly need  
Be with me this very night  
Against the Darkness, be my Light!**

## **Codes of Conduct**

Witches have few rules governing their behavior, particularly in matters of magick. The Wiccan Reed is available in many texts. It states that a witch may do what he or she WILLS so long as it harms none, and that all deeds will be returned threefold.

The witch came before the Reed, which acts somewhat as a disclaimer to those who fear the damage a witch could do by hexing or casting an evil eye in their direction.

It is indeed difficult to practice the Craft without ever resorting to negative action, magickal or mundane. Sometimes, the most positive of intentions may result in at less some less than positive results for certain parties. Wicca gained its name as “the craft of the wise” because great consideration and complete understanding of all the possible consequences of an act must be understood by the witch before the fact.

Witches must give careful consideration to any planned endeavor prior to its inception. Knowing the consequences of your work and accepting responsibility for its effects are important parts of being and living as a witch. You must be ready to put your entire being into every act. To do this with confidence demands that you use all the tools available to you to make the wisest choice.

These tools include intellect, a solid understanding of history, the desire to produce a positive change, and the ability to predict accurately how your actions will alter the status quo for all involved.

Beyond the common practices of consideration and meditation, the witch uses the powers of divination to distort the time line and learn the results of the change about to be made. Tarot, skrying, and every other sort of device are employed to provide a clear picture of things as they will be following a spell. The witch must endeavor to ascertain exactly what consequences may befall others because of the intended action.

This is not to say that nothing may be done that will result in a negative effect on all involved. Rather, the witch assesses the degree to which such an effect will cause genuine harm and to whom.

Suppose that, in 1939, a witch in England were considering the killing of Adolph Hitler. Certainly murder by magick or any other means is a negative act. However, the witch, having divined the path of death and destruction Hitler would carve through Europe, may decide that the karmic debt indicated by the Wiccan Reed would be well worth the elimination of this man from the planet. Supported by the intellectual analysis of the course of such tyrants and the misery they can bring if left unchecked (note that a knowledge of history is essential here), the witch may decide that the best course of action is to kill this man before he has a chance to assault mankind with his special brand of horror.

The witch can certainly choose to kill him, even if the result of such an act is the death of the witch. Some things are definitely worth dying for!

Ultimately, you must make your own decisions, and you must be ready to accept the consequences. Those who would tell you to always act in a kind and goodly way do so to protect you, both from the karmic debt you will incur and the wrath of society in general should it ever be discovered that you are in control of forces beyond their comprehension.

Thus, though the Reed can and should guide you, the ultimate choice of actions is your own. Remember that Wicca predates virtually all the modern codes of conduct, including such "hot off the presses" documents like the ten commandments, the beatitudes, and the Code of Hammurabi. You must, as an individual witch, decide on your own what is right and wrong and what debts you are willing to accept for your actions.

Guilt stops magick cold. While few of us are likely to be canonized any time soon, the best we can do for ourselves is to perform as many positive acts as we can, thereby reducing our unconscious burden of karmic debt.

This does not mean that one can avoid the Threefold Law simply by doing good things in addition to bad. Rather, the practice of doing beneficial or charitable deeds helps us to maintain a positive self image. The "faith" portion of the Witches' Pyramid demands that we have faith in ourselves. If we burden ourselves with guilt, the Pyramid crumbles.

One way to enhance our view of ourselves is to establish a code of everyday conduct. The exact source of this code is not as important its personal meaning. Many martial artists use as their guide the rules of the Samurai warrior or the Shoalin monk. Those of a more philosophical nature may choose from any of the great number documented by recognized masters of ethical conduct (Buddha, Jesus, Socrates, Plato, Confucius, etc.).

For some, the code of chivalry provides the key to correct behavior. Others select more arcane rules.

All that is necessary for a personal code of conduct to work is that you recognize that in following its rules, you are improving yourself intellectually and spiritually.

One caution: while it admirable to select a code that demands high standards, be careful not to exceed your grasp by too much. Rules that you cannot keep will damage your self image through the accumulation of further guilt. Accept that personal improvement is a stepwise process. Pick a simple set of laws that you can obey without sacrificing the elements of your life that contain importance to you, recognizing that you will mature as you progress and may, indeed, be able set a higher standard as you grow internally.

Learn to recognize your inner nature and work WITH it, not against it.

Many of us have cast away the dogma of childhood religions imposed upon us by well-meaning parents. Others discovered divergent philosophies during our formal educational process only to discover that they lacked the substance necessary to function in the modern world.

What follows is a short list of common sense behavior that you may use as you please to help you between philosophical stopping points as you grow in mind and spirit:

- 1) Perform charitable acts whenever possible without expecting reward.*
- 2) Help those who seek help. Never interfere where you have not been welcomed, lest you destroy the inner pride and spirit of the very person you sought to help.*
- 3) Envy no one. Lord over none.*
- 4) Keep your promises few. Keep them all.*
- 5) Love everyone through understanding, including your enemies.*
- 6) Constantly strive to know “right” from “wrong”, and behave accordingly.*
- 7) Speak little. Listen much.*
- 8) Accept fully the consequences of your actions without burdening others.*
- 9) Set your goals in steps, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, and keep a pace that recognizes your limitations.*

There's nothing original about this list. Add to it or subtract from it as you see fit, but, should you choose to follow any part of it, stick to it!

## Chapter 7: A Guide to Practical Living

Beyond the esoterica of behavior that is presented in this text and others toward strengthening one's inner self, there are some basic rules for living that can aid you in obtaining satisfaction with yourself.

First, you must recognize that every sort of perfection already exists inside you. You were born with your spirituality intact. Zen Buddhists are fond of saying that the Buddha nature sought by the neophyte is already within him. One charge of the Goddess states clearly that "I am what is attained at the end of desire".

We are the proverbial farmer seeking his ox, searching everywhere for it while astride its back.

In the simplest of terms, we are all quite perfect as we are. Our task is to remove the barbed wire that separates us from our perfection. That barrier is fortified by guilt and cannot be easily removed.

One of the most difficult tasks facing anyone seeking self improvement is the negative programming that we encounter in our lives. From the time we are children and can understand the spoken word, there has always been someone willing to burden us with guilt and doubt about our own capabilities. Thus is the fence erected between us and our perfection.

We can, however, transcend this barrier, because our minds provide us with the perfect set of wire cutters: recognized accomplishment.

This does not mean that you must achieve star status or win an Olympic gold medal. It means that you must provide yourself with program for personal development that satisfies you at every level.

Few of us are totally happy with our physical selves, and this makes a great place to start toward overall improvement, because the results are readily observable. Diet and exercise do much to keep us on this plane for as long as possible. Our inner drives lead us in the direction of food and away from unnecessary exertion. We crave an over-full stomach and a life of absolute leisure. These desires are in our genetic makeup and are very hard to suppress, as anyone who has tried most common sense approach to losing weight can attest.

The most important thing to remember when embarking on any method of self improvement is to be patient with yourself. If you are attempting to lose weight, don't bludgeon yourself mentally for going off your diet to eat that irresistible hot fudge brownie delight at your favorite restaurant. Just schedule a little more time to work off the calories during your next exercise period.

If your goal is to find peace of mind through meditation, don't fall apart you miss a meditative session or two. The same holds true for occasionally skipping an exercise routine or any other activity you have deemed necessary to achieving that better and brighter you.

Guilt destroys personal progress more than any lapse ever will. You must develop the ability to forgive yourself for minor transgressions. Feeling guilty leads to a loss of self esteem.

We have all endured negative programming from one source or another in our lives. When we accept these criticisms, we begin to see ourselves as imperfect. Starting with the adults who influenced our self image in childhood right up to the boss who believes in negative management (x theory, for those of

you who study such things), our lives are inundated with barbs and blasts that lower our opinion of ourselves.

To overcome all this negativism, we must recognize that we are, in fact, perfect just as we are, and that anything we do to improve ourselves is a demonstration of that perfection. When we loose our way on any of our chosen paths, whether intellectually, physically, or spiritually, we must know that these small failures are part of being human. We are capable of self correction, and , while we should welcome constructive instruction from those who have blazed the path before us, the ultimate authority in all personal matters is ourselves.

Most of us come out of childhood with heavy baggage. Even with absolutely positive parents and teachers, none of us can totally avoid accumulating guilt. It is far too powerful a motivator and very easy to use. Coaches, instructors of every sort, and our peers inflict it upon us. Worse, we use it on ourselves!

Guilt can destroy the body, mind, and spirit.

Wicca has extremely effective methods for ridding ourselves of guilt. Based on self affirmation and recognition of our personal perfection, employing them can make one stand above the crowd of handdog humanity. One caution: beware displaying your complete confidence and satisfaction with yourself, lest you be regarded as haughty and arrogant.

When you adopt a positive attitude through personal development that your self recognizes as beneficial, good things will come your way. Beware the sting of those jealous of your success without (in their eyes) any particular effort. One reason for the persecution of witches in England was the envious common folk could bring charges of witchcraft against anyone they felt had more than their fair share of wealth. Once the accused was executed or imprisoned, their goods would be scattered among the masses!

### **Step 1) Getting Rid of Guilt: Ritual of the Empty Cup**

Every religious tradition has some method for its practitioners to absolve themselves of guilt. Catholics rely on confession. Other Christians turn to Jesus. Sack cloth, ashes, self abuse, and pilgrimage are just a few of the ways mankind separates itself from that destructive mental and spiritual burden.

As with everything within the Craft, a witch rids himself of guilt through personal action. The first step in this process involves emptying oneself of accumulated guilt. Do not expect instant results from this ritual. Expect to perform it as many times as necessary depending on your own inner sense of conscience and responsibility.

What may be the blackest of sins for one person may be hardly worth another's notice.

For the purposes of this ritual, you are your own judge. Be merciful.

One caution about this particular ritual: it uses negative energy and, as such, can leave you feeling drained and maybe just a bit depressed. Don't be alarmed at these feelings. Every living thing prefers a full cup of the necessities of life over an empty one. The feelings will pass quickly as your mental cup begins to fill again, this time with what you need to move toward your goals for personal growth.

## **The Ritual**

*1) Take a bath or shower for as long as you deem necessary to feel completely clean and relaxed. Some find it helpful to use soap, bath salts, or herbs that purify (sea salt, golden seal, vervain, etc.). Slowly allow yourself to relax and divorce yourself from the everyday problems of life.*

*2) Once you have bathed, proceed directly to the place where you will cast your Circle. If you prefer to work clothed, dress in something that is new or that has been freshly laundered.*

*3) Since this ritual requires a high level of concentration, dispense with any preliminary steps to casting your Circle. Instead, use the simplest formula you are comfortable with to open the Circle.*

*4) Remain in the Circle and rid your mind further of distractions and dualities. Using the alpha countdown or counting one's breaths are both good techniques for accomplishing this. As in the preceding step, try to keep whatever method you use simple.*

5) *When you feel thoroughly relaxed and at peace with your surroundings, imagine a cup floating just a bit over your head. Once you have a clear view of the cup and have studied its details, Tilt the cup away from you in such a way as to spill all of its contents down to the very last drop. (Note: While these actions are being done mentally, they can be reinforced by acting this out with your ritual cup.) While you are doing this, imagine the cup to have contained soured wine or milk; something that needed to be disposed of before the cup can be filled with new, fresh liquid.*

6) *Once the cup is empty, put it upright again. You should now have a vivid picture of the empty cup. At this point, you will feel some loss, much like the feeling one gets after spilling the last of a favorite beverage or dropping ice cream from a cone. This sadness is merely the child mind's reactionary mechanism for dealing with change. The child mind likes to accumulate things without much regard for their nature. Any loss is mourned, including that of negative traits. Remember that the child mind values security above all else, and personal change threatens that security. Let the feelings come, examine them, endure them, then let them go.*

7) *You are now ready to fill the cup, but with what? Words can't fill it, nor can pleasant thoughts. Neither have the ability to effect change beyond the superficial level of the intellect.*

To produce real and permanent change requires Will, Imagination, Faith, and Secrecy.

*First, develop an absolutely clear picture of who you would like to be, physically, mentally, and spiritually.*

On the physical level, visualize any alteration to your body that you desire, and fix a picture of yourself having those traits. Once you have that image exactly as you want it, put it in the cup.

Changing the nature of mind is more subtle. Seeking an improvement in intellectual functions requires great discipline, mostly because it is very difficult to imagine yourself as smarter and more clear-thinking. An easy solution to this is to imagine yourself completing some mental exercise that you feel is an intellectual challenge. Picture yourself doing the multiplication tables through at least two figures. See yourself memorizing a difficult passage of poetry.

These are only suggestions. The choice of challenges is entirely personal. Do try to keep the exercises simple, however. The brain can and will reject anything that exceeds its immediate grasp. It must have a foundation to work with. Attempting to do multiplication without a basic understanding of numbers will obviously result, not in improvement, but in frustration and failure.

Once you leave the Circle, be sure to practice the exercises you have given yourself. Be relentless in your pursuit of knowledge and reject mental laziness.

## **Chapter 8: Making Magick!**

To paraphrase Aliester Crowley, *magick is the act of making things happen in conformance with one's will*. This does not mean that magick must stand outside the natural order of things. Rather, the opposite is true. To work magick requires uncovering the hidden laws of nature; learning the causes and effects that dictate reality and using those principles to alter reality in the desired way.

There are several key steps to constructing an effective ritual or spell. The most important factor in making magick is that the operator *must* endow the work with emotional content. Every part of the work must appeal to the magician on a conscious and subconscious level.

This is not to say that every part of a spell needs to be the original work of the operator. It does mean that the methods and materials should be those with which the magician feels completely comfortable with using. A favorite chant or a particular method gleaned from venerated texts can be employed along

with any words or tools that are the invention of the operator as long as the overall effect is to focus the magician upon the task at hand.

Tables of correspondences, planetary lore, and lunar phases came about through a great deal of experimentation regarding their effect on specific magickal operations. Do not disregard them, but do not deny your own inclinations as to the forces that might apply to your work.

When compiling any rite, follow this basic formula:

- 1) Define the goal of the work in the simplest possible way.**
- 2) Describe the goal of the work; that is, what you expect to happen when your spell takes fruition.**
- 3) Divine the goal; search out as fully as possible all potential results of your work.**
- 4) Research the rite. Learn from the successes and failures of others, especially those who share your tradition or whose work you respect.**
- 5) Compose the rite in exact detail.**
- 6) Rehearse the rite, whether physically or mentally. Remember, however, that spontaneous happenings in the actual conducting of any rite may take place. Be prepared to accept those that reinforce the work and to reject those that do not without undue concern.**
- 7) Physically and mentally prepare for the rite. Perform any sort of purification process that has meaning for you. Bathe. Meditate. Read. Take a nature walk.**
- 8) Perform the rite.**
- 9) Record the details of the work immediately after the fact. Remember to include any impromptue events.**
- 10) Observe the effect of your work with a scientist's eye. Note in your record only those things that actually happen within the scope of your work.**
- 11) Reviewing your journal, revise your rite using your observations. Make those elements that you have identified as key to your success a part of your permanent record of your personal magickal works. Discard those portions that do not work.**

Above all, remember that witches are scientists. Blind faith has no place in Wicca.

The human mind functions like a computer of great efficiency and speed. We can accumulate, digest, and store data in enormous quantities at a blinding rate of speed. However, we are much slower at categorizing that data effectively for our own use. For that, we require time to think; time to analyze and classify these vast amounts of information so that they will be useful to us in making future decisions.

Various cultures and individuals employ different means of turning this raw data into meaningful information. Some meditate. Some use rituals designed to improve mental focus. Others simply ponder matters much the same way a cow chews its cud, turning over the mass of facts influencing the decision making process until they become palatable and manageable.

Witches use all these techniques plus one other that is not so common. Witches bend time to ascertain the outcome of causal factors before taking any specific direction. The Circle is not merely a convention of ritual practice. It symbolizes the way witches view the Universe, not as linear, having a distinct beginning and end, but as cyclical.

Our human sensory equipment demands that we view time as linear, but this is merely a convenience for our survival from one event to the next. In fact, time does not PASS, it simply IS. If you have difficulty understanding this concept, try determining, without the use of a clock, how long you sleep. Better still, try figuring out just how long a dream "really" lasts.

Taking Einstein's theory of special relativity beyond the physical universe and applying it to the

entire Universe as perceived by humans illuminates the problem (pardon the pun). Time passes because we think it does. We see it pass with our own eyes. We note events and categorize them according to the time line and through personal observation.

There is plenty of literature available from both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions that gives the lie to our personal perception of reality, so I will not belabor the point. Suffice to say that divination is routinely done by those ignorant of the details of why and how it works. It is not necessary to prove the existence of water in order to obtain a drink.

Their claims to the contrary, most people do not want to know the future; not with any precision, at least. A general pattern is all they seek; a future that allows the possibility of improvement of their current circumstances. Most books on divination advise the soothsayer to avoid negative comments regarding events to come, concentrating instead on the potential for change that will turn a bad outcome into a good one should the seeker follow a positive path. Predictions as dire a death are to be replaced with cautionary tales dwelling on the potential for improvement should the seeker just refrain from self destructive behavior.

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In all, be true to your tradition. What one you choose is of little importance, as long as it satisfies your personal spiritual needs. The making of magic depends on the state of the subconscious, wherein lies the true Will

There is as much truth in Christian prayer as in the most arcane magical rites; so, too, for the meditations of the Buddhists and the chants of various other religions. We follow many roads to the same destination.

What is essential to magick is knowledge of the sort that is gained through meditation upon the symbols that act as gates between the worlds. For the shaman, the knowledge may be found a cave or a simple hole in the ground. For the Cabalist, the Tree of Life and its components serve as the gateway to those higher planes of existence that are the repositories of magical enlightenment.

In Celtic and certain other Wiccan traditions, the Quarters serve as keys to the Otherworld. The pentacle, blade, wand, and cup are interchangeable with the Stone of Fal, the Sword of Nuada, the Spear of Lugh, and the Cauldron of Cerridwen as subjects for astral exploration. In all, it is best to remember that these symbols stand for the elements that make up this world and act as principals in the Otherworld.

Remember that understanding the nature of the Ether, the center of the Circle where magical power manifests, also demands concentration of effort. Learn the inner meaning of each of these facets that compose the Circle. Through the complete understanding of these portals are all things possible within the realm of the All, beyond and outside of which there is nothing. Meditate on the polarities within the symbols. Earth is the firmament. Its opposite is Fire, the converter. Air is thought in motion. Water, at the other pole, is thought at rest; contemplation as opposed to inspiration.

*I sing of Earth and Fire*

Of Air and Water  
On a still night  
In a tossed bed.

Fire is friend to no one  
Nor a foundation  
For finer things

Controlled  
It is the best of forces  
Free it burns the hand

Faith in full measure  
Makes a bright blaze  
Blasting fear

In extra measure  
It takes the mind  
To fear forever

Hell's fury reigns  
Where escape is made  
Beyond the hearth

Fire draws the sword from stone  
Anneals and tempers  
In clever hands

Should the Salamanders slip the nest  
No rest, my friend,  
No rest!

In times to come as in times past  
Only balance  
Guides the blast.

Tame the Dragon  
Lest it  
Claim you!

Master the Spear  
And master all things  
As did Lugh, so long ago.

Yet he remains  
The Master  
Still!

# POWER

The symbol of Power is the dragon. The dragon acts as a repository for sheer strength as manifested by Will. It holds no distinction between good and evil, nor is it subject to any subjective moral code. This is precisely why some cultures view dragons as a menace while others consider them beneficial and a sign of good fortune.

Merlin's counsel to Vortigern about the warring dragons beneath his tower that caused it to collapse no matter how well engineered and built demonstrates the degree of absolute force that dragons represent. All the power of the universe resides in the dragon form. It is the archetype for the force of the Almighty as endowed upon Creation. Here lies the source, the reservoir, of the magician's power.

Power does not recognize a distinction between beneficial acts and works of destruction. It must be directed by the operator toward a given task.

The reservoir never runs dry, for, as with all Creation, it is endlessly coming into being from the action of the All. Once drawn into the realm of mundane existence, however, it follows the laws of the observable universe, including the principle of conservation of matter and energy. Thus, the rules regarding its use give rise to the Threefold Law of Wicca and the cautions for its employment that are recorded in the ceremonial magical texts.

If one draws upon this Power, there most assuredly will be consequences to the operator in keeping with how the Power is applied.

The ancient tales of dragonslaying represent man's desire to quell the Power; to eliminate it from his world and gain control over his existence. In cultures where dragons are looked upon as good omens, retaining them as companions demonstrates man's hope of appeasing the Almighty, preventing the destructive aspects of this universal force from manifesting as calamities of nature such as storms, earthquakes, tidal waves, and the like.



# A Money Spell

Danu, Dagda,  
Gods of Old  
fill my pockets with silver and gold

Send it swiftly  
Send it soon  
faster than the waxing Moon!

Ancients Ones, I ask your aid  
The spell is done  
The charm is made!

**Lodestone, gold, and silver have. Together bind them  
hand in hand.**

# The Secret Doctrine

Let no one know your thoughts.

Let no one see  
Into your heart or mind

Remember the Ancients and their ways.

Refrain from profanity  
In thought, word, and deed

Let no talent go unused  
Let no knowledge lie dormant  
Let Wisdom rule thoughts and passions

Bind none  
Who need not be bound  
Bind yourself only to Truth

The Secret of the Stone  
Is foundation  
Keep it sound

The Secret of the Sword  
Is inspiration  
Turn your face to it

The Secret of the Spear  
Is Passion  
Rule it with Law

The Secret of the Cauldron  
Is Peace  
Keep it innermost always

The Secret of the Center  
Is not mine to tell  
The Word yet unheard.

## The Mathematical Construct of the Circle

The Circle derives from a mathematical formula in keeping with hermetic principles.

According to hermetic doctrine, there are seven planes of existence. These planes account for three degrees of deviation from the central point defining a given plane. The Ancients considered these three degrees to represent the nature of the delineation from the center of virtually any sort of existence, whether physical, spiritual, or mental.

Take, for example, the physical state of an element: water. According to this formula, water has seven possible modes of existence. At the central point, we find water in its purest sense, devoid of external influences such as temperature. Here, water is pure H<sub>2</sub>O, a simple molecule that can stand alone and requires no other influence to exist. It is perfectly stable; water in the ideal state, its shape and form independent of anything else.

In its first positive degree of separation from this ideal state, water becomes the liquid with which we are most familiar as being pure water, an agglomeration of molecules interacting with one another according to its chemical nature; that is, an association of H<sub>2</sub>O molecules that form all possible stable relationships with their neighbors. These include the formation of multiple raw water molecules held together by electromagnetic and chemical forces in such a way as to produce extended molecules that are still, in their essence, pure water.

Water can exist in three simultaneous forms; as a single molecule, as a chain of chemically bonded of those molecules, and as a less firmly linked structure dependent on subtle electromagnetic forces known as VanDerwalls forces. The latter shift and change constantly with no great input of energy from any outside source. The chemical bonds are not so easily broken and usually require some input of energy to separate the simple H<sub>2</sub>O molecules one from the other.

For all intents and purposes except the working of magic and other arcane chemical operations, this multiphasic water is still pure water.

In its second positive degree, water comes under the influence of forces that can exist away from its central defining point. A useful example is water as it exists when exposed to a flame that it does not

extinguish. Here, water becomes subject to sufficient energy to cause it seek a different form of stable existence in which VanDerwalls forces are overcome completely and molecular interaction is defined by the amount of energy introduced to the system. Bonds break between the longer molecular aggregates. New molecules are formed that can withstand the abundance of bond-breaking energy. The water is no less pure than in its previous state. It has merely taken on a form that is stable within present conditions dictating its ability to form complex molecular structures. This sort of water owes its state of being as much to outside influences (the source of energy) as it does to its own basic nature.

At the third Plateau, water surrenders its nature to the forces acting upon it. Staying with the previous example of energy input into the system, water now loses its ability to remain a liquid and becomes a vapor. Heated to boiling, water accepts air as a component and responds to the overwhelming influence of the energy to which it is subjected.

Here we arrive at a key point: water that becomes vapor leaves behind all impurities, including the relatively innocuous “impurities” of elaborate chemical bonds. Thus, through evaporation, water returns to

the state that it had at the central point, that of pure H<sub>2</sub>O. 

## The Three Rays

The secret of the three rays lies in what they represent within the working of magic. It is through the clear understanding of these rays that the Will acts upon the Universe.

The central ray represents Power; that is, the undifferentiated force that permeates all Creation. This force can be tapped and, indeed, must be, in order to perform any function, magical or not. Here is the true meaning of “As above, So below,” for the force that one uses to lift an object from a table is the same in nature as the force employed to work magic, differing only in degree. Force is force on any plane.

In order to put this force into effect, it is necessary to identify with the object upon which the force is to be applied. This is the left hand ray, associated with Isis, representing Love in its purest state; that which allows the magician to completely understand the nature of the object which is to be altered.

The right hand ray is Wisdom, that complete knowledge of the path the force must travel and the consequences of its use to the magician and the world in general. It is identified with Osiris, he who would sacrifice himself utterly for the sake of the greater good or the "great work".

Thus, Power is Apophis, that energy that knows no moral bounds or limitations.

Love is Isis, who so loved Osiris that she searched the world to make him once again whole.

Wisdom is Osiris, who was torn to pieces for the sake of life; he whose wisdom brought

understanding and acceptance of the ultimate sacrifice.

*edit*

#### **Addendum**

**In everything, there is yin and yang, passive and active, receptivity and action.**

**Only by using the whole can anything be accomplished. Through the Will (yang) is the whole being activated toward a goal.**

**Every action, every activity requires the stirring of the whole of one's talents and abilities, that these gifts may be brought to bear on the situation at hand.**

**All training of the mind and body is directed at this purpose: that we survive and recognize those mechanisms that enhance this survival. otherwise, all learning and conditioning is for nothing. The Supreme Ultimate must always be our focus of attention, but it is not sacrosanct that talents be reserved for that achievement alone. rather, each of life's tasks gives the opportunity to use all that we know (for our pursuit of the Supreme Ultimate). Therefore, the seeker uses every life situation as practice, a means of honing skills, a adventure from which learning can take place. One confronts**

**each problem happily, knowing that the result, no matter what it might be, will teach one more lesson on the road to enlightenment.**