

# MEZLIM

Practical Magick for the New Aeon

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FOLK MAGICK



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# MEZLIM STAFF

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# EDITOR'S FORUM

Isn't it interesting how we always seem to assume that everyone else sees the world the same way that we do?

Recently, it came to my attention that, in spite of all our efforts to clearly communicate the contrary, some (or perhaps many) people still view *Mezlim* as "only for ceremonial magicians."

Perhaps the most disturbing thing about this realization was that I had so completely convinced myself that we were getting across the idea that this magazine was for anyone and everyone who practiced positive forms of growth oriented magic, alternative earth based religion, and those engaged or interested in related endeavors. This is what I wanted to see, but it isn't necessarily what everyone else saw.

I'm not sure how much of this comes from our early days (of four years ago) when most of our writers were indeed of the ceremonial persuasion, and our masthead read: "*A Practical Journal for the Working Magus*," but I'm sure it made an impression.

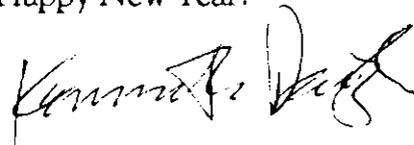
The point is, once you've made a

particular impression, it can be extremely difficult to alter it. After all, once we have formed an opinion about, let's say, a particular person, we create within our minds a corresponding image of that person, based upon our own experience and how we have interpreted it. From that time forward, each encounter with this same person is really an encounter with the internal image we've contrived, rather than the person *HI*self.

This is a problem which those who work to bring about personal transformation run into regularly. We change. But how willing are those around us to accept and celebrate these changes. An even more telling question might be: How willing are *WE* to accept the changes of those around us?

Just something to think about.

Happy New Year!



(Incidentally, if anyone has any clever ideas of how we can successfully transform our perceived image in the community, please let us know.)

# Folk Magic in the Academy

by Nikki Bado

"Who, *me*? Practice folk magic? Nah, I don't believe in any of that superstition stuff."

"But you're Pagan."

"Yeah, but my magic actually *works*."

Unfortunately, for the vast majority of folks, the terms "magic," "folk belief," and even "folk religion" all have a vaguely (and sometimes not so vague) pejorative connotation. The attitude commonly expressed is that magic is "superstition" or a set of "old wives' tales" that survived into modern times among groups of backward, uneducated, or otherwise unsophisticated people.

The fact is, however, that magic and folk belief are clearly alive and well and present at any contemporary pagan gathering. Since the modern-day Pagan community includes well educated, urban, and fairly sophisticated folks in its circle, the image of folk magic being the tool of backward hicks tends to fall down when examined in light of present-day reality.

Many members of the Neo-Pagan community realize that what we are practicing is indeed folk magic and are in the process of actively changing the understanding of the meaning of the term—not only within the Pagan community, but outside of it—among scholars as well.

Scholars have always been fascinated by folk magic, belief, and religion. From the very earliest times, when what scholars there were literally came out of the Church's monopoly on education, folk magic and folk religion were thought of as the bizarre and exotic practices of ignorant heathens from more "primitive" cultures. This is no doubt where the "folk" picked up its pejorative connotation.

This kind of thinking persisted into the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the folk magic and religions of "primitive" people being thought of as naive "superstition".

While practice of folk magic in the enlightened and scientific eras of the nineteenth or twentieth century could merely get you laughed at, it was no laughing matter during the years of the Inquisition when practicing an

"alternative religion" could get you killed. (Of course, those were the days when just being in the wrong place at the wrong time could get you killed. You didn't even have to practice a weird religion.)



The persistingly negative connotation of folk belief can be seen in the fairly recent remarks of Alexander Krappc, who wrote (with no sense of irony intended whatsoever) in *The Science of Folklore* (1930), "Superstition, in common parlance, designates the sum of beliefs and practices shared by other people in so far as they

differ from our own. What we believe and practise [sic] ourselves is, of course, Religion.”

While there are still remnants of this kind of thinking in the Academy, folklorists, anthropologists, and scholars of religions are now coming into a different idea about the nature of folk magic and belief. Since scholars were in part responsible for the negative image of magic and folk belief, it's only fair that they be part of the “reformation” of the folk process.

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“folk beliefs are not just found among isolated, uneducated, or exotic groups, but among all peoples.”

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So, how do contemporary scholars examine magic and folk belief, and how do Neo-Pagans contribute to a changing attitude toward folk religion? Ohio State folklorist Pat Mullen, in a forthcoming article in the *Folklore Encyclopedia*, identifies *folk belief* as a “broad genre of folklore which includes expressions and behaviors variously called superstition, popular belief, magic, the supernatural, “old wives’ tales”, folk medicine, folk religion, weather signs, planting signs, conjuration, hoodoo, root work, portents, omens, charms, and taboos.”

Considering the diversity and complexity of the above list, one of the first problems scholars face is classification, especially when comparing folk beliefs across different cultures. Mullen cites folklorist Wayland D. Hand's classification system as a good attempt to get a handle on the diverse elements of folk

belief. Hand based his system on the “cycle of life” or “rites of passage” idea that was originally formulated by Arnold van Gennep. Hand's categories are as follows:

- 1) birth, infancy, childhood
- 2) human body, folk medicine
- 3) home, domestic pursuits
- 4) economic, social relationships
- 5) travel, communication
- 6) love, courtship, marriage
- 7) death and funeral customs
- 8) witchcraft, ghosts, magical practices
- 9) cosmic phenomena: Times, numbers, seasons
- 10) weather
- 11) animals, animal husbandry
- 12) fishing and hunting
- 13) plants, plant husbandry
- 14) miscellaneous.

Hand's classification system is quite elaborate in itself, especially considering that these basic categories are further divided into sub-categories. In order to make the complex subject of folk belief more palatable, folklorists and anthropologists have developed various strategies.

One early school of folklorists and anthropologists saw folk magic and beliefs as survivals of some form of early religious beliefs or rituals. They were concerned with tracing the ultimate origins of different types of folk magic. Ironically, while one major group of “survivalist” scholars saw these beliefs as remnants of an earlier, more “primitive” societal stage, another thought of them as remnants of an earlier “Golden Age” which was lost to modern man.



As an aside, this reminds me of a stage which many Wiccans apparently went through—myself included, sometimes—in an early attempt to “justify” their religion or maybe even trace their practices to the ultimate “Golden Age of Wicca.” Perhaps, like contemporary folklorists and anthropologists, we no longer need to feel the need to trace origins, having found more interesting and imaginative things to do.

Getting back to the scholars, it must be pointed out that neither one of the survivalist groups much cared how or why such beliefs functioned in the present day. Their attempt to trace folk beliefs historically completely overlooked how the people who used them actually thought about them.

It was also typical of early scholars to associate folk beliefs with rural and lower class communities, often totally ignoring folk practices in urban or industrial society, and definitely ignoring folk beliefs among the middle and upper class. As Mullen points out, modern-day folklorists recognize that “folk beliefs are not just found among isolated, uneducated, or exotic groups, but among all peoples.”

In an attempt to avoid the negative connotations of words like “superstition,” some contemporary folklorists, like Alan Dundes, have taken a structural approach to the definition of folk belief. Dundes identified traditional verbal expressions which have Conditions and Results, some of which are causal and some of which are not. For instance, a black cat crossing your

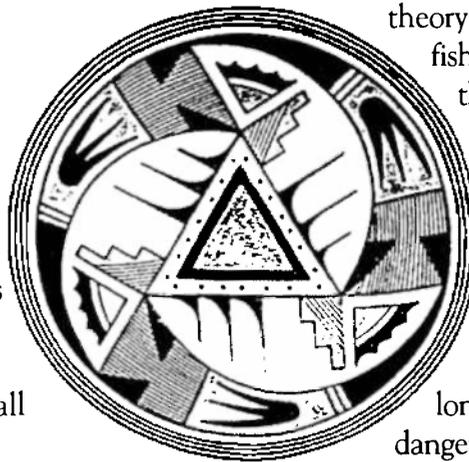
path was a *cause* of bad luck. A halo around the moon was a *sign* of rain, but not a *cause*. Of course, the problem with structural definition of verbal expression is that the underlying structure is not always apparent in the expression of a belief; behavior and context have to be examined as well.

In addition to survivalists and structuralists, functionalists have also contributed to the study of folk magic and belief, taking behavior and context more into account. Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in particular had an influence on how folklorists today use the idea of function to investigate folk belief. Mullen points out that Malinowski’s field work on magic and ritual among Trobriand Islanders was the basis for the “anxiety - ritual theory.” “Wherever there is uncertainty in life, anxiety will arise, and magic and ritual will be used to gain a sense of control.”

Mullen himself used the anxiety-ritual theory in his work on commercial fishermen. He discovered that they employ a system of occupational folk belief which “helps them to cope with the physical and financial risk of their work.”

When they start out on a long fishing trip in potentially dangerous waters, they perform certain rituals such as throwing coins overboard; they avoid saying certain words, such as “alligator” or “rabbit,” and they avoid particular actions such as turning the hatch cover upside down in order to insure a safe and profitable trip.

However, to put all folk magic down to a ritualistic avoidance of anxiety is to miss altogether or at least oversimplify the



imaginative and creative ways in which individuals not only deal with the exigencies of life, but actually express or construct their worlds.

Classification, structuralism, and functionalism have all contributed to the understanding of folk belief. However, folklorists who use performance theory seem to be making the most significant contribution to our understanding of the multiple layers of meaning which are produced by those who practice some form of folk magic and belief today.

In studying the *performance* of an act of magic, the whole context of the act must be taken into account. This means that *what* was said or done, the *way* in which it was executed, and under what *specific circumstance* or context it was performed, along with the reactions and responses of any others present or implied as an audience must all be taken into account in the analysis. This neatly merges criteria folklorists call “text,” “texture,” and “context” in order to get as full and complete a picture as possible.

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## Neo-Pagan rituals occur in a dazzling array

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Mullen makes the point that folklorists have begun to apply performance theory to the study of folk belief “in order to get at the ways in which expressions of belief do more than simply reflect worldview, but actually help to reconstruct the culture itself.” For Mullen and other folklorists, folk belief is seen as a “part of a dynamic ongoing tradition” that is “not static but continually undergoing change as individuals adapt received knowledge to specific circumstances.”

This brings us to Neo-Paganism—an almost perfect illustration of the dynamic nature of tradition and the use of folklore in everyday life “as a means of creating culture.” In fact, Pagans are constantly adapting “received knowledge to specific circumstances” in their use of magic. Whether you get your basic tools or ingredients from a “traditional” Book of Shadows or one of the late Scott Cunningham’s many books on magic and herbalism, the application of these techniques and materials in a magical context is limited only by your imagination and resourcefulness. The modern stuff of folk magic contains ingredients and techniques passed down through tradition (in the broadest and most inclusive sense of the term) and adapted to a particular situation through the individual Pagan’s own creativity.

In particular, the study of Neo-Pagan ritual can be of special interest to folklorists who work in a performance mode. Neo-Pagan rituals occur in a dazzling array. In addition to seasonal rituals, Pagans perform rituals for a variety of other purposes as needed. Rites may be performed for all the usual life passages (and perhaps a few surprising ones as well). Rituals are typically done in celebration, for healing, to provide comfort, to assist in transition, for protection, for whatever is needed by the participants. Because the emphasis in Neo-Pagan ritual is on participation and experience, personal creativity in ritual is important. Rituals therefore exist in infinite numbers of styles, ranging in structure from “none” to elaborately choreographed affairs.

However, the startling and interesting element in Pagan ritual from a folklorist’s perspective is its participatory and performative nature. At every step of the

way throughout the typical Neo-Pagan ritual, performance and participation are key elements—from the very first breath drawn to ground and center in circle to the last hug at the end. Understanding ritual as performance enables us to see the mutually active and dynamic relations between performer, text, and audience in a religious context.

Another facet of modern Paganism of interest to folklorists is the way in which Neo-Pagans seem to have an ability to hold belief alongside critical consciousness in the creation of magic and ritual. Pagans all across the country are making themselves responsible for their own experiences of the sacred. We are telling our own stories, making our own myths, conducting our own acts of magic, and performing our own rituals. We are crafting our celebrations of the sacred in new and possible revolutionary ways. Among Pagans, ritual can be understood not as a “prescribed form,” but a world *creating* act through which our traditions are given new meanings.

The study of folk belief has come a long way. Where early scholars thought of themselves as practicing “religion” and “science,” contemporary scholars are aware of themselves as practicing certain forms of folk belief, “constructing their scholarly schemes for ordering the world in some of the same ways others use religion or folk belief to construct theirs.”

One day, I look forward to the time when we no longer have to speak in terms of the distinction between “Religion” (with a capital “R”) and “folk religion.” We need to recognize the “folk” in all aspects of the human creation and celebration of the sacred. Understanding the ways in which belief combines with critical consciousness, and tradition combines with personal

creativity in the performance of any sort of ritual or act of magic, is a big step towards that goal. I think that contemporary folklorists and scholars of religions are moving in that direction. Neo-Pagans are certainly helping to create the paradigm shift which finally removes “folk” from its marginal status.

Note: My thanks especially to Professor Patrick Mullen of the Ohio State University for his permission to cite from materials on folk belief which he prepared for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Folklore Encyclopedia*. Any mistakes or errors in this article are mine alone.

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# A Witch's Garden

by Maeve

Long ago, if someone were to mention the phrase "A Witch's Garden", no doubt many images were conjured of an old hag stooped over a wild mass of noxious vegetation. Terms like "hellebore, wolfsbane, hemlock and nightshade" would send local townsfolk running to the village priest. Luckily, attitudes have changed (at least for the most part) today, and research from the medical field has given validity to the usage of these and other plants for their healing properties.

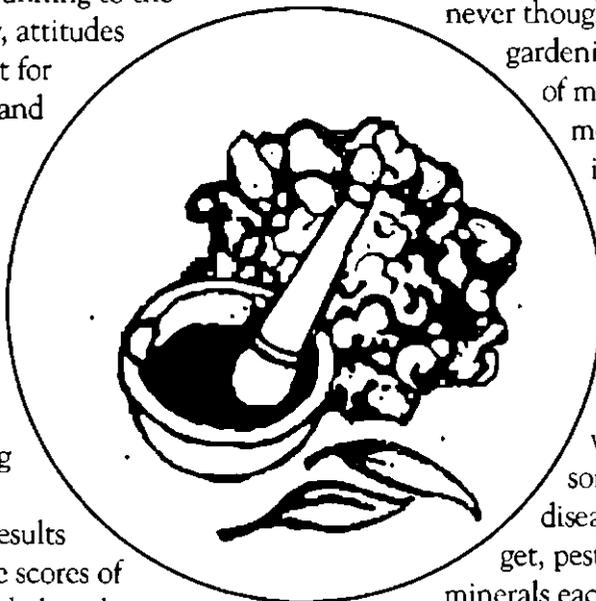
Should today's Witch feel the longing to work with Mother Earth and to see the results of her labors, there are scores of books available on herbal gardening, properties of plants, magical associations and the like. The problem for the apprentice Witch, herbalist or alchemist is to know where to start and then what to do with what they have grown. I would like to share with you a few gardening hints, my own views of some of the printed resources available, and a dedication that I used for my own Witch's Garden.

First of all, you must ask yourself what type of garden you want. That is, what do you want to do with these plants? Do you intend to cook with them, make incense,

homeopathic remedies, or aromatherapy? A clear beginning focus will immediately determine which plants you will need to obtain. I settled on a mixture of all the above. I drew up a garden plan that had four sections. Each section is focused on a particular use.

The next item to research is how each plant reacts to the plants around them. This is called Companion Gardening. I had

never thought about this aspect of gardening until a good friend of mine mentioned it to me before I got too involved. For instance, if you plan to grow culinary herbs and plants, dill and tomato aren't compatible, while basil and tomato work well together. This has something to do with diseases each plant might get, pest protection and what minerals each plant might place in and take from the soil.



Next, you must decide where you will plant. Even if you live in an apartment, you can have a garden. This is called Container Gardening. Before I moved out to the country, I had acquired cuttings from my neighbor who had the most incredible English Garden. I got these clippings well established in various pots and arranged them nicely on my back deck. After I moved, these plants became the foundation for my Witch's Garden.

Proper placement of your garden is also

important. Take time to look at the sun's course during the day. Will your plants require full sun or part shade? This needs to be taken into consideration, along with soil conditions, water and drainage.

I can recommend a variety of plants that share medicinal, culinary and magical characteristics. I will just give a brief listing, since much of this information can be readily found elsewhere.

**Rosemary** - an excellent cooking herb. It is also used in purification along with hyssop.

**Dill** - another great cooking herb, I use it a lot in salads and soup. It also can be used to help stomach aches.

**Chamomile** - a wonderful relaxing tea, also good for aromatherapy.

**Comfrey** - a little is good in salads and cooking. It is also used as a poultice on bruises and broken bones.

**Golden Seal** - a lot has been written about this plant - a great purifier.

**Mint** - there are many varieties. They can be used in teas, cooking, aromatherapy and making incense.

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...the longing to work with  
Mother Earth and to see the  
results...

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Before gathering you plants, you might take some time to find out what magical properties and correspondences relate to them. I was amazed to find out that there are very few plants that related to the element of Earth. Most plants tend to belong to Air or Fire. Some plants also have Deities ascribed to them. For example all Artemesia: Wormwood, Mugwort, Tarragon—belong to Artemis.

After I finished planting, I held a dedication on the first full moon. I have included the ritual for your own use. Please feel free to add or revise as you see fit. I might add, it worked. I hardly have any pests and my garden has "been fruitful and multiplied"....

## Garden Dedication

Gather your materials: Cup, Athame, Wand, Pentacle, Cakes and Wine, water, incense, fire source, candles & holders, charcoal, bell, etc.

## Cast A Circle

*This is a place of the living, of plants, of animals, of insects and spirits. A place within time, as creation ages, and beyond time, that these spirits always remain. This circle is cast. It is a place of working between the worlds. It is a place of rejoicing as the creations join with the Creators.*

## Elemental Blessings

*Creature of salt that purifies, cleanse this water of any impurities, so that I may use it in this rite to honor the Gods - so mote it be.*

(asperge circle)

*I take Earth and Water to the East to purify my thoughts and inspirations.*

*I take Earth and Water to the South to purify my actions and desires.*

*I take Earth and Water to the West to purify my feelings and emotions.*

*I take Earth and Water to the North to purify the physical plane on which I stand.*

*Oh creature of fire that consumes, ignite this incense that air may be purified to honor the Gods in this rite I hold to rejoice with Them.*

I take Fire and Air to the East for clear vision.

I take Fire and Air to the South for dancing.

I take Fire and Air to the West to fill my soul with happiness.

I take Fire and Air to the North for the foundation of it all.

## Calling of the Watchtowers

Oh Watchtower of the East. Element of Air. Guard me now, Pluto in this working and dedication I hold in your honor.

Oh Watchtower of the South. Element of Fire. Guard me now, Lord Cernunnos in this working and dedication I hold in your honor.

Oh Watchtower of the West. Element of Water. Guard me now Lady Artemis in this working and dedication I hold in your honor.

Oh Watchtower of the North. Element of Earth. Guard me now Lady Hecate in this working and dedication I hold in your honor.

## Invocation of the Gods

I invoke your might, Thor of the Rowan. Come to me now in the center of Your creation. This garden I have planted in Your honor. As Your strength and love touches me - may Your strength and love nurture both Your trees and plants.

I invoke you, Lady Demeter. Goddess of Grain, Goddess of the Poppy. Come to me here in this garden of Your creations. This garden shelters Your sacred plant. Give it and

its neighbors Your strength and love that You give to me.

There are many plants here, many have elemental powers and honor You in Your many forms, Oh Lord and Lady! I ask that these and the others planted here be under your protection. Let them prosper, grow and be harvested in the joy of living and in the aid to other creatures living. Protect them from harmful pests, disease and drought.

I will do my part as guardian of this garden and caretaker of Your children.



Within this garden and on the land surrounding it are many plants representing elemental powers. I dedicate these to the Elementals:

To the East, Element of Air - Citrus Mint, Chocolate Mint, Southernwood, Angelica, Marjoram, Sage, Lavender, Bergamot, Parsley, and Lily of the Valley.

To the South, Element of Fire - Artemesia, Marigold, Basil, Rue, Woodruff, Dragon's Blood, St. John's Wort, Dill, Rosemary, Curry, Peppermint, Pennyroyal, Oak, Fennel, Hawthorn, Hyssop, Juniper, Holly, Lovage and Rowan.

To the West, Element of Water - Lady's Mantle, Dittany, Tansy, Tomato, Thyme, Chamomile, Fever Few, Foxglove, Poppy, Yarrow, Strawberry, Valerian, Comfrey, Spearmint, Raspberry, Rose, Willow, Bee Balm, Lemon Balm and Catnip.

To the North, Element of Earth - Lunary and Mugwort.

Even so, some of these are dedicated to Elementals, there are some who hold high favor in Your aspects. Bless them now: Hecate - Mint and Willow, Artemis - Mugwort, Artemesia and Rue, Thor - Rowan, Isis - Rose, Apollo - Lily of the Valley, Persephone - Parsley, Demeter - Pennyroyal and Poppy, Kerne - Oak, Erzulie - Basil, Venus - Angelica and Marjoram, Baldur - St. John's Wort, Freya - Strawberry, Hymen - Hawthorn, Pluto - Peppermint, Bast - Catnip.

Now is time to celebrate in this dedication. In the symbol of the Blade and Chalice, may joy be found in mating both for plants and animals in this garden and throughout this land.

(pour libation)

As this Cake is consumed, let there be nourishment to both plant and animals in this garden and throughout the land.

(bury a sacrifice)

Let all creation be joyful in purpose and find renewal in this rite. I thank Thee Thor and Demeter for coming here and witnessing this dedication I hold in Your honor. I ask that your strength remain as Ye depart this place.

Watchtower of the East, Lord Pluto, I thank You for your protection. I ask that Ye depart in peace to Your happy realm.

Watchtower of the South, Lord Cernunnos, I thank You for your protection. I ask that Ye depart in peace to Your happy realm.

Watchtower of the West, Lady Artemis, I thank You for your protection. I ask that Ye depart in peace to Your happy realm.

Watchtower of the North, Lady Hecate, I thank You for your protection. I ask that Ye depart in peace to Your happy realm.

Once this place was mundane - never again will it be the same. The circle may be open, yet never broken. As it is now dedicated to the Gods, and their protection forever makes this place special. So Mote It Be.

Naturally, you will want to make appropriate changes in the ritual text, in order to reflect your own choices for your garden, and your own creative spirit.

In closing, I wish you all the Blessings of the Goddesses and Gods. May you thoroughly enjoy the labor and the play of planting your own Witch's Garden, and, when the season is ripe, may you reap a bountiful harvest.



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# Hebrew Folk Magic and Related Tales

by Sabra

The Hebrew Warrior-Shepherd tribes, who roamed the fringes of the desert and the cultivated lands inhabited by settled folk, must have looked rather fierce. Roughly clad as they were in animal skins, and carrying staffs as a defense against predators and to help direct the flock. The men went with their hair unkempt, and with flowing beards, not having yet discovered the bronze scissors and the lotions and perfumes and fine cloth used by the settled folk of villages and cities.

Among these Shepherds moved powerful Seers who could be heard speaking of mystical wonders of the earth and the heavens, of gods and goddesses, or about the spirits of land and air. The Seers worked their healing magic, or their averting magick, to keep the flock healthy; and, practiced foreseeing the future for the good of the tribes. Over the millennia, all these ancient Earth-folk-beliefs of ancient Israel were either clothed in the garb of later Yahwist beliefs, or, when that was not possible, they were censored away under the growing and combined influence of temple Priesthood and the Guild of Prophets who fought the older beliefs, often against the recorded will of the people.

Still, many of our folk traditions, including many tales about Seers and the Ways to Power, were handed down in the non-canonical literature, and were thus preserved for us.

Here are a few of the beliefs, legends and related magical practices - from these ancient traditions of the Hebrews.

There are many more, and many recent ones; but I thought I'd select in favor of some of the older ones, to illustrate the continuity of our people's Earth ways.

## Averting magic; Amulets

The protection of newborns with amulets is a custom still strong today in many parts of the world. It is practiced all over the middle east, and the one I will describe extends to the southern parts of Italy. It is very ancient; and can be traced back to the belief in the night spirits called *Lilim*<sup>1</sup> which goes back all the way to ancient Sumer, approximately 3000 BCE and earlier.

To prevent infants from being kidnapped by the *Lilim*: Tie a red<sup>2</sup> string around the baby as soon as it is born - or put a pendant made of red coral around its wrist or neck.

## The power of parental curses

It is well known from the most ancient days, that if a middle eastern parent (for Moslems the father; but for Hebrews either the father or mother) is angry enough to actually curse their offspring, that curse will inevitably come true. Such is the magic of a Parent's word that nobody - not the Parent who cursed you, and not even the many faces of the Deity, can undo the Parent's bad wish (i.e., curse) once it has been uttered aloud. By the way, if you go look up the story of Isaac and his brother Esau, you will see that a blessing from a Parent was serious business too and also irrevocable once uttered.

Anyway, as a result of this belief, the descendants of the Hebrews who have

remained and lived in the Middle East to this day take the utmost care of what they say when angry with their children.

But people are only human. If provoked beyond all reason, a mother (or father) may feel themselves slipping, may begin saying something that, as we have seen, contains powerful magic and cannot be undone once said. If, therefore, they catch themselves with their mouths already open, beginning to hurl some ill wish on their child, they must resort to a device of deflecting magic to prevent tragedy from striking the child that just angered them. Let's say that the angry parent is beginning to say "may you (...be damned)." She can prevent tragedy by saying quickly instead: "*Kapara alaich.*" ("May you...have an atoning sacrifice done for you!")

This means: May your stubbornness, or evil doing, or disobedience, and my anger at you, fall not on your head but on that of a "*Kapara*" (a scapegoat and atoning sacrifice) instead. This transfers the curse from the child to the next animal (usually a hen) that will be ritually slaughtered as a part of the daily routine of household chores.

## Averting the death of a firstborn

It is interesting to me that people in the West who read the biblical text, entirely miss the fact that much of what they read contains classic instances of ancient Semitic averting magic. The one below is known to most Christians; while among orthodox Jews, the memory of this magical practice is passed on orally each Passover during the mandatory retelling of the Exodus story.

But like all magical or Seer's practice recorded in the Bible and other Hebrew sources, it is not called "magic", but commonly referred to as "miraculous". So that what was once ancient Earth magic,

has thereby been hidden under a much more recent Yahwist cloak.

I won't retell the well-known Exodus tale, but here is the magic recipe found therein: To prevent the Angel of Death from destroying the firstborn when striding out on the Full moon of Nissan, sacrifice a firstborn lamb and paint your tent posts with the blood. This will spare your firstborn from certain death.

By the way, while modern Hebrews no longer do this, the very same averting magic is practiced today by the Samaritans during their Great Ritual Sacrifice of Passover, in which a large number of firstborn lambs get sacrificed to celebrate the Exodus. At the height of the Festival, the Samaritans daub the cheeks and foreheads of all the firstborn, from babes in arms to ancients, of either sex, with the fresh, red blood of the freshly sacrificed lambs.

That this is still perceived as averting magic, rather than merely commemorative in nature, was confirmed to me by a Samaritan elder I questioned back in 1968. Asked about the purpose of the daubing in blood I was witnessing, he said: "Lest the Angel mistake our firstborn for bad people and take their souls."

## A legend: How magical "Preserving Stones" came to be

Long after the people of Israel were mostly settled, and no longer mostly roaming Shepherds, there arose an organization known to scholars today as the Guild of Prophets, who claimed reconnection to the Seers of old. Whatever one may think of these latecomers (and of their fanatic persecution of the older earth beliefs), one must admit that they too had among them people who

were powerful seers and workers of magic. One such was a Seer known as Eliahu.

Tradition has it that the Seer Eliahu lived in a cave on the beautiful Mount Carmel which is covered in flowers all winter long, being blessed by heavy winter rains. And so the Seer in his cave did not lack water. As to food, he got gifts from the people when he wandered among them and plied his Seer's trade. So, in keeping with the tradition of his day, he never took food with him, but trusted in the traditional hospitality which was the law of the dwellers on the Land.

One evening in early spring, not long before sunset, as the shadows were getting longer, Eliahu came to a field of ripe sweet melons. He was tired after wandering about an entire long day on the steep hills; and, upon seeing the owner of the field getting ready to leave before the sun set, he greeted him and asked him for a gift of a melon.

Now, it is an ancient tradition on the Land, that the pilgrim and passerby may help themselves to the fruit of the land - not to sell - but in modest quantities that suffice to slake the thirst and hunger, for wayfarers are protected by the Godhead and by the laws of hospitality. So, Eliahu's asking was a courtesy. He could have just helped himself and been well in keeping with the manners of the day.

Instead of extending to Eliahu the gift of hospitality, as was his duty, the owner of the field took a look at his shaggy appearance and laughed in his face. Not only did he break the rules of hospitality, he made it worse by sneering. For he said: "Melons? What melons are you talking about, old man? Can't you even see they have already all been picked? I have no melons here. What you see in the falling light, you old bastard, are just rocks, scattered on my field. That is it. Go away."

Now, the light was bad, but not so bad that one could not see that on the field lay ripe, plump wonderfully sweet and moist melons. So Eliahu - who like many of the ancient Seers had a temper - lost his and growled at the owner, extending his arm in a magical gesture: "No melons, huh? And it's all rocks in this field of yours, you so-and-so?? Well, so be it then. Just as you said. May your words come true."

And as he was speaking, Eliahu turned his back on the field and the inhospitable man, and shook the dust of that field from his sandals, which is a gesture of contempt.

And in that instant, all the beautifully juicy, sweet ripe melons on that field turned into round stones.

So if today, on hiking the slopes of the Carmel, you find those smooth, round stones that ring like bronze when struck, you will know that these were once the produce of the field of a man who was cursed by a great Seer for breaking the ancient, immutable and sacred laws of hospitality.<sup>3</sup>

Now, to the related magical object. Belief in the magical powers of this Carmel stone is preserved in a rabbinical rule that dates back all the way to the third century.

The source is no less than the Talmud.<sup>4</sup> In the passage I refer to, those round stones are known as "*even tekumah*" ("Preserving Stones"); and they are said to have the property of preserving women (or any female creature) from miscarrying.

Such powerful averting magic was ascribed by the rabbis to this *even tekumah* that, in contrast to other rulings regarding the Shabbat, women were allowed to carry the *even tekumah* on their person even on

the Shabbat. The rabbinical rule reads as follows: "One may (i.e., it is permissible for a woman) go out on the Shabbat with an *even tekuma*. Not only if she has already miscarried (i.e., if she is so afraid that she wished to prevent a recurrence), but even if she merely fears (i.e., without previous cause) that she might."

## Magic to avert or heal ill health or to deflect evil spells

To be healed from all manner of diseases, make an amulet inscribed in perfect Hebrew letters. It is best made from silver, about two inches by two.

One side is to be inscribed with the names of all the matriarchs. The other side, must be inscribed with the name of all the patriarchs. (Only one or the other just won't hack it!)

Hang it about your neck and touch it frequently. It will keep all manner of disease away. Also, some say that if polished to a mirror finish, it will operate as a shield against curses from evil wishers. (The curses will presumably bounce off and be mirrored right back to where they came from.)<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, here is one of our most ancient Hebrew magic recipes for the healing of snake bite. (The snake referred to was a "*Nahash seraf*," i.e., a burning snake. Scholars speculate that it was perhaps called that because of the type of pain the bite caused. However that may be, these snakes began plaguing the Hebrews at one point and here was the healing magic for it.)

"Make yourself a Saraf and put it on top of a pole (or wand). Whoever has been bitten will look at it and live (or be healed)."

This recipe for healing magic from an amulet comes from YHWH himself, no less; and the command was to none other than Moses. As the story goes, Moses complied. He made a copper (or bronze) (*Nechoshet*, in Hebrew) likeness of a serpent on a pole. And if somebody got bitten by a serpent, and looked upon the copper serpent, they were healed.

This healing copper or bronze serpent was so revered by the Hebrews that it (or a copy of it) was still located in the Temple compound in Jerusalem around six hundred years later. Only when King Hezekiah, in league with the Guild of Prophets, engaged in sweeping Yahwist reform, was the revered healing image, the Bronze Serpent, finally removed from the Temple compound.

Incidentally, the red coral amulets for infants mentioned at the beginning of this article, always have something of a spiral shape. Some scholars of folklore point out that rather than representing a horn, this is originally a likeness of an upright serpent spiraling up and around a staff.

There are many more tales and magical recipes from more recent times, but I have chosen those which show some of the most ancient and lasting of the Hebrew folk traditions.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Lilim/Lilot: The winged spirits of both sexes who inhabit the middle eastern night; frequently identified with Incubi and Succubi. Traditionally, not all Lilim are believed to be evil.

<sup>2</sup> Red is a color sacred to neolithic peoples, symbolizing the Earth and the blood of life.

<sup>3</sup> The story "Le Jardin des Melons" by F. Goujon, 1671. It is quoted in "Legends of Galilee, Jordan and Sinai" by Zeev Vilnay, *Sacred Land*, vol. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the later part of the fifth century BCE.

<sup>5</sup> One such Jewish amulet is known to us from 1600 Iran. Replicas are sold today in museums in the USA and overseas.

# Pow-Wow, Psalms, and German Magical Folklore

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For the majority of people the term "Pow-Wow" is often exclusively associated with Native American shamanistic practices; however, for a small group of Americans it has a uniquely European meaning.

I don't remember the first time I heard the word "pow-wow" as it has to some degree always been a part of my upbringing. It was not until I was 12 or 13, however, that it became a meaningful force in my life, at the time of my conscious spiritual instruction and development. It was my maternal grandmother and her brother, my great uncle, that told me of the stories of their father, Augustus Tischler, and how he "pow-wowed" for them and others whenever they were injured, ill, or in need of help. With psalms, oils, water, breath, the Sign of the Cross, and laying on of hands, he was able to perform seemingly "magical" acts and "miraculous cures" for those to whom he rendered his services.

It is not exactly clear at what point he began his training as an apprentice in this uniquely German Christo-centric magical system of healing and "altering circumstances according to one's Will" although it was under a relative, an uncle, that its culmination took definite form and power.

Based heavily on Biblical passages, corrupted kabbalistic ideas, Divine Names, traditional uses of rhyme, incantation, oil, water, touch, and sheer belief, pow-wow has

developed and survived for centuries (out of the Middle Ages) in German communities in Europe and North America. Like many similar folk traditions, its strongest adherents were, and still are, in the rural farm villages and regions where simple, direct, and meaningful spirituality was needed as a part of daily life. While pow-wow is not a secret, with most people knowing a little themselves or someone who can "pow-wow for them", it is a private affair in many respects and, as a result, has kept much of its oral traditions.

My great-grandfather's teacher would have by any magical or mystical system been considered highly adept at his craft and well suited to pass on his information to willing students. To those who knew him privately and semi-publicly, in his native eastern Germany (pre-1900 borders), he was known as "Wachendseele" or "The Awakened Soul". The nearest equivalent that I know of for such a title would be "Illuminati" or "Adeptus Minor" in the full sense of the title. He had, to those around him, attained the sphere of Tiphareth. The stories that exist describing his power are few, but significant within the context of the pow-wow tradition: He possessed a magical book and was able to contact the living and instruct them consciously after his transition (death).

The book was similar to others within the tradition, in that while they are often able to close themselves when "they" don't wish to be looked at by a non-initiate, this book in particular was able to "freeze in place" anyone who did not have permission to view its contents. This was something Augustus personally experienced on one

occasion, much to his surprise! With the accompanying "I told you so!", he was released from its power. Like many modern and ancient "Book of Shadows", these books are handwritten, few in number, and passed down along family lines or to a worthy student. There is also the suggestion that he may have belonged to one or more truly secret societies and been versed in the higher hermetic or mystical-magical teachings of the period.

Unfortunately, there is no known definition for the word "pow-wow". My great-uncle has told me that it is "a very old word, going back to biblical times", but nothing more. Some have suggested that it may have gotten its name after local contact with the native tribes in North America. However, no substantial answers to the origin of the phrase exist. Prior to immigrating to America, my great-grandfather had no contact with the Pennsylvania Dutch and none after arriving. He used no other phrase to describe what he did; it was simply "pow-wow".

Other phrases that denote a practitioner of the art are varied even in their translations, denoting the particularly familial and regional nature of the different practices that comprise the tradition. Even the understanding of one who is a "pow-wow doctor" changes, particularly among the Pennsylvania "Dutch" or Germans, one of the few places where this ancient folk art is still practiced to some degree. For some, "pow-wow" is simply as I have used it here, a healing art, or a magical belief system. For others, it is black magic and one who practices healing is a "Braucher" or "braucherei". In German "braucher" is tradition or custom, in the same sense as *kabbalah* is tradition in Hebrew; it can be used to denote either a secular or spiritual activity, or both. Here, we get some insight

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as to the Medieval origins of pow-wow.

In other systems within the tradition, a “braucher” is one who works almost exclusively with herbs, but still in a healing capacity; but one who practices the black magic is a “hexerei” or “hexer”. However, a “hexenmeister” can refer to one who paints hex signs common among the Pennsylvania Dutch. About these signs, E.G. Alderfer writes, “We know little about these forms and motifs except that they must have been developed in the dim Germanic past as symbols of spiritual or mystical elements now lost to memory.” The words can also refer to various levels of magical attainment as we will later see in the Mennonite community, for example.

Among the things given to me by my grandmother was a list of Biblical Psalms, their accompanying Divine Names, and their use in healing and magic, as well as the “celebrated SATOR Square” which she claimed her father used to cure rabies.

It is understandable why the Psalms would be used, for not only did they contain the necessary Words of Power as many kabbalists know, but they were also used extensively among the illiterate and barely literate members of Medieval and later 17th, 18th and 19th century European and American society. The Psalms were said often at various stages of the liturgical year for both Protestants and Catholics. They were often memorized and already known to some degree.

Other Bible passages were also used, especially Ezekiel 16:6 for stopping the flow of blood. My grandmother swears by Ezekiel and her slightly blood stained Bible attests to such use. If this passage was not readily available, then the following “charm” could also be used to stop the bleeding:

*Jesus Christ Dearest blood  
That stoppest the blood  
In this help (name of person)  
God the Father, God the Son,  
God the Holy Spirit Amen!  
Help to this!*

The fear of fire was a significant part of pre-twentieth century rural life. A swift fire could destroy a farm and its surrounding structures rapidly. To avoid this, or to contain it after it had started, many invocations and magical acts were employed, among them the use of the SATOR Square. I am told that one day when a flat, tar topped factory one structure away from where my grandmother and her brother lived caught fire, Augustus Tischler put it out with some such device.

As the fire began to rage out of control, and roofs were being hosed down to prevent the flames from leaping, he sat stubbornly on his porch staring at the flames with his iron teutonic will. His family pleaded with him to go inside as the heat was too intense, but he stayed, murmuring to himself over and over again. His reply was simple, “It will not spread!” He stared at the flames as they fed on the black tar that comprised the roof, and then as surprisingly as it had begun, the fire began to diminish and die away.

To prevent fires from occurring, or to extinguish it once it had started, the SATOR Square was often employed. It was written on both sides of a plate and thrown into the fire. When placed as a protective device on or in the building to be protected, it is called “Ein Brief” or “Himmelsbrief” or “Heavenly Letter”. Similar plates or “letters” were enclosed within the walls of the Ephrata Cloister. This series of structures, now maintained by the Pennsylvania Historical Society, was one of two communities established in the late

16th and early 17th centuries by German mystical Pietists, believed to be Rosicrucians, seeking to establish a commune in “the Wilderness” and await the Second Coming. Material from this group may have filtered into popular pow-wow practices and might be the source of its more alchemical, astrological, and High(er) magical elements.

Julius Sachse, the definitive authority on the early Pietist and Rosicrucian movements in America, states that not a single building was accidentally lost to fire where these plates or “letters” had been installed. Several buildings were destroyed purposefully to prevent the spread of infectious diseases during the Revolutionary War.

The idea of the “Himmelsbrief”, or “Letter Written by God Himself” dates to the early Christian era; however, most of those in circulation date from one of several found in 18th century Germany, such as those of Holstein, 1724, or Magdeburg, 1783.

Another method, used in Somerset County (PA) was the following charm:

*“Father God, please place a wall of living flame around (fill in the blank) for protection against danger, harm, accident, evil, illness, or fire.”*

The belief in the effects of the moon, and use of the various phases of the moon, waxing especially, is also an aspect of this art. One of many applications is to look at the increasing moon and say: “*What I am looking at, increase. What I am rubbing, decrease,*” for warts, goiters, or any unsightly growths. My great-grandmother repeated this for her goiter, and it is also found in some of the pow-wow books that have been printed for general circulation. Moon cycles are also used for the planting,

harvesting, and blessing of crops. The preparation or herbal treatments, magical items or tools, and execution of magical activities also are effected by the cycles of the moon.

Among those books most easily found today and used in earlier days are John George Hohman’s *Der Lange Verborgene Freund* (“The Long-Lost Friend”) published in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1819, and still in print. Hohman’s “Friend” is second only to the Bible in importance to pow-wow practitioners. The next book or books is *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* referred to as one volume. This collection of apocryphal writings is said to contain the highest magical teachings of the tradition. While most people (such as one’s grandmother or grandfather) could do some simple charms, and a few could qualify as pow-wow practitioners or “pow-wow doctors”, only the highest and most magically powerful could qualify as being able to do the charms and spells contained in this collection of writings.

In German Mennonite communities, there exist three levels of practitioners. Those who comprise the last are those who are considered to have given themselves over completely to the practice of their art and to either its application for the Will of God, or for temporary, selfish, Faustian gains that will cost them their sanity and their souls.

According to my grandmother, her father was familiar with these writings and capable of employing them when he wished. Her brother mentioned to me, that they, like many magical devices, are neutral and can be used for either healing or harm. This is the difference from general pow-wow, which is specifically a healing art.

Yet, somehow, within this framework of spells, charms, and mystic and magical sigils,

those who practice pow-wow have, for the most part, always considered themselves "good Christians". Farm, church, and family are what essentially comprise the Pennsylvania German communities. The church has tolerated the existence of these practices, but couldn't eliminate them from the social order as they too deeply reflect the "imminent presence of God" in daily life. The constant scriptural references, affirmations of faith, and regular Sunday service attendance only made it that much more ingrained into the popular psyche on some level. If anything, the changing social structure of late 20th century America, the rapid decline of family and communal farming, and the encroaching bulldozers of suburbia into Southeastern Pennsylvania farmland have done more damage than any ecclesiastical bans.

The Pennsylvania Germans who came to this country, when it was Penn's Landing that recruited and welcomed them, were escaping the hundreds of years of religious wars and persecutions that plagued their homelands. This is reflected in their devotional zeal and millennialistic outlooks. It was the idea of the "New Atlantis" that fueled Johannes Kelpius and Conrad Beissel.

This mixture of over forty different European sects and regions that make-up Pennsylvania Dutch culture, what unites it, and is reflected in its native spirituality, with pow-wow being but one expression of that, is the desire for spiritual, albeit mystical, longing (Sehnsucht) and the Time of the Lily (Lilienzeit) or Second Coming. The shared common oppression united them, and forged literally a new people and a new language in America. Catholic piety, French Quietism, Eckhart, Boehme, folksongs, pastorals, Sufi, Kabbalistic, and theosophical adoration for the Virgin Sophia and her Heavenly Bridegroom fill

the simple folk culture and spirituality of the Pennsylvania Germans and their other North American brethren.

Yet, while I am not of Pennsylvania Dutch extraction, I feel an immediate kinship with their beliefs and ideals. The power of their folk beliefs, even though many of them are pure superstition and holdovers from a truly more ignorant age, has a magnetic quality to it that lets me know some of it rings true. The mystical longing, community beliefs and ideals, and waiting for the time of the Lilienzeit with each setting sun, run deep within me.

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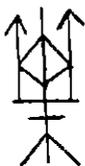
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# From Out of the Past

by Mishlen

When I was a little child, my ears were always open for tales of the unseen. The things I saw were explained away as imagination—by my parents. My grandparents, however, had another view. This is one of the stories that my Roman Catholic grandmother told to me, a story which still reverberates in my head even now. A story of angels, life and death, and fear:

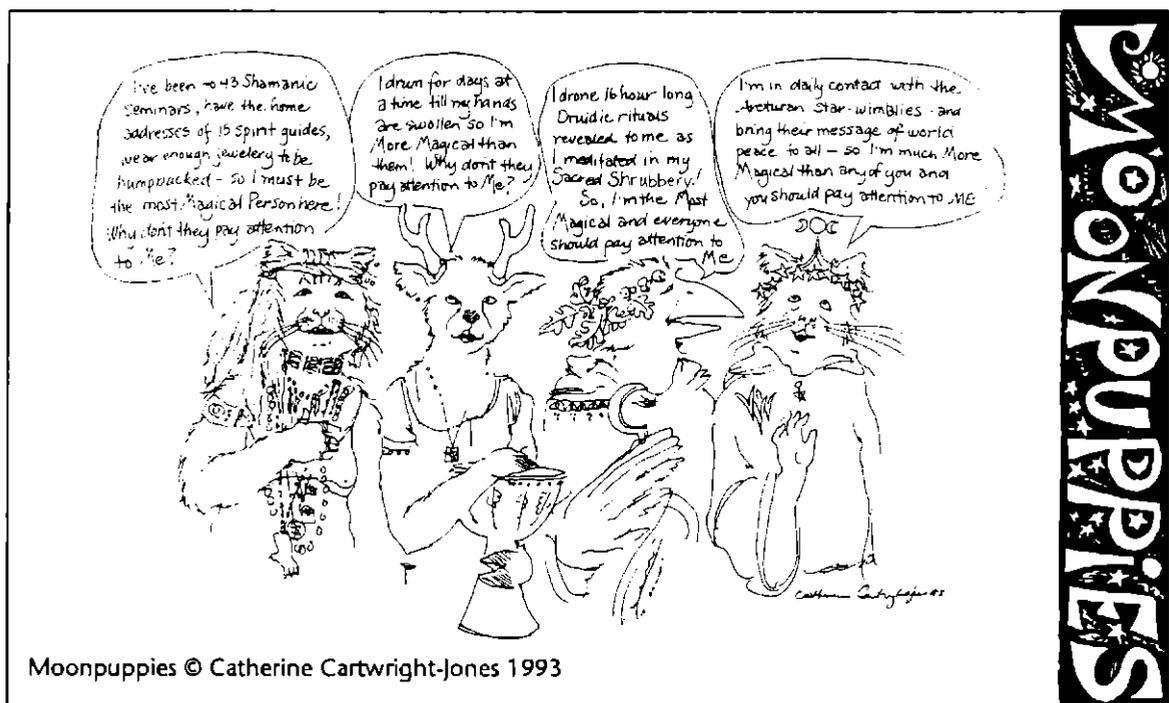
In the days before penicillin, Strep throat infection was as likely to kill as to not. Across the street from my grandmother lived a couple and their only child, a young girl. She contracted a throat infection, which rapidly grew worse, despite the treatments of the doctors. In those days, the doctors came to your own home. They shook their heads, squabbled, and tried their various creative solutions, all to

no avail. Finally, they gave her up as one already dead.

Her parents, like all parents anywhere, refused to give up hope. They sent for a woman known for her ability to heal. Tall she was, with long dark hair, a remnant of her gypsy blood. She came to the child's room, and looked about her. The angels of death stood around her. The gypsy gazed upon them, and upon the child. This is what she said: "Your child is sleeping the sleep of death. There is a halo growing about her head. When it is finished, she will die." She meant this literally. So also did her parents understand, and they took the pillow out from under their daughter's head. They cut it open, and there, amongst the feathers, a halo had partially formed around the child's resting place. It had almost completed the circle.

They burned that pillow the same day, and their child's health began to improve.

So spake my grandmother, and so do I remember it. And I tell you this—all through my life I've been careful to have polyester foam pillows.



Moonpuppies © Catherine Cartwright-Jones 1993

# The Witch's Lore

by Emily Hazeldean

## The Making of a Witch

Imagine a village, somewhere in eastern Europe; somewhere in time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Age of Enlightenment. On the outskirts of the town stands an old cottage, with a full, lush garden and spreading shade trees which seem to embrace the small building. If you come closer, you can see that there are clusters of drying herbs hanging off the rafters of the porch, and small birds playing under the thatched eaves. Closer still and you can smell the wonderful odor of freshly baked bread and spices.

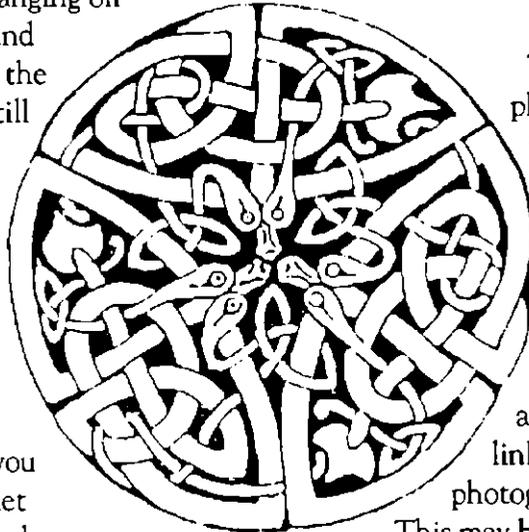
Education is a rare thing in this part of the world, and is controlled, for the most part, by the ever present Church. If you were to approach this quiet cottage and knock on the door, you would be met by one of the only people in town able to read and write. This is the person you might come to if you wanted to have a letter written, or a letter read, or find a cure for the cough you've had for days, or purchase a charm for your first pregnancy...in short, the local witch.

This is my fantasy of what it might have been like to be a witch "back then." And it is about as easy to prove as anyone else's fantasies about the history of Witchcraft. My own beliefs of witchcraft are founded upon those witches I've met and learned

from, some of whom considered themselves "good christians with an extra gift," and others with no particular religious beliefs at all. While I have no quarrel with Wiccans and their craft, this is just a reminder that there are other kinds of witches as well.

With this in mind, I would like to share a bit of the lore I've learned. All of these operations are quite simple, and require no special training beyond a sensitivity to energy, and a willingness to work.

## Photograph Charm



Take a recent photograph of a loved one whom you wish to send protective and supportive energies. (Note: This operation seems to work best with those for whom you feel a genuine affection.) Establish a linkage between the photograph and the loved one.

This may be done simply by holding the photograph and bringing the person's living image to mind, then speaking to the person as if they were present within the picture. When you can sense that the connection has been made, and you can feel the presence of the person, however distant they might be in fact, you may continue. This is an essential part of any similar charm, and such a connection must be made in order for the operation to have any real effect.

Now, place the photograph on a table set aside for this work, and choose a candle

of the appropriate color and scent. The color of the candle should reflect the nature of the energies you wish to send. For instance, use pink for love; yellow for joy; red for protection; and so on. Now "tell" the candle what it is to be used for. The "telling" should be as simple as possible, such as: "You are the color of the love I feel for \_\_\_\_\_." While "telling", be sure to feel the truth of the words yourself, until it seems as if the candle can hear you.

Be certain that you will not be disturbed for any reason while you perform the rest of this operation. Light the candle and begin passing the candle slowly in a clockwise circle over the photograph. Imagine the person in a room, while you are drawing a circle of light around them. Place the candle within the circle of light on the table and speak the words below (or words of your own, if you prefer) aloud three times, and let the candle burn itself down. (Be certain to use a candle holder, so as not to scorch the photograph nor get wax all over it.)

*"With this light, I wish thee love.  
With this love, I wish thee light.  
May nothing harm thee in any way  
Neither morning, noon nor night."*

## Candle Charms

Among the most simple of spells are those using a plain candle. This is only one of many, and much can be done by adding a word here and a bit there, much like any recipe. This one is for getting rid of a bothersome person's amorous attentions.

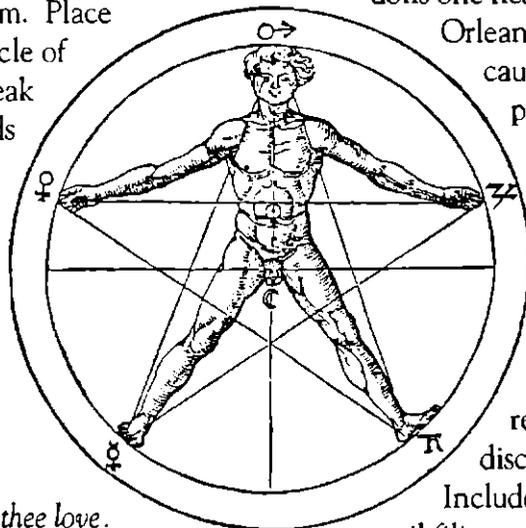
Take a length of thread from the

person's clothing, or, if this is not possible, establish a linkage between that person and a piece of thread. Wrap it around a red candle and burn the candle a bit each day, until the thread is burnt. Each time the candle is lit, sit in front of it and say aloud three times, as if speaking to the person face to face:

*"That which you want can never be.  
Let well enough alone.  
From your heart, let my image fade,  
never to return."*

## Poppets

These are quite a bit like the Voodoo dolls one hears about in New Orleans. They are made, not to cause harm, but to bring protection and prosperity. They work best for those you know and love.



Make the poppet from materials which are connected to the person you wish it to represent; perhaps from a discarded piece of clothing. Include some of his or her hair, nail filings, and a drop or two of blood. Once the doll is complete, establish the linkage (as mentioned above) and "name" the poppet by simply saying aloud: "I name you \_\_\_\_\_," giving the poppet the proper name of the person it now represents. From now on, to be most effective, you must treat the poppet as if it were the person named in every way. Once the poppet is named, any of the following may be done.

For prosperity: Gift the poppet with tokens of wealth and prosperity. For instance, make "gold" rings for its fingers

and tell it:

*"Here are gifts of gold, that you may never want."*

Place bread and salt before it and say aloud three times:

*"May your table never be empty, may your fortune never fail."*

Or choose whatever words seem right for you, as these will have the most power and the greatest effect in any case.

For protection: Place the poppet in a circlet of braided grass or cord, saying aloud:

*"About you I weave this wreath  
of love and light and life.  
That none may harm you  
and nothing befall you  
save love and light and life."*

For love: Any sort of love charm will serve here. Simply act, once again, as if the person were present, in the form of the poppet, and proceed.

When disposing of a poppet that is no longer needed, be sure to un-name it and cut the linkage to the person it represents before destroying it.

I thank you for this opportunity to share with you these few charms.

In conclusion, I find it so interesting that much of what we once saw as witchery, we now view as science. It leads me to wonder how future eyes may view these things we see as witchery today.



# Samhain

by Louise Getz

Summer's song  
Has gently faded,  
The harvest moon  
Has waned.

Soulful wind  
Stirs branches bare,  
Beneath watchful  
Lunar eye.

Ancient memories  
Of earth changes  
Stir in folk  
Of hearth  
And hill,  
Beast of forest glade  
And glen.

Rites remembered  
Long forgotten  
Rekindle amber flames.

Whirling ghosts  
Ride witches' brooms  
On gusts of wild magick.

Cauldrons bubble,  
Spells are cast.

Edges blur  
Between the worlds  
For the breadth of  
This one night.

# The Folk Remembered

by Paul Joseph Rovelli

Tradition! Do you have your family values intact? Have you said good morning to your neighbor? Don't forget to stop and chat with the mailman. And make sure the welcome wagon gets that cake off to the new neighbors down the street. Ah...here we are, another fine day amongst the rabble. Let me hear that "Fanfare for the Common Man" on my new-fangled CD machine. Here's all those just plain folk that I live amongst; Christian/God-fearing lot that they are. But wait! What's this? Oops! Spilled the salt? Throw some over your shoulder! Don't walk under that ladder! And don't do anything on Friday the 13th!

The origins of present day folk magick have been obscured. Some folk magick practices lost spontaneity and authentic flavor as they became canonized and sanctified by the Roman Church. Sometimes such practices simply lost their original meanings over time, the sources forgotten by those who made casual use of them. Whatever the reasons, what remains is now ours and belongs to us. But are these "remains", our "folk magick", merely form or true substance? An examination of its workings can tell us much, about ourselves and about our times.

The "folk" of such magicks is composed of a smaller subset of people within the population as a whole. Paganism has evolved in this country, into its own social class—whether concerned with the Celtic, ancient Roman and/or Greek deities, or still

others, this "folk" has form, structure, manners, customs and modes of conduct; not really that different from the larger population. So, why do those in the larger community turn from their Judeo/Christian roots and embrace Pagan Magick and Lore? And why, at least in this country, does it seem that Paganism is so much more popular than Magick? I practice the art of Magick and I do differentiate between the two. In pre-Christian Europe, the common folk had their Pagan rites by which to celebrate life; the more secretive Magick existed in much more lonely quarters.

While I'll note that there's a certain spark of spontaneity in these Pagan folk at all the festivals and gatherings where such community is easily found—drumming, dancing, lovers in tents, naked and half-naked people around a fire—it seems to me more erotic than magickal. I have to wonder at the power (or possible lack thereof) of such folk magick. There must have been a time when we were so much closer to the gods than we are now. The folk magick and, indeed, the formal magick must have been so much more potent. Maybe there wasn't even a need for the formal magick. Such formalism might have been specifically created to preserve what was already being forgotten and buried by the conversion of the mass culture to Roman Christianity.

From this, the evolving form of magick seems to have been somehow codified into our deepest racial memory; our collective psyche must hold a secret treasure house. But to me, the spirit seems lost. Yes, the eroticism can evoke a certain divine presence. But does it? We struggle to define form and outcome, but our power seems so incredibly limited. In ancient times, it has been written that a certain one had a dream to determine a particular

course of action. Another had a heavy desire and performed a rite by which amazing feats were accomplished as a means to fulfill that desire. Still another was launched on an heroic journey. It all seems as if it must have been so easy and natural.

As we later lost communication with this etheric world and its inhabitants, our magick seemed to stutter and occasionally fail. Now, I wonder, sometimes, if it ever really works at all. It's not the magick, it's us. Our bodies, hearts, souls, and minds are not as sensitive as they once were. Oh Sylphs and Salamanders, Gnomes and Undines, O Angels and Spirits, we have too long forgotten ye! We are so much more "sophisticated" than our ancient counterparts, and we have paid such a price for that sophistication. Perhaps now, we can begin to remember and, in doing so, begin that journey homewards.

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# Divine Riders

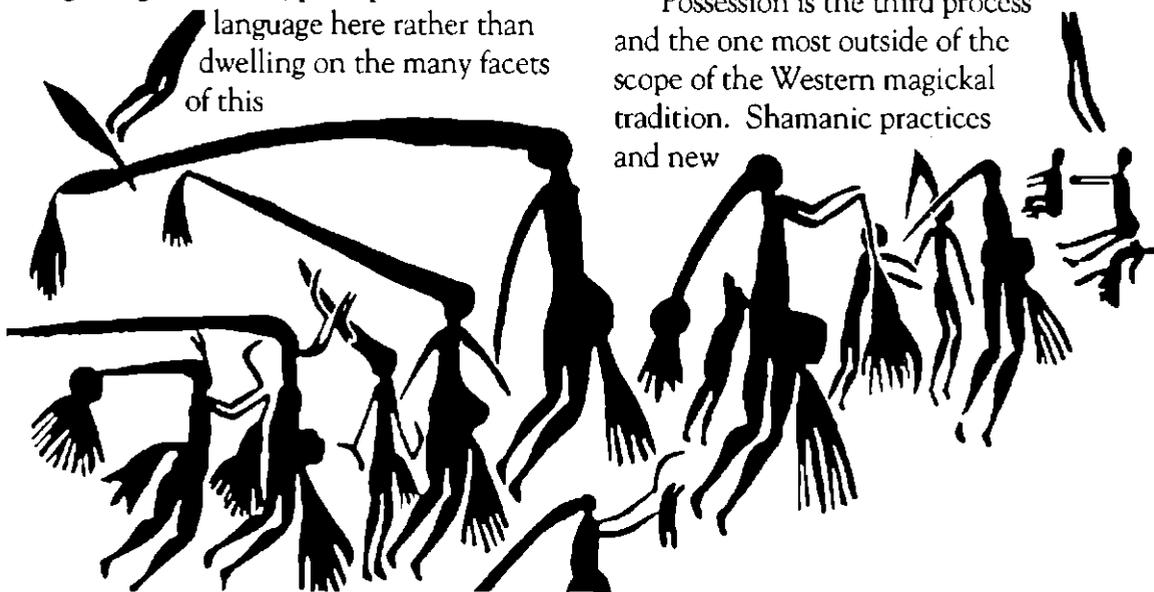
## Evokation, Invokation and Possession in Modern Magick

by Julian Wayne

Drawing the spirits of the unseen realms into direct contact with humanity is one of the most enduring features of magickal practice. Whether today we are happy to see these forces as “real” external, conscious entities, archetypal forces or emergent properties of the whole universe is immaterial. The experience of summoning the “spirits of the vastly deep” can certainly be one of the most profound that a magickian can have. Although the terms are somewhat interchangeable, this “calling” can happen in at least three main ways.

The first is evokation. This is the process whereby a spirit or being is called to be present in the temple in order that the magickian may utilise the being’s power or instruct it to do his Will. (I’m deliberately using straight-forward, perhaps arcane

language here rather than dwelling on the many facets of this



process which I’m sure the seasoned magickian will be aware of.) One might evoke a demon from the Goetia, an Enochian Senior. One might evoke a being which has been directly created by the magickian such as a thoughtform or “imaginary” entity. One might also evoke a whole group or abstract collection of beings—the “spirits of the fiery south” or “the ancestors”.

The second process, invokation, is a far more personal one. Usually one force, generally a god or goddess, is invoked. The process of invokation is, classically, the process of ritual identification with the deity or force in question. Crowley, in his invokation to Thoth, shows how the magickian begins by declaring all the attributes of Thoth: Wise one, god of magick and writing, lord of the crescent moon, etc. Then the magickian identifies herself as the true devotee of the god, calling herself “true worshipper”, “priest of his word”, etc. Finally, as the ritual climax approaches, the identification with Thoth is made: “I am the great god Thoth”, “I have given form to the word”, “I have the knowledge of all things in heaven and earth”, etc.

Possession is the third process and the one most outside of the scope of the Western magickal tradition. Shamanic practices and new

magico-religious systems (such as Voudou) maintain a vigorous tradition of possession. To generalise, in the possessed state, the individual loses all sense of consciousness and is absorbed utterly into the force which is “riding” her (to use the voodoo term).

These three ways of interacting with the underlying forces in the universe (called “unseen forces” because they are everywhere and therefore often overlooked) are part of a spectrum. When one evokes the forces of Air at the eastern watchtower, the forces are drawn into the temple to permeate the atmosphere and the being of the magickian. In this respect, it partakes something of invocation also. Equally, a long ritual to assume the godform of Odin might well mean the loss of consciousness at some stage. As such, an invocation of this type shades off into the field of possession.

When we consider possession, we might think of the business in terms of trance. Trance is often used to mean a catabolic, relaxed and semi-conscious state, whereas in fact, trance is a far more general term. One can be in a deep trance while climbing or playing the piano. In the same way, the more extreme forms of possession as witnessed by terrified whites in the Voudou Peristyle are only one aspect of the system.

Yet within the Western occult tradition, the full loss of one’s “faculties of reason” has not been a process much encouraged. The emphasis has been more on using, control and subjugation of the unseen forces. Giving oneself up to these powers is, in the West, a relatively new idea.

The Tantric translations of Arthur Avalon and the more esoteric speculations of the Golden Dawn began to mean that the notion of dissolving the self in ecstatic union with the divine became more and

more accepted. Investigations into the practices of ecstatic Classical Pagan cults, such as those of Dionysis and Artemis, revealed a tradition of possession. The influence of Buddhism and Hindu thought further suggested that “giving up” was an important part of the souls’ quest for enlightenment. Finally, Crowley says much the same thing when he tells the adept to give every last drop of their blood into the chalice of Our Lady Babalon, for to die into the principle of the eternal woman-whore-goddess is the only way to cross the abyss.

Today, despite (or perhaps because of) the current vogue of shamanism, the process of possession has still not become an incorporated feature of modern magickulture. I suspect the reason for this is that the techniques involved are ones fraught with practical and psychological difficulties.

Possession, as arguably one of the highest states of union with the forces of the cosmos, requires its fuel to come from the most basic level. Drumming, chanting, psychoactives, sex, dance—these are the primary ways to possession. Possession is a dangerous process since it requires a total letting go of the ego and consciousness boundaries. One needs to know that intelligent, supportive people will be around you, since you are about to lose consciousness and be ridden by the divine.

Of course, one of the reasons that occultists are so wary of possessions is that spiritualists and channellers seem to be able to enter five states of profound possession before breakfast. There is a certain air that being possessed by a force smacks more of communicating with UFOs and dolphins than “proper” magick.

Despite this, in the UK there are groups

who regularly use possession in their rituals, though much more in the USA—Charismatic Christians. Charismatics and other such Christian groups regularly use dramatic, impassioned invocations (prayer), song, dance and rhythm in their rites. Their devotees speak in tongues, heal and the “holy spirit” comes upon them, frequently blotting out consciousness and sending them into ecstatic states.

Whatever one might think about the theology of these cults, their possession is quite real. So to are the powers which possession brings with it. It would be wrong to say that being possessed gives the individual any new abilities, perhaps this is one of the reasons that it has been ignored by much Western occultism. Rather possessed people are able to act like gods, both by conforming to the expectations of the group in terms of how the deities act and by displaying more-than-human powers, such as the ability to handle red hot irons, to hold the breath for upwards of ten minutes, to prophesy, to heal, etc.

What the possessed person experiences is perhaps secondary to the experience of those individuals who are in the company of the possessed person. Even so, the clear experience of physically breaching the veil between the worlds has many profound effects. In my opinion, modern magick needs to look more closely at possession. This ability to become “drunk on god” is certainly implicit in the symbolism of Western magick (Atu I—The Fool is the classic example). Moreover by allowing possession to become the preserve of the messianic church and charlataneous channellers, we are cutting off an historic and powerful aspect of magickal practice.

Certainly in recent years, there has been a re-emergence of possession style methods in Western magick. The technique of

“seething” which is being revived by Norse tradition inspired Pagans is a fine example. Here, we have a system which used the physical body as its tool and aims for dissolution of the individual sense of self as an aid to prophecy. I believe that magickians must engage in dialogue with practitioners who have paths of which possession is a vital part: Voudoun and South American priest and priestesses as well as those shamanic practitioners with a genuine background in this area.

The skills, methods, and symbolism of Western occultism are very powerful. Yet this total “giving up” of consciousness to become submerged in “the divine” is naturally one of the most difficult things for the repressed Westerner to do properly. We know the techniques intellectually and have all the resources necessary to draw upon. Let’s stop acting out the roles of the gods and start really being them.

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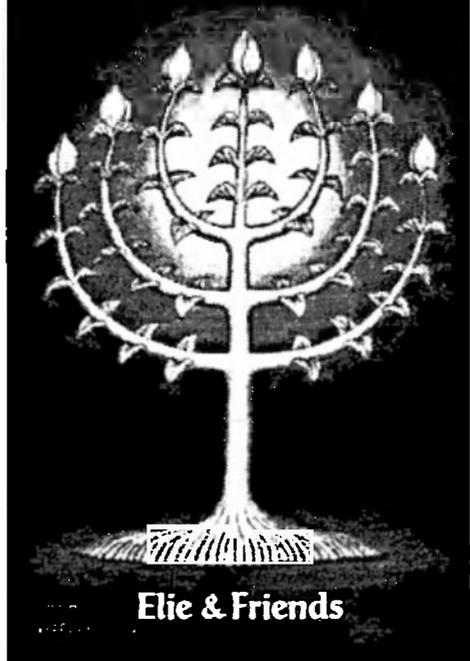


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# THE "SATANIC PANIC" IN AMERICA, Part II

*This is the second part of a two part article, the first part of which appeared in the last issue of Mezlim.*

by Donald Michael Kraig

## FRAUD AMONG THE SATAN SELLERS

This is the really sad part of the entire current "satanic panic." Anybody can call himself or herself an expert. I've already talked about Pat Pulling and her attack on an American business, Ms. Stratford's wild and demonstrably false claims, as well as the false claims of Mr. Warnke. Several police officers are going around claiming to be occult experts and giving seminars. Mostly their information is taken from ridiculous sources such as the infamous *File 18 Newsletter* of Larry Jones which is published from a church in Idaho. According to one of the more reasonable satanic investigators, Sandi Gallant of the San Francisco Police Department, the *Newsletter* "carries little if any credibility." Yet some self-professed experts use it as a source.

One self-styled "expert" is Dr. Rebecca Brown (AKA Ruth Baily). She was barred from practicing medicine in Indiana for reasons including diagnosing serious illnesses, including brain tumors and leukemia as "caused by demons, devils and other evil spirits," getting her patients addicted to prescription drugs without valid therapeutic reasons, and self-medicating herself with "non-therapeutic amounts of Demerol." The medical licensing board for Indiana appointed a psychiatrist who diagnosed her as "suffering from acute

personality disorders including demonic delusions and/or paranoid schizophrenia." (Carlson and Larue) Yet she gives talks and lectures as an expert on satanism. She has tapes and pamphlets published through Chick publications, an organization primarily known for publishing scurrilous little comic books that are anti-occult and anti-Roman Catholic. Chick has been denounced by fundamentalist Christian organizations such as the late Dr. Walter Martin's Christian Research Institute.

Others, such as the previously mentioned Bob Larson, virtually make a living propounding theories and claims which have no physical evidence to support them.

## THE McMARTIN PRESCHOOL CASE

This is one of the ugliest cases in the history of jurisprudence. It has ruined the lives of parents, children and the people who worked at the school. It has "demonized" child-care workers and made all pre-school workers suspect in the minds of many people.

One woman, Judy Johnson, started the case. She said her child had been sexually abused at the McMartin Preschool, a well-respected school which for many years had existed in a quiet beach town in Southern California. When the child was taken to therapists, they said he had not been abused. She accused the therapists of being satanists and went to the police. (Johnson later died, allegedly from the result of alcoholism).

The police, in one of the most grotesque errors in police work of all time, wrote letters to the parents of all the children at the school saying they were investigating sexual abuse at the school and wanted to know if the parents had seen any signs of abuse in their children. Many parents, justifiably, panicked. The police had the children go to a psychological clinic with a team led by a woman named Kee MacFarlane. It seems evident that she led the children into lying. One of the prosecution team, Glenn Stevens, resigned, saying, "Kee MacFarlane could make a 6-month-old baby confess to being molested." He called the case a hoax. In fact, the only evidence found were some turtle shells (supposedly supporting allegations of animal sacrifice), a robe, costume bunny ears and a burned candle.

Unfortunately, the police, the prosecution and the media let everything get out of control. It ended up costing tens of millions of dollars—the most expensive trial in California history. But there was no evidence, no proof and no convictions.

## ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Is this manipulation of children by therapists (I personally consider it a form of child abuse) unusual? Perhaps not. On the Geraldo show (October 3, 1989) a woman named "Alyssa" who was running from a husband (he had allegedly abused their young son), said, "I talked to Faye on Friday...I told her of the sexual abuse, which is all I knew about at the time. She said, 'But that sounds like satanic (sic) to me because my [Alyssa's] father was a minister...'" Two days later, after her child had a chance to talk with Faye Yager, he disclosed to his mother that "his father took him to a bad church where they dressed in long black dresses and danced around candles."

Did Faye Yager coerce these children to lie? Here are her words from the same show. Remember, she is talking about what she says to small children:

"I tell these children that they're at the end of the road. Nobody is going to help them if I don't and if someone like me doesn't help them—and if they don't tell me the truth, forget it. I'm not going to help them, and I'm going to put them on a plane and send them back."

If you were four or five and had been physically or sexually abused by your father, would you want to go back? Chances are you would tell the "truth" which is the lie Ms. Yager wants to hear.

People like Ms. Yager are giving seminars to therapists and law enforcement officials around the country. The result is what has been called contagion. This is a contagion of false information which leads honest therapists and people in law enforcement to look for a non-existent epidemic of satanic child abuse. Therapists lead troubled children into repeating stories which the therapist expects to hear. "Did you do such-and-such?" asks the therapist, repeating a claim made in a seminar. When the answer is positive because the child wants to please the therapist, a diagnosis of satanic child abuse is made.

## RESULTS OF THE CURRENT "SATANIC PANIC"

Millions of dollars are being wasted by law enforcement agencies in training and investigating non-existent crimes. The media focus may actually be attracting the natural rebelliousness of children and teens and drawing them to self-styled satanism. Panics are taking place all over the U.S.

According to Jeffrey S. Victor ("The Spread of Satanic-Cult Rumors" *Skeptical Inquirer*, Spring 1990), there have been (as of the date of the article) "21 sites of past rumor-panics about satanic cults." Parents have taken their children out of school because of rumors of possible sacrifices. And the panic, being spread by certain Christian Fundamentalists and those who are manipulated by them, is spreading. According to the March 28, 1990 issue of the *Times of London*, three women preachers went to a remote Polynesian atoll and decried satanism. Villagers went on a rampage and six people were killed. Some were burnt alive while the bodies of the others were thrown into a fire after being tortured to death.

Another aspect is that some people are trying to cover up their crimes by claiming satan told them to do it. A 16-year-old-boy in Minnesota killed a woman and claimed it was "because of Satan and the cult." Yet his parents, friends and police investigators all say that this was untrue. Perhaps the best-known case of this type of activity has been that of Sean Sellers. He murdered his parents and a convenience store clerk. At the time of his arrest he claimed he shot the clerk for flirting with his girl friend. He also robbed the store. While awaiting trial he claimed he became a born again Christian and that he had actually committed the murders as a ritual sacrifice to satan. In over 25 years of study I have never seen a ritual that called for the murder of a convenience store clerk and the robbery of the store. It seems far more likely that he is trying to get a lighter sentence.

## THE OPINION OF THE FBI AND NIH

Kenneth V. Lanning of the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI academy in

Quantico, Virginia, wrote, "I can't find one documented case [of satanic-cult victimization], and I've been looking for seven years or more. I personally have investigated some 300 cases—and there is not a shred of evidence. There are no bodies and there is not one conviction." He says there is not even evidence of such crimes. "I started out believing this stuff. I mean, I had been dealing with bizarre crimes for many years and I knew from experience that almost anything is possible...I can understand maybe a few people getting away with a few ritual crimes. But thousands of people murdering tens of thousands of victims—we just don't have that many murders. We'd mobilize the entire police force of the nation if 50,000 people were being killed."

Lanning says that "Prior to 1981 there were no reports of satanic-cult torture and murder. We have none on record and I challenge you to find any in the psychiatric or scientific literature." He noted that this was the time when *Michele Remembers* came out. He says that "until hard evidence is obtained and corroborated, the American people should not be frightened into believing that babies are being bred and eaten, that 50,000 missing children are being murdered in human sacrifices, or that satanists are taking over America's day care centers." He adds, "The fact is that more crime and child abuse has been committed by zealots in the name of God, Jesus, and Muhammad than has ever been committed in the name of Satan."

A psychiatrist at the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Frank Putnam, makes another telling point. "Why isn't more known about Satanism? We know enough about the Mafia, which also is supposed to have a vow of silence—you talk about the Mafia and you die. But people leave the Mafia, they talk about it. Why hasn't

anybody ever come forward from these satanic cults?" (*Satanic Panic* by Laurence Gonzales.)

## SATANISM, CULTS AND COMMIES

In the brilliant article by David G. Bromley ("The Satanic Cult Scare." *Society*, May/June 1991), the author, a professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University, makes several fascinating assessments. His basic contention is that "satanism has been to the 1980s and early 1990s what religious cults were to the 1970s." I would add that this would also relate to the fear of "communists under the bed" in the '50s and '60s. He sees the whole satan scare as a sociological movement rather than a true danger: "Satanism constitutes a metaphorical construction of a widely experienced sense of vulnerability and danger."

## THE ANSWERS

We can now answer the questions asked back in 1987:

- Why have no murder victims' bodies been found?

Because there aren't any to find.

- Why did satanic child abuse cases begin to appear in 1984 and '85 when they did not appear before?

Because the books which first described such abuse did not appear until the early 1980s. It then took a while for certain therapists and law enforcement personnel, through meetings and discussions (contagion), to start looking for and interpreting the information in a false manner.

- Why are children's stories from different parts of the country basically the

same?

The key word here is that they are basically the same. They are not identical. This is because the therapists and law enforcement officials inadvertently (and sometimes on purpose), coerce stories from the children, which the children then elaborate upon.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Are there satanists?

Yes.

- Are they dangerous?

No more so than members of any other group.

- Are there dangerous sociopaths who use satanism as a rationalization for their crimes?

Yes.

- Do we have anything to worry about concerning children?

Yes. We need to make sure that they do not become obsessed with any particular fad. Also, it seems clear that child abuse (not satanic) is far more prevalent throughout all socioeconomic levels of society than previously assumed. This is something we, as a society, must deal with in the future.

As for law enforcement, it should be made clear that their natural skepticism is moving more and more officers away from the fictional advice of the self-proclaimed but ill-informed "experts." That means that law enforcement officials need better and more accurate information about the occult and what occultists do. They must investigate and prosecute crimes, not beliefs.

For the bibliography for this article, please see page 49.

# THE NEOPHYTE'S NICHE

## Personal Power!

Donna Stanford-Blake

As I explore my own spirituality and quest into the unknown realms of Magick, I find myself looking for the source of transformative power. The power that can be used to change; one's self, circumstances, or beliefs. I have seen this force at work in others' lives and seek it for myself.

It is one of the ironies of life that we are driven toward growth due to a dissatisfaction with life. If things are comfortable, we are rarely in a hurry to change! So, as my life gets more uncomfortable, I strive towards growth more rigorously. Then I become caught in further irony. Sometimes growth seems more painful than dissatisfaction - but there is no going back. It was in one such agonizing period that I realized one of those fundamental keys of life. An "Ah, ha!" experience.

I was practicing stillness - quieting my mind and body (it sounds so deceptively simple!). As I was letting go and centering, I felt a pulse, a rhythm that actually rocked my body. Although I later discovered this is a pretty common experience, it effected me deeply. Feeling this physical effect of my inner energy was like a light dawning. THIS is the essence of that illusive power I had been yearning after. Personal power - and I had it all along.

We all have it. We use it every day to create our lives. Consciously or, as is more often the case, unconsciously. I had read about personal power before my experience, but I never really believed it was in me. I thought 'personal power' was a label some New Ager had given a certain set of mind

processes. I thought it was all psychological. As I grow into magick, I begin to see more clearly that nothing is all mind, or all physical. In fact, each is a mirror of the other.

My personal revelation was, of course, earth shattering only for myself. But I wondered how other relatively "new" practitioners felt about personal power. So I contacted two fellow Sheya and asked them, "How has your involvement in Magick changed your perception of your personal power?"

The first person I asked was Shayna: "As I began thinking about the question posed, it occurred to me that there are at least three 'sub-answers' needed to make up a single response: A subjective, objective and Maggah response. I feel these are all interrelated.

"First is the subjective notions of my personal power. This is, for the most part, what I experience in my daily temple work; it is mine alone (except my sharing with my mentor). As I evolve through daily work, the changes seem so dramatic. I have more control of visualization, vibration, and projection of energy. Most recently my work with the Middle Pillar exercise is taking on much more powerful dimensions. As Enochi (Kether) sheds its light on me, I can feel the energy coursing through me, raising 'goose-bumps' and bringing great invigoration. Of course, this is my experiencing. Someone who might chance to see me in my temple probably wouldn't 'see' anything. I suspect, though, they may feel the charge of the temple without knowing what it is. This brings me to the objective dimension of personal power.

“Things do change according to the Will’s desire. As a beginner in Magick, I don’t, as yet, know the fullness of my true Will. Obviously, I would like to be in complete, knowledgeable control, but I’m not yet in the position to do this. Observation of people and situations around me has shown a dimension of activity I hardly would have expected a few years ago. A recent event will illustrate what I mean.

“There was a certain individual that I did not want to see - though they assured me they would meet with me on a particular day. My desire not to have this meeting was very strong. So I sent the ‘vibes’ out. On the day of the meeting, I received a call from the person. They would not be able to meet with me after all - the brakes had suddenly gone out on their car.

“Yes, this could have been coincidence, but I think (subjective) that this was a real (objective) incident of the effects of actively using personal power. There are countless other examples - for instance, asking my roommate a question silently in my mind and he answering it out loud. Again, this could be seen as clearly subjective (and I’m open to that notion), yet there are too many ‘coincidences’. It seems that the subjective/objective are just too intertwined for a simple answer to the original question.

“A third issue remains to complete my triad: Maggah. In the Sheya tradition, Maggah is elemental fire, the will, life force. This appears to be the pivot between subjective and objective views. Here is the focal point where my subjective ideas can be launched in ways that manifest objectively. This is the well of energy that is the source of my power. An over simplification, of course. There are many energy centers, all of which can be a launching place for power. But at this point

in my spiritual development, it is this particular model that makes sense to me.

“My perceptions of my personal power have changed dramatically since beginning my magickal journey - as has my life! We each need to experiment and see how each individual is effected by the process of Magick. We must try our own ideas and then, perhaps, change our world.”

Shayna’s answer illustrates the components of the personal power process. First the idea, then the energy to move the idea into reality, and finally the end result - the manifestation. When a person begins to “awaken” or become conscious, the awareness of the steps to personal power are usually not learned in order. I was aware of the idea first, then I discovered the inner energy. Some people see the results in their life and then trace it backwards to the source. Although we each take different paths, the result is the same: Conscious creation of our world.

I asked Holly the same question I did Shayna. Her response is a wonderful illustration of the discovery of personal power.

“It seems that every time I turn around, I’m being asked to examine some part of myself or my life. Until this article, I had been able to look back and see the tiny sparks that eventually burned brightly. When I began thinking about personal power, I realized that I had begun this work from scratch.

“Our society in general does not encourage independent thinking, personal responsibility, self-sufficiency or many other things that are tied to personal power. At home, my parents were very politically correct and reinforced the societal norm daily. They taught me to trust others for all of my answers. Doctors were the only ones I

could trust with my health - certainly I had no control over it. Teachers knew so much more than I ever would, and I should never question what they told me. All authority figures and elders were also among those who I should rely on to make my decisions. The ideas I most vividly remember from my upbringing were: 1) If I don't take responsibility now, I can blame somebody else later. 2) Never hurt anyone's feelings, even if it means I will suffer for it. My feelings are less important than anyone else's. 3) Never say no to a request (even if it inconveniences me greatly), because if I do then I'm selfish. 4) I have no control over what happens to me, and I should be grateful for the nice things that do happen to me. 5) If I deny to myself that something happened, it will go away.

"That, in a nutshell, is where I came from - a life of no personal power. So what happened to change this life of blindly going from day to day? The right time, the right place, the right people and one little step off into the abyss. At the time, I had been working Wicca and various forms of eclectic magic for roughly 13 years. I had learned a lot, except about personal power. I was still governed by those who 'knew' more, and by a god/dess that I was closer to but still very separate from.

"So I went off to my first pagan gathering hoping to reconnect with forgotten energies and just chill out for a week. I allowed myself to loosen the grip I had formed on my world. I allowed myself to really get into the working rituals. I also discovered Shiatsu massage. My, (now) mentor described it best, 'You had been pushing against a door which you knew you could never open, then suddenly the door disappeared.' I fell into a place that allowed me to see how much responsibility I had neglected/ignored. I saw that my life was mine to work with as I saw fit. My life, as I

knew it, was over and I had just stepped into a world that was wonderfully vast, transformative and terrifying. This was also the beginning of my creation by my own hand. Through this experience, many people helped me to understand what I was going through. With their help, I found Sheya (my path), friends and a mentor. I have come to realize a lot about my own self worth, my mechanisms, the validity of my feelings, responsibility for myself and the limits of my responsibility for others.

"As Sheya was explained to me, a phrase came up that I was unfamiliar with: 'Sovereignty' or personal power. I had managed to do some good work while blowing this concept off. I was sure I wouldn't have to get into that, and it scared the hell out of me. It meant that I could no longer ignore the fact that whatever happens to me, I have allowed and can blame nobody but myself. It meant confronting my mechanisms, those older than dirt responses that helped me to dodge responsibility for my life. It meant doing a lot of things that were going to be scary and very uncomfortable.

"So, what does personal power mean to me now? It means that it's okay to say 'no' even to somebody I love. It means learning how to get what I want in a straight forward manner. It means learning how to deal with people and their egos. I'm learning how to recognize my own mechanisms and stop them before they get set in motion. I'm learning to stand up for myself and let others know when I have been hurt by their actions or words. I'm learning how to be in control of my life.

"I'm learning how to be honest with my husband - and that has been one of the toughest things I've ever done. I'm not saying all I've done is lie to him. But I never told him when he hurt my feelings, or

what made me happy. I would let this bottle up inside me until I would say something mean and undeserved out of frustration. Now I tell him when I'm upset. Recently after such a talk I told him that I wasn't any angrier now than before, I was just letting him know about it. I finally learned that he can't read my mind. I have to tell him what's going on, because he can't change what he doesn't know.

"All of these things have to do with my personal power. I know that I have come a long way and have worked hard for the road I have travelled so far. I am also aware of how far I have yet to go. It is frightening to have done what I have done, but it has also given me more confidence in my own abilities, judgement and internal strength. I am fortunate to have found this road."

A very personal response, yet Holly brings up pertinent points for anyone striving to grow spiritually. That we are not raised to be aware of our personal power is an important revelation. The truth is - we are taught that we are powerless. The origin of this falsity is not important. Blame is not the issue. Realization of our power and using it to expand ourselves in ways only dreamed about; that is the real issue.

Taking the reins of your life, honoring your inner fire - that is the stuff of personal power. No, you do not need to be into Magick, Wicca or Paganism. This discovery is valid for everyone. But using a path not normally taken seems to be a catalyst for the opening of unknown doors. Doors that we never knew existed or were told never could. Doors that open to the treasure we each carry inside.

The ironic aspect about personal power is that we use it every day. We create this world and everything in it. But we do so - for the most part - unconsciously. Learning the dynamics of power seems, at once

simple, and overwhelming. Old issues of self worth are dredged up and that tired old question - "what do I really want?" must be answered.

No amount of manipulation or fervent prayer will affect your life in the same positive way as simply taking back your power.

As this concept takes root and grows, I notice that every situation in my life becomes an opportunity to exercise my choice. Some days it still seems to be so much easier to blame my unhappiness on someone or something. However, I have come to recognize the accompanying feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness and I do not like these feelings. They are a signal to me to again reclaim my personal power - and use it! I do not need to be miserable - I can do something about it. After all, no one else can.

Magick is the path I have chosen for spiritual growth. It is also the method that aided me in the discovery of my personal power. With that discovery, I have felt my life subtly changing. "Feel" is the operative word. Magick has allowed me to get out of my head and really feel. Feel the energy, the power, that is constantly pulsing through me. I am now able to change my behaviors, not only in my mind but energetically. For any method of self transformation to be effective, it must address all aspects of a person - mind, body, and spirit.

What are the limits of personal power? Ah - the unknown! I believe there are no limits except those that we impose ourselves. Discovering personal power is like discovering that you have wings. Growth is learning to fly and overcoming the fear of falling. We all have a choice; to remain ignorant of our wings or to find out how far the sky goes.

# THE WORKER IS HIDDEN IN THE WORKSHOP

## On the Role and Function of an Initiatory Order

by Mark Green

### Introduction

It is the contention of this article that seemingly popular opinion, voiced at those gatherings of Occultists, Pagans and New Age followers I have attended over the last few years, and to be read in many recent publications, that the “old” hierarchical initiatory orders are defunct, is a misunderstanding of the highest degree. I have been involved in most shades of occult endeavour for the past ten years, and would like to take an opportunity to dispel some of the myths concerning the role and function of such a group.

### Initiation

What is initiation and why is it important to the Occultist? The word means “to begin”, and can be applied to any creative act, such as initiating a project to carry out a traffic census, or initiating a “bright idea”. On application to an individual, it carries the connotation of being “taught” and “welcome” to some system or social status, such as tribal rites of passage. Indeed, Mircea Eliade analyses Shamanic Initiation in three stages, the second of which is when the apprentice is taught the “tradition”—Wicca follows the same construct with its explanation of the working tools in the early Grades.

However, to be a Magician, initiation is

even more specifically defined, as being the event where what is “begun” is a new life to be lived by a more comprehensive and consistent state of awareness to that which was maintained before the point of initiation. Hence, we are constantly being offered the opportunity for a type of initiation by the environment around and within us. If I see a news item about the atrocities of Sarajevo, I can integrate that knowledge, allow it to remain in consciousness, and it might then change my personality (through thoughts and feelings) to that of a concerned well-wisher, and hence I might act by giving money to the relevant charity. I have been initiated into the group of people that share that concern.

This though may not be initiation as defined, in that the next day I might ignore news about some other atrocity (inconsistent behaviour) or not give money when approached by another charity (non-comprehensive behaviour). Given the many identities that parade through the ego process, it is unlikely that a change of pattern in one will affect any of the others. Magical initiation is just that—a change that affects the essence of identity itself, and therefore filters in a domino effect through all patterns beneath it (computer buffs will recognise an analogy to a tapeworm virus).

These initiations become the turning point of one’s whole life, and are recognisable as such. In Chaos Magick, this process is modelled by the use of the “Catastrophe Theory” topological model, where interconnected events lead up a slope until a “cusp” or breaking point is reached, and the system folds back into itself in an entirely different direction.

As an example, a close friend's death may cause such a dramatic shock to the individual world view that it will be thrown into question. As this world view is what informs a standard person's life and behaviour (Yesod in the Kabbalistic system), they may find the process of grief reorganises their priorities, causing them to leave their job, propose a marriage, go on holiday, sell the car, never get upset about the aggressive behaviour of others, and so forth. Unfortunately, an "environment calibration" would later inform them that some of these changes were not useful or consistent with each other for their long-term goals, and that is where a system assists.

## The Initiatory System

The de-facto system for magical initiation is without question the Kabbalah, and aside from mention of other likely systems such as Astrology, Alchemy, Tarot, Chakras, Seven Rays and the like, I do not intend in this article to delve into the details of why and how that system should be utilised. An Initiatory system should provide, in the words of Aleister Crowley, "the aims of religion and the method of science". That is, the goal should be towards a better way of living, in whatever terms the individual states it, (i.e., being closer to God, attaining power, finding ultimate truth, being nicer, being more effective) and the method should be replicable, demonstrable, verifiable and predictive.

Kabbalah was used to form a model of ten stages of Initiatory Progress, working up the Tree of Life. It should be remembered that this is a useful picture, and not in any sense a "thing". The Sephiroth of the Tree cannot be found anywhere, but the processes they model can be observed, and symbolised by the Paths of the Tree, and

hence the Tarot.

These ten stages are given relevant titles to the "state of mind" undergone by someone working through that stage of the overall process. Thus, the "Zelator", attributed to one of the first stages, will be one who has just begun the Great Work, and hence their enthusiasm will mark their work accordingly, and provide the keystone of further work, and also the barrier to overcome. The tarot cards that connect with the Sephirah to which the grade is associated will model the lessons that must be learnt and integrated in preparation for the next process. No-one would argue that to make tea, the water must be boiled, and the cup must not be cracked—why should the process of becoming a more effective human being not have similar rules?

## Grades and Hierarchy

The use of the word "grade" has often been taken as a symbol of self-made ego aggrandisement. It is very easy to create a group, put oneself at the top of it, and create thirty-odd "grades" set up in such a way that no-one would ever be able to, nor want to, work through them. Also there are cases of grading by accomplishment, or conformity to group beliefs, which have nothing to do with the Initiatory grades.

When steel is tempered, it passes through different grades, as do many processes, such as the extraction of gold from the earth. These grades inform us of the likely properties of the material, and what we can or cannot expect of it. A certain grade of paper can be used in a photocopier, but not a fax machine, for example. Likewise, the grade of a Magician is a statement of their stage in the process of Initiatory development, in the simple sense that the word grade is derived from the latin, "gradus", meaning "step".

The steps signposted by the ten Sephiroth of the Tree of Life, or the twelve/fifteen stages of Alchemy may be very generalised, but are nonetheless ordered and informative. The difference between the grade of Practicus and Philosophus may be years of work, or a simple decision, dependent on the individual. The Initiatory system prepares the worker to take part in the process that is always already in each of us.

Grades are not badges of any form of "spiritual" ranking, in the way that term has been used by critics of the system. Spiritual progress in the Initiatory system is not measured in terms of behaviour, but in awareness and the state of identification and attachment. Differences can therefore be observed and graded, in that there is a marked difference between a young child dominated by their own natural state, and an adolescent suffering the all-consuming pangs of a first love. If to be more "spiritual", a certain mode of behaviour is required, then many will fall into the trap of merely emulating the symptoms of a grade, rather than attempting to attain the state likely to engender that behaviour.

I have often heard the glib phrases "well, you can't initiate anyone else anyway" or "the only real initiation is self-initiation" levelled by those who either, in my view, misunderstand initiation completely, or have nothing at all to teach. By my writing and your reading of this article, I am initiating a process of thought and hopefully enquiry within you, as you were initiated into various states by what your mother told you, and what her mother told her, and so on. The magician uses the grade system as a Map to inform him which input he takes into his "inner crucible" to prepare the ground for the completion of the process which he is undergoing. It is true that the only initiation is that which

goes on within, but all teaching provides impetus for that change, and hence should be structured accordingly. There are obviously many more aspects of the initiatory system for those who work through it.

That a Practicus may have a more consistent and comprehensive state of awareness than a Zelator does not obviously mean that one would follow the advice of another in the choice of clothes or food, or any other behaviour. The Initiatory system hinges on the law of Thelema, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", in its truest sense, and does not conflict with the dictum. One might listen more carefully to the way in which a Philosophus makes his decision to choose clothes, and then attempt to learn from it for that, or any other, process of choice, but that is all. It is the "meta-method" which is the essence of initiation, not the processes of personality and action which are merely its outward, and only, observable signs. The Worker is always hidden in the Workshop.

## Occult Orders

Large Occult Orders must be functional and provide something for the initiates within. The largest problem voiced by those who leave occult groups is either that the group had nothing to teach, or that what it had to teach was outgrown quickly, and further questions were frowned upon or side-stepped completely to avoid revealing ignorance or lack of responsibility. Another problem often voiced at current groups is that they are more embroiled in internal and personal politics than the teaching/learning/support function itself.

As anyone studying group dynamics will be aware, a group must be organically structured to develop as its size and range of responsibility increases. Communication

between the levels of the group must be established, and feedback acted upon, and be seen to be.

In the developing science of networking and communications theory, a network at the social level can be defined as groups of activity who may share no common ground aside from their communication. Thus, networks are grown from interacting groups who find communication useful for comparative reasons, and in order that someone may be passed through the net to the “node” most suited to their needs, no matter where they start. A networked Order can also bypass the politics that mar other group types by having no central decision-making aside from an organisation and administrative constitution.

Thus, a “networked” Order composed of differing “nodes”, each of which carries a teaching function, and develops in tune with its members needs, is ideal. The hive analogy of the Ma’at Current can be profitably studied in this light. This structure also enables members to develop their own individual work with the resources and support of a larger group, without the needs of conforming to a “party line”. Such a group can equally facilitate communication between differing paths in a supportive environment, unlike many specialised gatherings and conferences.

A truly networked Order also provides the opportunity for affiliated groups to interact and gain from a wider audience, without loosing any autonomy that they seek for themselves. An Order composed of many nodes would hence not require any belief system to support it, aside from a belief that communication can be useful in a structured manner. As the nodes grow, the “Order” becomes an invisible web composed only of the interaction between its membership, and this, I believe, is as

near a representation of the Rosicrucian “Invisible College” as you are likely to get.

## Conclusion

It is impossible to discuss the many digressions possible in putting forward a counter-argument to a popular opinion that has grown blindly over the last century. The essence of the new impetus in magick is integration, and we must work with and understand the limitations of previous solutions before rashly creating our own without the substance of prior experience. Each Current at present, be it Pagan, Wiccan, Thelemite, Lovecraftian, Ceremonial, New Age or whatever, has shared the vision of where we are going, even though each has expressed it in different ways. Simply put, we are coming to know constantly that we are all in this together, and we are trying to find a way to work in that context.

I would end by offering one or two questions, firstly: “Do you want to live more effectively, and if so, is what you are doing assisting that goal”? If you do, and it isn’t, then the path of the Magician may provide a solution. Secondly: “Do you believe that by communicating with others your own goals will be reached more easily”? If so, a modern occult initiatory order might prove suitable for your work.

Whatever your view, background or experience, I would be pleased to hear it, and can be contacted through “Samekh Lodge”, 14 Horsman Street, Cockermouth, CUMBRIA CA13 0HE. The Illuminated Congregation of Melchizedek, the Occult Initiatory Order through which I work, is currently open for application, covering Degrees in most aspects of the Great Work—details can be gained from the same address (enclose a large SAE).

# Reviews

## Amulets of The Goddess Oracle of Ancient Wisdom

by Nancy Blair

\$29.95

Wingbow Press

7900 Edgewater Dr.

Oakland, CA 94621

reviewed by Donna Stanford-Blake

Finally, a divination set for goddess oriented people! That was my first thought when our review edition arrived. I was not disappointed.

The set consists of 27 amulets, a pouch and an illustrated book. Ms. Blair has done an extraordinary job of researching ancient goddesses and their cultures. She is also a superb ceramic artist - as her amulets clearly indicate. Though I only saw the plaster-cast rough draft, I was impressed by the grace and power of each figure. The amulets are divided into three groups of nine; goddesses, sacred animals and sacred symbols. Each represent a unique quality or state of being. For example : the goddess Inanna - Self-Transformation; sacred animal Frog - Speaking Out; sacred symbol Labyris - Priestess Power.

The wonderfully illustrated book not only describes each amulet and its meaning in detail, it also gives historical and mythical background information. The first chapter gives guidance in using the amulet, along with a variety of different lay-outs. Each subsequent chapter describes each individual amulet, gives its background and cultural roots and ends with a summary of qualities, associated colors, fragrances, and a visualization, meditation or ritual. Although it may seem like a lot of

information to absorb, it is easy and enjoyable to read. I was impressed with how deftly the author handled the material without boring or confusing the reader.

I experimented by choosing a single amulet to answer a query and found the answers received to be insightful, enlightening, and right on target. I especially enjoyed the rituals and meditations. The only complaint I had (and it may well be addressed in the finished edition) was the difficulty in using the book as a reference tool when doing a reading. The set we received had no easy way to match the figure with the appropriate chapter. A small number or name on the back of each figure would easily solve this minor problem.

The nature of this set makes it an excellent tool for both individual and group work. No previous experience with goddess based spirituality is necessary. It's fun, enlightening and educational. It is also brand new. Look for it in your local bookstore by mid-October. A great gift idea for that Pagan that has everything!

## Passwords and Passages

by Lyrion ap Tower

From Strawberry Meadow

Wilton, NH 03086

reviewed by Keter Elan

Lyrion's *Passwords and Passages* is primarily a collection of poetry celebrating the sabbats, our connections as women, and the Craft. The two short sections at the end contain brief essays on the seasons and on identity, and two charming tales for late winter reading at a warm fire with children (of all ages) snuggled close.

I found that the poetry relating to the sabbats provided excellent meditative

reading. Several segments of verse kept recurring to me at various times throughout my daily routine subsequent to my initial reading of the text. An additional treat were two “bawdy” limericks included for the Beltane section. How refreshingly silly!

However, for me, the truly powerful pieces were in the section related to our connections as women. One piece in particular, “A Circle of Pagan Women”, is so full of power and evocative imagery that the hair stood up on the back of my neck as I read it! I’ll not quote any of it here because no single verse could do justice to the constantly building power of this poem. It simply must be read, and read again, and again.

Within the Craft related section of this book, “Strange Galley” was a standout from my viewpoint. The theme was on the passage (via galley) of a woman from this life to that which lies beyond. At one point, the galley is skimming over the “ocean” of graves of the others, who in their dull lives never truly lived—

*“But she dancing fast, ever faster on board  
in the swirl of the magic that severed the cord of  
life on the shore tasted deep and chewed well  
sailed forth to the island ‘twixt heaven and  
hell.”*

Lyrion makes excellent use of common language to evoke uncommon imagery. Her women are powerful figures, in charge of their lives and at home in their element. However, I must confess, that I was confused by the pieces which related to what appeared to be unreconciled or possibly unresolved feelings/issues around the Christian traditions, and, in particular, about Christ.

Several of the poems and essays had a distinctively Catholic flavor; and, the related questions and images raised by

Lyrion in these pieces left me, at times, unclear as to why they had been included in a book of this nature. One poem, “Unlearned Lesson”, closes with the question as to whether or not you would “Again refuse your home to Christ?” I may be missing the point, but it appears to me to be out of context with the rich, magical nature of the majority of this book.

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. From the silly to the sublime, it captures the heart as well as the mind. And, if for no other reason than to read “A Circle of Pagan Women”, I would strongly recommend this book.

## Audio Reviews

### Fire Dance! & All Beings of The Earth

both by MotherTongue  
EarthSpirit Community  
P.O. Box 365-FD  
Medford, MA 02155

· reviewed by Moonflower

This is a very professionally produced tape by the group MotherTongue. It begins by invoking the Spirits of the four directions with the chant “Air I Am”. The remainder of the tape is divided into the four seasons.

For the season of Summer, there are brief poems followed by songs - all with a slow beat. I would like to hear more excitement in the music, after all, Summer is the season for festivals and dancing around the fire.

Next is Autumn and a moving chant to Hecate along with “Haste to the Sabbat” - an excellent Pagan beat!

Winter has my favorite song of the whole

tape - "Light Returning"- wonderful beat; very danceable.

Now, onto Spring, beginning again with poetry intermingled with song. This side ends with the upbeat "Fire Dance". I especially like the rhythm - it slows - then picks back up. Extremely well done.

I respect what MotherTongue and the EarthSpirit Community strive to do. They are dedicated to the reconstruction and composition of Pagan music and the use of the performing arts in ritual settings. If they would put a little more excitement (yeah, even frenzy!) into the Summer section, the tape would be more deserving of the name - "Fire Dance!".

*All Beings of the Earth*, on the whole, was a more consistently enjoyable experience than "Fire Dance!". For those who like to "sing along", the words are included - a nice touch. Side One has wonderful, energizing, powerful, familiar, "dance-around-the fire" chants. The "Moon is High" makes me feel like I am out in the woods dancing around the fire. "Air I Am" starts slowly, then works itself into a frenzy - and the listener along with it! "I Am Earth" is a very moving personal invocation, but my favorite selection on this side is "Between the Worlds". EarthSpirit uses it to close their Samhain circle each year and what a great way to do it!

Side Two is all one song, "We Are One". EarthSpirit's claim: "If sung repeatedly, can bring us to a deep awareness of ourselves and the Earth as one and sacred" turned out to be very true for me. Its trancelike rhythm is quite effective. The chanting evolves into drumming and even howling during the course of the song. Originally written for "Rites of Spring", it certainly captures the unique essence of that festival.

These chants may be familiar to you if

you are a regular festival goer. They bring the flavor of being with a large, loving Pagan family home. I definitely recommend "*All Beings of Earth*". Listening to it may make the cold months go more quickly, hastening the return of the festival season.

## Tribal Drums

EarthSpirit Community  
P.O. Box 365-FD  
Medford, MA 02155

reviewed by K. Deigh

*Tribal Drums* finds that fine and enjoyable edge between a professional studio recording and a live celebration - and it has some of the best elements of both.

The drumming is of a consistently superior quality, allowing the listener to "ride" the rhythms without interruption, something that happens all too rarely around the festival bonfire.

While the rhythms are classics (including Baladi and Haitian, African and Brazilian rhythms), they are executed with a celebratory passion and effervescence that makes you want to "get up and dance."

This tape is especially effective for use in rituals that call for a rhythmic element, when you have no good drummers handy.

## Alchemy

by Kiva

\$10.00 from

KIVA P. O. Box 0403  
Rockville, MD 20848-0403

reviewed by K. Deigh

Perhaps the most beautifully produced of the KIVA tapes I've heard, *Alchemy* blends voice, strings, piano and percussion

into their ever enchanting "cauldron of music."

Side One is a melodious blending of original tunes in a distinctly pagan theme; all of which are harmoniously and professionally executed.

Side Two begins with a well executed drum piece on Conga and Djembe, entitled *Midnight Passage*. As a drum lover, this single piece did a lot to sell the tape for me.

Though I've enjoyed the other offerings of KIVA as well, something sets *Alchemy* apart as a truly excellent recording. This phenomena is certainly helped along by the wonderful percussion provided by some of the additional musicians. They make for an exciting difference.

If you're looking for a tape with all the quality and persuasion of the best of new age music, this is it.

## Songs From the Center of the Sacred Circle

by Spinner & Magnus

\$10.00 from

Tobias Beckwith & Associates, Inc.

305 W. 52nd St.

New York City, NY 10019

reviewed by K. Deigh

All too often I hear such wonderful, magickal music and chanting at the festivals I attend and know that I will have to wait until the next year before I can hear them again - if I'm lucky. Now some of my favorite festival chants and drumming are available on this cassette from the renowned Abbi Spinner and Jeff McBride.

Known, along with various guests, as the Magic Circle Drummers, these two provide

us with some very effective ritual music, including a series of "Trance Dances" on Side One. These are a series of simple vocals backed by powerful, passionate and evocative drumming, which really carries the tape. (I love that drum!) This side includes my favorite "Abbi song": *Behold*.

Side Two invokes each of the elements one by one, and continues with "Raising the Cone of Power" and "ABRACADABRA."

Though the production quality is sometimes spotty, this is overall a very enjoyable tape - and a magickal experience.

## Eyes Behind the Veil

by David Korup

\$10.00 from

2118 Central S. E. #120

Albuquerque, NM 87106

reviewed by K. Deigh

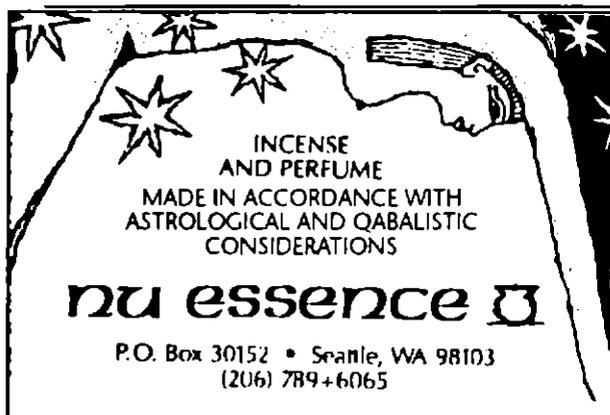
Speaking of drumming, *Eyes Behind the Veil* is a must for anyone who truly loves the voice of the Dumbek/Dabuka, played by a master. David ("*That's David*") Korup is clearly a master.

I mention the drumming, because I had the opportunity to watch and hear David Korup in person at Starwood this year, and if there is one thing I find disappointing about this tape, it is that the drumming is not as prevalent as I would have liked. It is, however, surrounded by a marvelous assortment of middle eastern, "gypsy" music. No doubt a wonderful find for any aspiring belly dancer.

While this is not a "pagan" tape in the formal sense, it certainly will keep many a pagan ear well pleased for a long time to come.

(Continued after following page.)

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## Earth Is My Temple

by Elie & Friends

\$10.00 from

N'Chi

P. O. Box 19566

Cin, OH 45219

reviewed by K. Deigh

For those jaded pagan listeners looking for high quality recordings that are truly original and unique - this is a windfall. A whole series of songs in the new/old Hebrew tradition; the tradition of the *Am ha Aretz* (Dwellers on the Land).

No "E minor, D minor" nonsense here. *Earth Is My Temple* is solidly powerful, Earth-centered music with a purpose. Deceptively simple (drums and vocals for the most part), the chants on this tape really pack a wallop!

Elie's words speak to issues that have meaning for all of us in this community. They call upon the Goddess by names which most of us are unfamiliar with, and yet they are like an open door to the uninitiated, welcoming all faiths, all races, all paths to join together in celebration and protection of our Mother Earth.

While the Hebrew words (The lyrics are in both Hebrew and english) of some of the songs/chants are strange to the western ear, they carry a visceral intensity that perhaps speaks to an older part of us than we are used to dealing with. In any case, it certainly stirs the blood!

Finally, most of the songs introduced on this tape are easily remembered (it happens without even trying!), and perfect for singing around the fire with friends of your own. I'm sure we'll be hearing them a lot around the bonfire in years to come!

## Voice of the Sheya

Songs of the New Aeon

\$10.00 from N'Chi

P. O. Box 19566

Cin, OH 45219

reviewed by Antero Alli

The timeless quality of this music is difficult to pigeonhole. One gets the impression of some ancient culture – with druidic roots, perhaps – yet to be discovered; one that has created its own religion complete with its sustaining rituals, chants and prayers. Yet, this is not passive meditation music. Strong percussive rhythms also call the beast in us to kick up some dust and dance; these are songs for worship in the body.

I thought about what I heard. What was this music? What's it for? Why did these people make it? This music sounds to me like music to prepare, design and execute rituals by. What kind of rituals? Between Aleister Crowley's "Hymn to Pan" – sung/chanted with arched amusement – and Kenneth Deigh's "Invocation to Enki" and his "Spiral Dance", the words praise the Earth. The music is gentle and soothing, without losing the edge so often missing in "new age" elevator music, which this is not; there's too much obvious talent at work. All of four individuals weave a far richer musicality than expected; at times, especially with the harmonic rounds, I heard twice as many voices. Even though the production values are high, these multi-instrumentalists have not over-rehearsed or digitized their souls away; theirs is a heartwarming performance.

I know nothing of the Sheya philosophy, yet I can recommend these songs as a soundtrack for creating your own rituals.

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### ERRORS IN THE BOOK: EDGE OF EVIL

1) Dedication, P.2-3, 17-21: Sean Sellers killed because he thought a man was flirting with his girlfriend. He may be using his "conversion" from (non-existent) satanism to Christianity in order to avoid the death penalty.

2) P.1: She is called the "Church Lady," not "Church Chat Lady" as written.

3) P.2, 13: As testified to by friends, Tommy Sullivan's "...hatred of his mother was well known to them long before the onset of anti-social behavior...His emotional problems developed from a long history of family dysfunction, not because he developed an interest in occultism." (Source: Carlson, Shawn and Larue, Gerald. Satanism in America, 1989, New York, Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion. Referred to as SIA in the future.)

4) P.3: The "levels of the satanic movement," are an invention and have never been verified through quantitative research. They are also illogical: why would an organization try to get as a member someone who "is above average in intelligence (and thus, cannot be easily manipulated) and generally a loner (who would not want to join an organization anyway)?"

5) P.4: There is no proof that a hardcore satanic cult, such as is described, exists.

6) P.6: Not a picture of Anton LaVey as described.

7) P.8: "666" and "NATAS" are just as likely to be related to rock bands as anything else.

8) P.10: "I'm not going for the sleazy stuff." This is a misstatement for that is exactly what he goes for in this

## Writer's Guidelines

Are you interested in writing for Mezlim? We are seeking submissions of articles, artwork and photography in a Magickal vein. See page 54 for upcoming issue themes.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 4500 words, or more. All submissions should be typed, black ink on white paper. Please enclose S.A.S.E, a cover letter with your contact information and the name under which you wish to be published.

We request that we be informed if your submission has been printed previously in another magazine, or if it is being simultaneously submitted to any other publisher.

book.

9) P.11: The statement "Satanic cult survivors have reported names of cult members who are law enforcement officials, judges, politicians and other government leaders, medical doctors, ministers, entertainers, teachers and psychologists" is misleading. There is no proof that they are satanists in spite of the alleged reports.

10) P.13: If satanists make porno films, where are they? None have been found.

11) P.14, 164: "Law enforcement officials confiscated a letter" with the "protocols" of Wicca. This is false. In fact, they were created by one Dave Gaerin, a deputy sheriff in San Diego. Even Johnston says that they are "simply ludicrous (p.15)," but he keeps using and referring to them. (SIA P.74-75)

12) P.31-33: The "Pete" is Pete Roland. He was getting into trouble with the law from age 15. He did not get involved with the occult until he was 17. Therefore, his emotional problems led him to the occult, not the other way. (SIA, P.39)

13) P.48: Contrary to his statement, there is absolutely no proof that "way down at the deep end [of metaphysics] is satanism."

14) P.52-53, 154: "Black Witchcraft" is like "Evil Christianity": they are non-sequiturs. Therefore, saying that "in black witchcraft the altar is a nude woman" is, by definition, a false statement. He is talking about certain satanic groups, not Witchcraft.

15) P.62: Although it may be true that young girls have told about rituals in which men gave them alcohol, drugs, and forced them to participate in sexual acts, Johnston implies that these things actually happened. There is no proof of this.

16) P.80: The statement that Crowley's magick "was responsible for the alleged sacrifice of 150 human victims yearly from 1912 through 1928" is completely false and without merit. The "death" Crowley was talking about was symbolic as stated on the very page the quote was taken from.

17) P.87-90: Cassandra Hoyer's case was investigated by the police. There was no evidence found to support her statements. "Ms. Hoyer is apparently an emotionally unstable woman. She has been in intensive psychotherapy to treat multiple-personality disorders." (SIA P. 20)

18) P.94, 147, 150, 179, 234: The book Michelle Remembers is given as an accurate book. In fact, "occult experts insist that the rituals Michelle details, the dates she says are held sacred by 'Satanists', the tools she described as being used in the rituals, etc., are largely or completely inconsistent with Satanism and Devil-worship." Further, no evidence to support her claims has been found. (SIA 18-19)

19) P.106: Johnston implies that BADD produces accurate information. BADD was founded by Pat

Pulling. She ignored the strange behavior displayed by her son during his last weeks, including that "he growled, screamed, walked on all fours and clawed the ground." In spite of that the family was planning a trip to Disney World. (SIA) After the son shot himself it is possible that she could not accept her responsibility so she put the blame on a game. BADD tries to promulgate her unproved allegations.

20) P.107: Sam Webster told me in a phone conversation that Johnston allegedly came to him under false pretenses. Why was this not mentioned?

21) P.108: The title of the film is Curse of the Demon, not Curse of the Daemon.

22) P.108: The spelling should be "Yog Sothoth," not "Sothot."

23) P.118: Implies that backward masking works. There is no proof of this.

24) P.118: Uses an unnamed person to claim that Aleister Crowley was the most famous satanist in the world. Crowley was as much against satanism as he was against what Christianity had become. He was not a satanist.

25) P.118: Same, unnamed person claims that Jimmy Page "used to be a guitarist in Led Zeppelin." He was the only guitarist in that group and he is still a guitarist.

26) P.124: Second hand information is not debated, although it seems unlikely: a 19-year-old prisoner who can't remember whether he used to write to Texas or California to get information. A 12 foot by 30 foot single piece of paper which was frequently transported, rolled and unrolled. Presented with no supporting evidence, the entire story is highly unlikely.

27) P.131: "Bhodi Tree" should be spelled "Bodhi Tree." It is misspelled three times on this page alone.

28) P.132: Way of the Shaman is by Michael Harner, not "Michael Harder."

29) P.135-136: The name is Annie Bessant, not "Annie Basaud."

30) P.136-137: There is no evidence that New Agers have a common belief system. Referring to them as unitary "they" with a set of beliefs held in common is an error.

31) P.137: Buddhism, having no Deity, is a philosophy, not a religion.

32) P.140: Her name is Magzcha Westerman, not "Magzcha Westeman."

33) P.145: Since Wicca has, as he writes, "thousands of traditions and thousands of interpretations of those traditions," it is incorrect to say that "Wicca is polytheistic" or that tapping into the powers of the gods "through ritual is the key to solving both personal and the global problems," although some Wiccans may believe this. Different Wiccans have different beliefs.

34) P.145: Witchcraft does not fall into categories of wiccan and satanist.

35) P.146: While it may be true that "some people"

only call satanic groups "covens," Johnston does not say who these people are. The implication is that they are Wiccans. This is false. Most Witches and Wiccans refer to their groups as "covens." Satanists refer to their groups as "grottoes."

36) P.146: There is no evidence that Crowley was "loony." His last works (such as the Book of Thoth) are some of his clearest and best.

37) P.146: Crowley did not believe in Satan except as a metaphor.

38) P.147-148: Dr. Rebecca Brown (AKA Ruth Bailey) is given as an authority. However, all of her comments are suspect. The Medical Licensing Board of Indiana claimed that she diagnosed serious illnesses, including brain tumors and leukemia as "caused by demons, devils and other evil spirits," provided excessive amounts of controlled substances [i.e., addictive drugs] to patients "without any explanation, instruction or appropriate charting," addicted numerous patients to controlled substances "without valid therapeutic reasons" and "self-medicated herself with non-therapeutic amounts of Demerol" which she injected on "an hourly basis." The board appointed psychiatrist diagnosed her as "suffering from acute personality disorders including demonic delusions and/or paranoid schizophrenia." (SIA)

39) P.153: The short paragraph, "Belief in equal and opposite gods is...based in Eastern mysticism. For example, Shiva, the destroyer, has for millennia been worshiped equally with Brahma and Vishnu in India," is illogical. Is Shiva opposite to both Brahma and Vishnu? Then he is twice as powerful as each individually. Thus, they are not equal. Alternatively, if Shiva, the destroyer, is seen as opposite to Brahma, the creator, how can he also be opposite to Vishnu, the preserver? A thing can only have one opposite. His example not only does not prove his point, it refutes it.

40) P.155: The O.T.O. was in existence before Crowley became a member. It was years after he became a member that he became the head.

41) P.155: The story of the "bizarre ritual death of his grown son," was from a novel by Crowley's friend, Dennis Wheatly. It was not a true incident.

42) P.155: There is no evidence that Crowley was senile in his latter years. His writings and correspondence indicate the opposite.

43) P.155: No "Black Mass" was held to commemorate Crowley's death.

44) P.155: Crowley's ashes were sent not to "disciples," but to his successor in the O.T.O., named Germer, who lived in New York.

45) P.155: There is no evidence that "significant numbers" (how many, please) of satanist groups follow Crowley's works.

46) P.156, 166: "Do what thou wilt" does not mean "do what you want" as the author implies.

47) P.156: The author of Gods and Beasts was Dusty Sklar, not "Dusty Skylar."

48) P.158: It was not a fortunetelling law which was repealed in England in 1951 which let Gardner become public with his form of Witchcraft. It was the repeal of the anti-Witchcraft laws.

49) P.158: There is no evidence that Gardner used drugs (other than sacramental wine) in his rituals.

50) P.158: The Satanic Bible has nothing to do with any kind of Witchcraft.

51) P.161: The quote should read "predynastic," not "predynamic."

52) P.163: Webster is not a black magician nor has he ever claimed this. This claim is a lie. Webster is currently studying for the ministry.

53) P.167, 173, 244: A "coven" is a group of Witches, not satanists.

54) P.169: The Book is entitled Necronomicon, not Necronomican.

55) P.172: Crowley made no "rule for true satanists." He wanted nothing to do with satanists of any sort. Further, his rule for his followers was "Do what thou wilt," not do whatever you will as Johnston falsely calms. In this phrase "wilt" means that you should find out your true purpose in life, "your true will," and strive to achieve it. It is the exact opposite of doing whatever you want.

56) P.173: Johnston uses Tom Wedge as an accurate source. However, he doesn't mention that Wedge comes only from a fundamentalist background ("I don't believe anyone can investigate or teach this without a Biblical foundation," he wrote.) and makes a living charging large amounts of money for his anti-satanism seminars. In the seminars he gives out wrong information which, according to Professor Phillips Stevens, Jr. of SUNY, Buffalo's department of anthropology "promotes racial—and worst of all—religious intolerance." (SIA)

57) P.173: He uses a book published by Chick Publications as a source. Even fundamentalist Christian groups such as the late Dr. Walter Martin's Christian Research Institute decry Chick Publications as spreading falsehoods.

58) P.180: Contrary to Ms. Balodis' claim, there has never been, and is no evidence whatever, that satanic "cults perform human sacrifices, [are] burying... children underground in animal carcasses," etc. See also page 199 where it is revealed that Balodis has "more than 100 alters" which implies that her information may be based on false information from the fantasies of one of the alters.

59) P.186: Picture is not as described.

60) P.196: If Balodis could show exactly how "hardcore satanic cults" can perfectly create multiple personalities it would revolutionize psychological theory. Since she has not produced this information we must assume that this, too, is false.

61) P.197: The comments in the last paragraph taken

from The Noetic Bulletin do not necessarily apply to satanists as implied by Johnston. This implication is not supported and is a falsehood.

62) P.201, 212: He uses Kurt Koch as a source even though he doubts Koch's claim of treating 20,000 cases over 30 years. That's understandable. If Koch worked five days a week, 52 weeks a year for 30 years without a vacation he would have to have seen 2.5 people a day with occult problems. This is highly unlikely, making all of his statements dubious.

63) P.244: Makes claim with no proof that "a fantasy roleplaying group can devolve into an occult cult."

64) P.244: The typical adolescent answers to: "Where have you been?" "Nowhere." "Who were you with?" "Nobody." "What were you doing?" "Nothing." are common among teenagers trying to develop their own personalities (what Jung referred to as "individuation") and have nothing to do with satanism.

65) P.245, 246: The organization C.A.N. accuses almost any group which does not follow their brand of Christianity of being a cult. They have been accused of being a cult themselves. Their leader quit after a child abuse scandal. Anything they say is questionable and they should not be looked at as experts.

66) P.251: Johnston does not define what it is to be "mentally ill." A woman says, "The agony and the confusion at the time seemed permanent... There is a great feeling of being hopeless and lost and your self-image is in pretty bad shape..." These are common expressions of clinical depression, a "mental illness." Thus, Johnston is incorrect in his diagnosis and shows that he knows little about psychology.

67) P.255-257, 259: Lauren Stratford's story, as presented in Satan's Underground, was proven by the Christian magazine Cornerstone to be a "fantasy." The book and its sequel were withdrawn. (This was reported in Christianity Today, February 19, 1990.) She was not a "courageous woman," nor was she "victimized by Satan's dupes throughout her childhood and adolescence." Anything she says is questionable.

68) P.265: The moon and star symbolism is not part of Witchcraft. In the form known as the "Star and Crescent" they are a part of Islam. The comment implies religious intolerance on the author's part. See also item 70 below.

69) P.266: This description is so wrong it is funny. Spirits are not conjured into pentagrams to keep them there. Witches do not conjure spirits either from within or without a pentagram. This is totally foreign to any occult practice.

70) P.266: The definition of the hexagram is incomplete. It is also the symbol for Judaism and Israel, making his "definition" anti-semitic and again implying religious intolerance.

71) P.268: The Anarchy symbol is upside down.

72) P.269: A.A.: the abbreviation of Astrum

Argentum, not "Argenteum Astrum" as given.

73) P.269: No covens claim A.A. roots. The A.A. was not a Witchcraft organization.

74) P.269: An athame is a dagger and not, as listed, a sword.

75) P.269: A book of shadows is not a medieval grimoire.

76) P.269: A chalice is any stemmed goblet of any material. Witches and magicians do not use it for "blood communions."

77) P.269: The definition of a circle is filled with errors. Magicians stand in the magical circle when they evoke spirits into a triangle.

78) P.269: A coven is not a group of satanists. Satanists meet in "grottoes."

79) P.269: Most covens do not call themselves clans.

80) P.269: Daemon is from the Greek, but it originally meant something akin to a guardian angel, not evil spirit or demon.

81) P.269: The equinox is not the time when the sun crosses the equator, it is when it crosses the ecliptic.

82) P.269: The hand of glory is, according to tradition, not the hand of a person who has died, but the hand of a murderer who has been put to death. It is supposedly used for invisibility, not "protection against evil spirits."

83) P.270: A magister is only the leader of a coven in some Wiccan traditions, not all.

84) P.270: A male Witch is called a Witch, not a "magus."

85) P.270: Witchcraft is only the practice of the craft of Witches. It does not mean "satan worship," nor does it mean "a practice of occultic arts" other than those of the Witch: i.e., it does not mean any form of kabalistic ritual magic.

Additional errors in The Edge of Evil found by the magazine Abrasax:

a) The name of the band Motley Crüe should have an umlaut over the letter u.

b) The Bulgarian sect should be spelled "Bogomil," not "Bogomile."

c) "The Cathars were not 'perhaps the first group to actively worship Satan.' The fact that their Catholic inquisitors—and executioners—accused them of this, and the fact that people like Jerry [Johnston] accuse all practicing occultists today of being Satanists only proves that the more things change, the more they remain the same, and that Santayana was right: Those who do not learn from history really are condemned to repeat it."

d) "Palladism was largely the invention of 'Leo Taxil' (Gabriel Pagès) a paranoid axe-grinder whose hallucinations have been perpetuated..."

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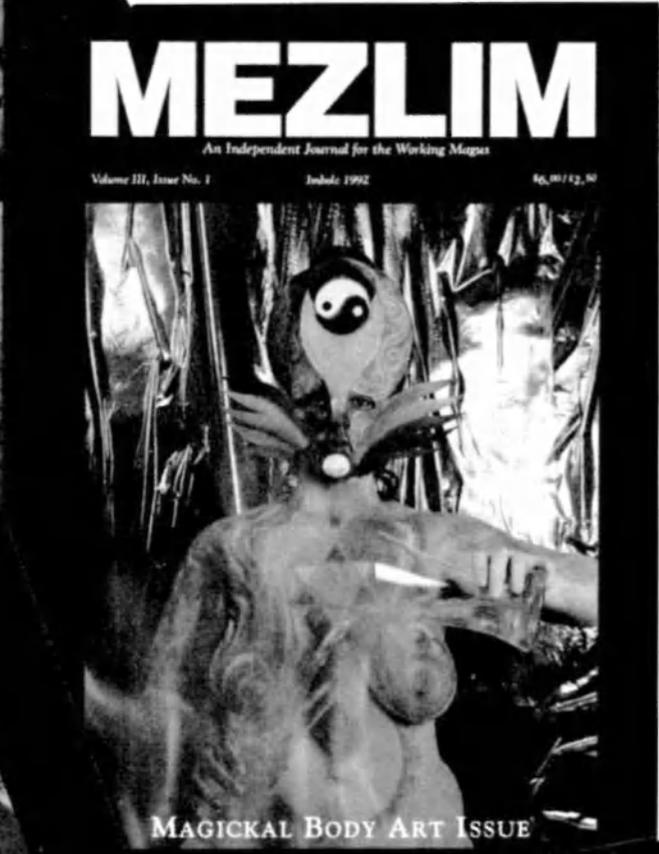
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