

THE ALEX SANDERS LECTURES

PART THIRTEEN:

FORMING A COVEN

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When one has finally attained to the third degree of the Wicca he may probably decide that he would like to break away from the group he is working with and form his own working group or coven. If it were you, you would have found before hand that you and a few friends could work together away from the normal meetings and obtain reasonable results. Perhaps you would have spoken about the possibility of setting up your own coven with each other. This is how you might go about it.

In the first place you would discuss which home or apartment would be the best for the circles, naturally the one having the most space would be the most suitable. However, this would be up to you to decide. Having a permanent temple in a convenient spot would be better for all concerned.

Having now accomplished this, it would be up to the High Priest and the High Priestess, chosen by the elders, to have all the working tools and equipment already in their possession. It is no use starting a coven with only three working tools.

The elders should then get together and discuss the material problems of a new coven. Someone must be chosen to keep a record of the group's funds. This money will be used to buy incense and candles and anything else that may be needed, and it should be decided how much the members should contribute and how often. Next, a member, possibly a first degree initiate, should be selected to set out the temple and the altar before each meeting. The instruction in this should be given beforehand until the member can set up the altar without having to refer to a list of weapons, etc.

Having now done all these things, you can now all come together to hold your first meeting. It would be an idea to select four members whose zodiacal signs fall under the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Say a Capricorn for Earth, Gemini for Air, Aries for Fire and Cancer for Water, but if none of your members have these signs, any born under one of these elements can become a watchtower. These watchtowers will stand at the four cardinal points of the circle and will act as receptors for the power sent out and help to seal it on the plains where it can be used to the greater benefit for the party you are working for. These members can be swapped round as much as they like but you will usually find that they feel they can do the most as watchtowers and they will not want to give it up.

The covens of the Alexandrian cult here in England basically all work the same as regards invocations and casting the circle, but when you set up your coven, you may wish to elaborate on what you have been taught.

'It is always better to have too much ritual than too little.'

As there are many different paths to follow it would be advisable to have an evening or two set aside each week for the purpose of training your initiates. Then at a following coven meeting you could let them cast the circle and invoke the watchtowers etc. In this way, they can learn by their mistakes and will know how to channel his or her power to the full advantage.

Remember always to bathe and purify yourselves before a circle, for being fresh in body you will be fresh in mind and so be better to receive and contribute to the efforts of the group, for in all these things 'properly prepared you must be'.

Naturally, you will attract many new members - those who have perhaps written to another coven, but as they live near you they have been given your address. These new people can be invited along for a chat and it is up to the High Priest and High Priestess of the coven to decide whether the person is suitable for initiation. Sometimes you will recognise a potential initiate immediately, others will perhaps take much longer to show their potential. Always be wary however, for some people will show outward signs of great interest in the Craft but their inner mind is intent on lower things.

A new member, if invited to a circle, will show his true mind eventually. The true initiate will put himself fully into the work of the coven and will show great promise by learning what he must by heart.

If the elders of the coven have good harmony then the coven will grow strong and the rituals will develop. Never say to yourself, 'I know nothing, how can I teach others?'

You can teach your initiates what you have learnt and as time passes you will learn by whatever mistakes you may make yourself and the experience of having your own coven will be invaluable. The pitfalls may seem many, but when the coven is fully formed and working well, you will look back on the troubles as good experience.

This then, is a short account of what can be expected and what can be done when you set out on this venture. And remember, 'Keep pure your highest ideal, strive ever towards it, let naught stop you or turn you aside.'



written for Alex Sanders basic witchcraft course, later called the Alex Sanders Lectures. From original source material. (C) 2005 Ordine Scatere Stellae