

LESSON IX

SYMBOLS, OMENS, AND DIVINATION

Symbolism is extremely important in Pagan religion, and probably has been since the beginning. Symbolism is the use of an easily recognized creature or object to represent a more abstract or elevated concept. Thus a serpent may be used to represent psychic power and connection to the Divine. A feather may represent truth, purity, or the element of Air. Or the Chalice may be used to represent the womb of creation, and the Goddess' all-pervading, all-sustaining Spirit.

In Wicca -as with all things in life- everything is exactly as it seems on the surface, yet below that surface has many other levels. Through the use of symbolism even seemingly simple images and acts take on rich deeper meanings. The casting of the Circle and the calling of the Quarters symbolically portray the creation of the Universe, and the interaction of elements which continues it -from thought (Air), to action (Fire), to emotional reaction (Water), to understanding and integration (Earth). The conjoining of the cup and sword portrays the eternal interaction of Goddess and God, Spirit and Matter, Death and Life.

So too the rich symbolism of animals, plants, and abstract motifs can be used to convey important spiritual ideas in the decoration of simple objects. A Chalice decorated with lotuses speaks of the growth of spiritual enlightenment -for the lotus is rooted in the mud and grows up through water to bloom in the open air, even as our consciousness is rooted in physical perception, grows up through emotional and mental understanding, to bloom in spiritual enlightenment. An Athame decorated with the head of a stag refers to the magical qualities of the Old God, while oak leaves refer to the strength and vitality of the Young God.



The use of multiple symbols to convey complex spiritual ideas is called **ALLEGORY**. It has been said that allegory is the crowning achievement of Pagan thought. Allegory allows a single artwork, story, or symbolic action to convey many meanings at once, on many levels. Allegory allows subtle ideas to be conveyed through simpler, blunter forms, so that they may be more easily understood.

Thus a myth such as the **DESCENT OF THE GODDESS**, which appears so simple on the surface that it could be taken as a children's tale, speaks not only to issues of life and death, but the interaction of Spirit and Matter, the nature of reality, the energetic system of the Chakras, and the cycle of the seasons, all at once.

Symbolism is important because, though intelligible to the conscious mind, it also speaks directly to our subconscious and can be absorbed on that level. Often the conscious mind can absorb in symbolic fashion complex ideas that it could not grasp easily in abstract form. In this way we can make an emotional connection to information which we might otherwise find too complicated to identify with intellectually.

OMENS

An omen is a symbolic message from Spirit - that is to say the Goddess. Omens come in many forms, and can come at any time.

Probably the most famous example of an omen is the black cat crossing our path. Commonly understood as bad luck, it would be better and more accurate to describe this omen as a warning to be careful and avoid unnecessary risks.

Omens have been with us since the beginning. Some people think omens are

SUPERSTITIONS, but if you understand that your connection to

Goddess comes from within, then the idea of receiving messages from Goddess should not seem odd. And since the Spirit of the Goddess is within all things, all things can serve as Her messengers.

There are many traditional meanings for omens, and we have included some with this lesson. But in interpreting an omen it is more important to pay attention to what a symbol means **TO YOU** than what it may have meant to others. Since your connection to Goddess comes from inside, She certainly knows what things mean to you as an individual, and will use this

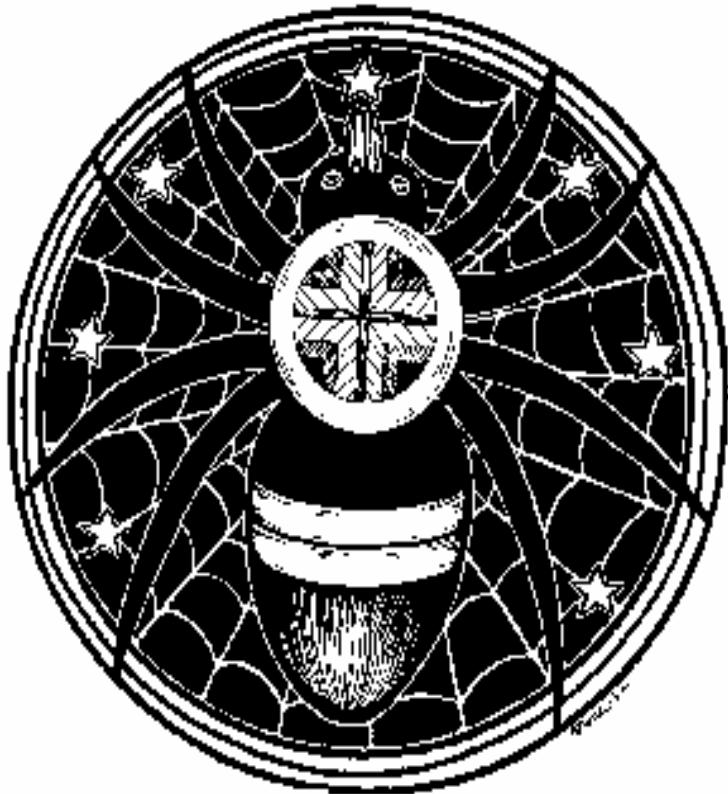




A Regency era Diviner advises her client by means of palmistry -reading the lines on the palm. Around them are tools used in other forms of divination, including Tarot cards, tea leaves, phrenology, and a crystal ball for scrying. Artwork originally prepared for a series of lessons by Lady Novalla, Head of the Faerywood Tradition of Wicca.

knowledge to communicate with you. Thus, though tradition says that a spider seen in the morning warns of difficulties ahead, if you particularly love spiders or are a **DEVOTEE** of a spider Goddess such as Arachne or the Native American Grandmother Spider, the spider may have positive meaning for you no matter when you see it.

To take best advantage of the Goddess' ability



to speak to you through omens, you should familiarize yourself with a wide variety of traditional symbols, as well as with things that have symbolic value for you. If you have developed a rich inner language of symbols that you will understand as omens, the Goddess' ability to communicate with you in this way is greatly expanded -whereas if you have only a few symbols to use, or a fuzzy understanding of what those symbols mean to you, your ability to receive omens is greatly lessened.

When people speak of omens, they are usually thinking of messages that come unbidden. But you can ask for an omen in response to a question too -this is divination.

DIVINATION

Divination is the term we use for systems of symbols which we use to help us speak to Deity, or to our own Higher Selves -which are of course emanations of Deity (see **LESSON II**).

If you ask for an omen in response to a question, you are practicing divination.

Say for example that you're in a park, or the woods. You might ask the Goddess to give you an answer to a question by the omen of the next animal you see. You might specify, as for example:

"Goddess, if the answer to my question is yes may the next bird I see be brown. If the answer is no may the next bird I see be black."

Or you might leave the omen open ended, especially if you're asking how a given situation will go. For example:

"Goddess, may the next animal I see tell me how I may expect this situation will progress."

If the next animal you see is a dog it could mean a happy outcome to the situation. If the next animal were a spider, it might indicate a need to meditate and seek inner guidance.

Or you might be walking on the street, or riding a bus, and say to Goddess;

"Goddess, if the answer to my question is 'yes' then may the next person I see be wearing a warm color. If the answer is 'no' may they be wearing a cool color."

This sounds very simple, and so it is. But you must be psychically open to do it, so you will want to clear and release before you begin. Also, like anything else, practice makes perfect. If at first you don't receive good results, work with it. If you have been doing the exercises which accompany these lessons, you should not have any trouble with this, as you will have opened and strengthened your psychic abilities. If you haven't been doing the exercises, you will find psychic work harder.

There are many more formal kinds of divination, which can be used to get more detailed answers. Among the most famous of these forms of divination are **TAROT CARDS, TEA LEAVES, and RUNESTONES**.

These forms of divination use complex systems of omens to divine very specific answers to questions. The answers come because Deity speaks to us from within, through the medium of whatever symbolic language we understand.



This -again- is stated in the ancient maxim of Hermes Trismagistus "As Above, So Below." Because all the Universe is an emanation of the Goddess, and all of our souls ultimately connect to Her, the totality of the **DIVINE PLAN** can be seen reflected in all of its parts, for nothing which exists is separate from the rest.

Because this is so, anything which exists can be used for divination.

In this lesson we have discussed several different forms of divination, some of which you might like to try. But remember -again- practice makes perfect. If at first you don't get good results, keep working. You'll get better. Also remember -you have free choice. Any form of omen or divination shows you not what must be, but what will be if circumstances remain unchanged. Use the information you get to help you make the conditions you want, not to limit your choices. Nothing in a spiritual path should ever limit or bind you, but rather help you to open and grow.

NUMBERS

ONE -Self reliance, personal ability, one's own capabilities.

TWO -Partnership, assistance, peace.

THREE -Growth, expansion, fertility, creativity, good luck.

FOUR -Practicality, stability, life lessons, working things through.

FIVE -Communication, movement, speed.

SIX -Love, home, pleasure.

SEVEN -Spirituality, psychism, spiritual aid or guidance.

EIGHT -Intensity, extremity, great success or failure.

NINE -Compassion, helping others, group projects.

TEN -Completion, unity.

COLORS

BLACK -Protection, safety, grounding. Also wisdom, learning.

RED -Strength, vitality, passion.

PINK -Love, compassion, nurturing.

ORANGE -Creativity, self-expression.

YELLOW -Pleasure, happiness, success.

GREEN -Healing, growth, abundance, money.

BLUE -Communication, focus, will-power.

INDIGO -Psychic ability, spiritual guidance.

VIOLET -Spirituality, connection to Higher Self, Goddess.

WHITE -all-purposes, unity, purity.

EXERCISES

By this point in your development you may find yourself feeling very drained after doing your exercises. This is because you're using psychic "muscles" you're not used to, and this unaccustomed activity makes them sore -just as your physical body is sore if you begin a new exercise regimen using muscles you've not been using otherwise.

Happily, just as there are salves and medicines for the physical body, there are **ENERGETIC** restoratives for those psychic muscles.

Not only after doing psychic exercises, but any time you feel your energy is low, these techniques can help you restore your natural balance. Use these techniques any time you feel you need them, but especially if you find yourself feeling tired after doing any kind of psychic work.

Like the Lemon Exercise from **LESSON #6**, these techniques are not meant to be permanently

added to your daily routine, but rather to be used occasionally as they are needed.

Exercise #17 -The Pearl

This exercise is intended both to replenish energy and to soothe frayed nerves. Thus it is very good to use if you are feeling nervous tension or exasperation as well as fatigue.

Place your hands in front of you, and between them imagine a ball of white light about 1" wide.

Now add detail to this ball of light: Imagine it as a giant pearl -softly iridescent and gently glowing.

When you have the image of this giant pearl clear in your mind, imagine the inside of the pearl: within the pearl is filled with a thick, viscous amber light -the color and consistency of honey. This honey-colored light is translucent, and softly glowing from within.

Lift the pearl up over your head, and bring it down upon the top of your head. As it comes in contact with the top of your head imagine the pearl rupturing, and all of the thick, rich, honey-colored energy pouring into your body.

Visualize the honey-colored energy going down into your body, into every part of it -coating and soothing frayed nerves and rough edges everywhere it goes.

Let the honey-colored energy distribute and settle in your body, going wherever it is needed.

When you are finished, clear and release as always.

Practice this exercise every day for one week to get the hang of it, then use only as needed.

Periodic use of the Lemon exercise and the Pearl Exercise will help keep you open and unblocked as you continue your exercises.

Exercise #18 -The Silver Ball

After practicing the Pearl for one week, you will be ready to try the Silver Ball.

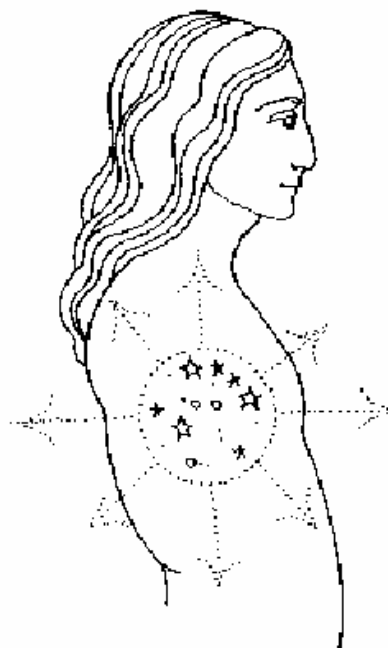
Like the Lemon and the Pearl, the Silver Ball is meant to be used as needed, rather than as a permanent addition to your daily psychic exercises.

The Silver Ball is intended to increase or restore energy. This exercise uses a stronger energy than you may be used to, and one with which it is good to become familiar.

As with the Pearl you will begin by forming a ball of energy between your hands. Imagine this ball not as white light however, but as a sparkling silver light -rather like the silver glitter that is used in craft projects. Imagine the light composed of thousands of constantly moving, glittering, silver particles. You might think of it as being filled with tiny silver stars in swirling motion.

When you have this image clear in your mind, bring the ball of swirling silver glitter up over your head. Bring the Silver Ball down through the top of your head and into your body, stopping at the Heart Chakra.

Now imagine this glittering silver light beginning



to expand beyond the ball -moving out into your body, going into every part of your body, filling you completely until you are saturated with it.

Let the light circulate within your body for a while. Then clear and release, allowing the excess light to run out of you.

This is a very powerful form of energy, and very useful. If you continue your studies beyond the First Degree you will learn much more about how to use it.

Do this exercise every day for one week, to become familiar with it. Thereafter use it only as needed.

Exercise #19 -The Golden Ball

After you have spent a week with the Silver Ball, you are ready for the Golden Ball.

As you might imagine, the Golden Ball is very much like the Silver Ball, except it's gold.

This may seem like a small change, but in reality it's not -though the exercise is very similar, the energy is very different.

Again place your hands in front of you and create a ball of light between them -this time a ball of glittering golden light. Imagine the light as if it were composed of thousands of particles of swirling golden glitter.

When the image is clear you will bring the ball of golden light up over your head, and thence down into your Heart Chakra, just as you did with the Silver Ball.

As with the Silver Ball, allow the golden light to expand throughout your body, filling it completely so that you are saturated and suffused with the sparkling golden light.

Allow the energy to circulate for a time, then release.

This golden light is a very powerful form of energy which you are only touching on here, and which is not at full strength in this form. If you continue your studies you will in time learn much more about it.

As with the other exercises in this lesson, practice the Golden Ball for one week, then use it only as needed.

SPELL OF THE MONTH

This month's spell comes to us from Merlin the Enchanter, Head of the House of Lawrence and proprietor of the Lawrence Museum of Magic and Witchcraft, established in 1537 Pisces (1937 AD).

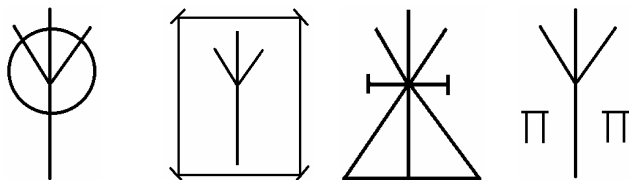
This is an old spell which makes use of **RUNES**. "Rune" is a Germanic word for a magical symbol or marking. The term is especially used to refer to the ancient Germanic alphabet -also called **FUTHARK**- which was used for magical workings, but it can also be used to refer to other magical alphabets or **SIGILS**.

This spell is intended to work with one of several general goals. The specific details of how the goal will come to pass are left to the Universe to decide. This is usually for the best. If for some reason you must be more specific, then instead of the Rune or along with it use a written word or a symbol of your own design that represents your goal.

Below are several traditional magical Runes to choose from:

HEALING	PROTECTION	LOVE	PROSPERITY
YELLOW	WHITE	RED	GREEN

Select the Rune which represents your goal.



Each Rune has an accompanying color. You will need to acquire a piece of paper and an accompanying candle in that color. Any 8'-10' candle will do, but a knob candle separated into 9 segments is ideal.

On the bottom of the candle carve the Rune you have chosen. This represents the foundation of your working.

Now take your piece of paper -it needn't be large- and draw the Rune that represents your goal at the four quarters of the paper. This will represent the dispersing of your **INTENT** to the Universe, through the Four Quarters.

If you are doing the spell for another person, write their name in the center of the paper.

Now you can set up your altar for the spell. You can use your regular working altar, or create a special altar specifically for the spell. Either way, be aware that the process of this spell will take nine days, during which the candle should not be moved, so bear this in mind as you decide where and how to set it up.

You will need the following things:



Don Lewis photographed with Merlin the Enchanter at the Lawrence Museum of Magic and Witchcraft, around 1586 Pisces (1986 AD).

- * The candle in the appropriate color with the Rune carved into the bottom.

- * The paper in the appropriate color with the Rune written at all four quarters.

- * A fire proof burning dish, as discussed in **LESSON # 4**.

- * Matches or a lighter.

- * A coin.

Begin as always by clearing and releasing excess energy.

You may choose to dress your candle (see **LESSON # 4**). If so you would do that now. You might use lavender for healing, cinnamon for protection, rose for love, or vanilla for prosperity.

To dress the candle, put a little of the oil in the palm of your left hand. Now rub your two hands together so that they are coated with the oil. As you rub your hands together, visualize white light shining out from between them, and see this white light expand and grow into a ball of light around your hands. Now take up your candle, holding it by the middle. Slowly work the oil up toward the top of the candle, and down toward the bottom, a little bit at a time. As you do this, imagine the candle filling with white light, and concentrate upon the goal you have chosen. Coat the whole candle with oil, including the wick, then return it to the altar.

Place the coin directly in front of the candle.

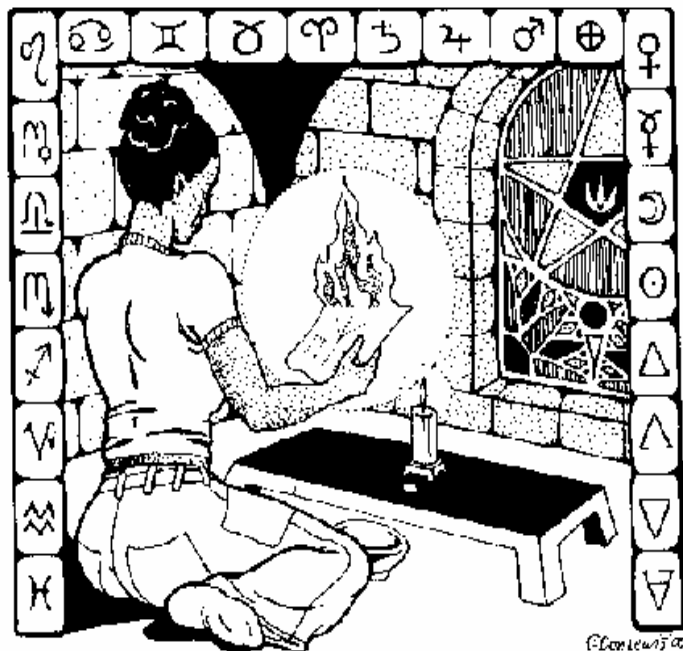
Now light the candle.

As the candle burns, focus on your goal. Imagine the goal strongly, and picture it being fulfilled. Imagine what it is like to have this goal in your life -for example if you are working for healing, see yourself being healed and healthy. Or if your working for prosperity, imagine yourself surrounded by money, or by items that represent prosperity to you.

The more strongly you concentrate on your goal, the better.

Now take up your paper. Imagine the paper

surrounded by a ball of white light, shining with energy in every direction. As you visualize this ball of light, continue to focus upon your goal, so that the energy becomes strongly impregnated with it.



Touch the paper to the candle flame, so that it ignites. As the paper begins to burn, imagine a ball of white light around the flame, growing larger and stronger as the flame grows. Focus strongly on your goal and speak the incantation:

*"Behold, there is one power in the Universe,
And I am a perfect manifestation of that power.
And as such I will that (your goal) will come to me.
It will come to me in the best and most positive way
And with harm toward none.
I will it. I draw it to me. I manifest it.
I accept it. I receive it. And I give thanks for it.
By my will, so mote it be."*

As the fire begins to consume the paper, you will want to place it in the burnish dish, where it can burn safely. Continue to visualize the burning paper surrounded by a ball of white light, and to concentrate upon your goal, until the paper is reduced to ashes.

When the fire goes out, sit and meditate before the still-burning candle for a few moments. Focus upon the goal, and upon the flame of the candle.

Meditate for about ten to fifteen minutes, then

extinguish the candle. If you are using a knob candle, let it continue to burn until the first segment is completely gone.

Remember to snuff the candle flame rather than blow it out, and as you do so say:

"By all the power of three times three, as I do will, so mote it be!"

Now clear and release. Scatter the ashes of the paper out of doors, so that your intent is symbolically released to the Universe.

Each day for the next eight days (making a total of nine) you will light the candle again. Imagine the flame surrounded by white light. Repeat the incantation given above, then meditate upon your goal for ten to fifteen minutes. If you're using a knob candle, let one full segment burn away each day. Then extinguish the candle saying:

"By all the power of three times three, as I do will, so mote it be!"

After the nine days you should have only a stump of the candle left, with the original Rune still on the bottom.

Take this candle stump to a tree of which you are particularly fond, or to any tree that is tall and strong. Take the coin that has been sitting with the candle all this time, too.

Make a little hole at the base of the tree and place the candle stump in it. Place the coin in the hole as well, as a n offering to the tree spirit. Cover the hole over and say something to the effect of:

"Oh tree, even as you grow, may the power of this my working grow likewise. I thank you for your aid. So mote it be."

This is a very ancient act based both upon the idea of **SYMPATHETIC MAGIC** -that is the idea that like creates like and that the spell's power will grow and flourish because the tree grows and flourishes, and the two have been mystically bound.

Now leave the tree knowing that your goal will continue to grow and unfold in your life, and trust that it shall come to pass.

GOD OF THE MONTH

THE LOVER

The Hero is the Temporal aspect of the Young God -that is to say that the Hero, Who brings life back to the world in the Spring, expresses the energy of the Young God in a physical way. The Lover expresses that same energy in a more spiritual or cosmic level.



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(Artwork reprinted from the Wheel of Hekate #2, Summer '87.)

The Lover represents the God as Consort of the Goddess. She is spirit and He is matter. She is Yin and He is Yang. Their union creates and maintains the physical world, which arises from Her and is carried out by Him.

The Lover represents the principle of the God at It's greatest power. This is the "Yang" or outgoing principle, symbolized by the Sun. The Lover represents the flowering of physical life and the material plane.

The festival of the Lover is the Summer Solstice, when the Sun reaches it's greatest strength. Astrologically He is associated with the Lunar sign of cancer, symbolizing His union with the Goddess.

The principle myth of the Lover is the story of His death and rebirth: for the Sun begins to diminish as soon as the Summer Solstice is past. For this reason He is also sometimes called the "Dying God."

The Lover achieves His union with the Goddess, then dies, becoming the Old God of winter. In spring He will be reborn again to repeat the cycle.

The Lover is the spirit of Earthly life which is constantly dying and being reborn, transforming and assuming new forms which carry it forward from life to life. Thus though the Earth turns to winter, it always returns to spring. Though day gives way to night, a new dawn always follows. Though our bodies die, we are eternally reborn in new and different forms, even as we have already lived many lives before this birth. The union of the Lover and the Goddess symbolizes this eternal and perfect cycle.

As a personal Deity, the Lover embodies all of the strengths of the Sun, of life, and of balance. He is the master of every art and skill. He is beautiful beyond words. He embodies all virtues and expresses the highest ideals of a given culture.

The Lover is the ideal consort of the Goddess, and acts from a fully activated heart center -His emotions are positive and harmonious. He is the patron of poetry, music, and dance. He is a God of love, beauty, and joy.

The Lover represents the joy of life and the exuberance of being.

It is to be born in mind that while the Hero and the Lover are sometimes conceived as separate forms of the God, at other times they are seen more as phases the God moves through. It is not uncommon for a single form of the God to be both the Hero and the Lover. Some Gods, like the Egyptian Osiris, combine all four aspects among Their attributes. However each of these four main aspects -Hero, Lover, King, Sorcerer- are inherently distinct in themselves, and understanding them separately helps to clarify their nature even when a single personal Deity combines them.

Below follow several examples of the Lover:

ATTIS -Attis is the consort of the Mother Goddess Cybele, Whose worship originated in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and later became popular throughout the Roman empire.

According to a central myth, Cybele was the first Being to come into existence: Primordial Deity. Both male and female, Cybele contained within Herself the origins of all things. But Cybele was lonely, and desired a companion -and so She cut off Her masculine genitals and used them to create Attis -Lord of the physical world. Thus



copyright Don Lewis '89

Primordial Deity divided Herself between Female (Spirit) and Male (Matter), just as in the Vangelo Delle Streghe. The physical world took form, and Cybele and Attis lived happily in it. But in time Attis came to die, gored by a wild boar, and went into the land of Death to become the consort of Persephone, Goddess of the Dead. Grief stricken Cybele struck a deal with Persephone, allowing Attis to spend half the year with each of Them, thus establishing the seasons and the cycle of Death and Rebirth. Attis therefor is seen to be the world of matter, eternally moving between Life and Death -or Evolution and Involution. The yearly death and resurrection of Attis were marked by elaborate rites in which He was represented by a Tree, like the European Green Man. Cybele and Attis were served by a transsexual clergy who sought to unify both sexes within themselves, like Primordial Deity.

HORUS -In Egyptian mythology the God Osiris taught the Egyptians all arts and sciences and ruled them as their King. In time Osiris was murdered by His brother Set, Who coveted both Osiris' kingdom and His wife Isis. Unwilling to yield to Set, Isis fled from Egypt and resurrected Osiris through magic, becoming pregnant with a child: Horus. Thereafter Osiris became ruler of the Otherworld, while Horus took His place in the world of the living. Though the Egyptians looked upon Horus as the son of Osiris, he still fulfilled the role of the Reborn Deity Who conquers over Death. Growing to adulthood Horus engaged His uncle Set in battle, becoming polar opposites. In earlier traditions the struggle of Horus (Life) and Set (Death) was eternal, and They were more or less equals. In later tradition Horus defeated His uncle Set and banished Him.

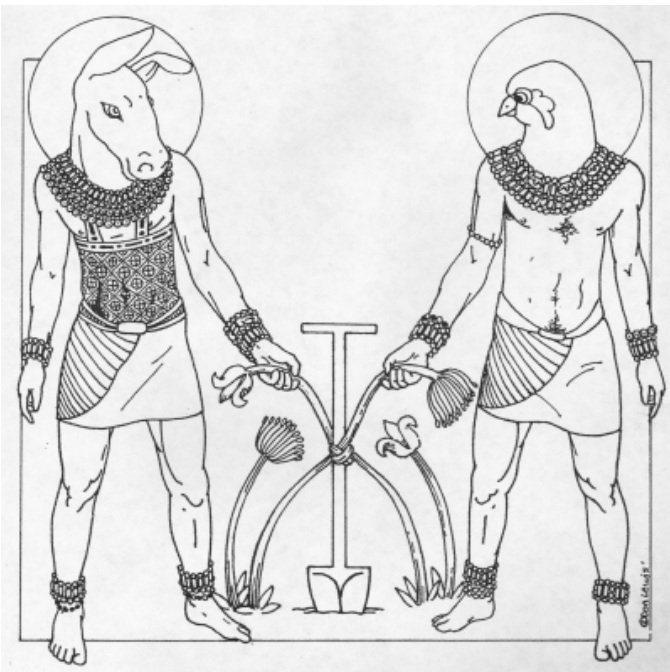


Illustration of Set and Horus. Between Them is the Sma symbol.
This artwork was originally done for the Isian Arch Priestess
Firewalker, Lady of the Crystal Moon. Copyright Don Lewis, '95.

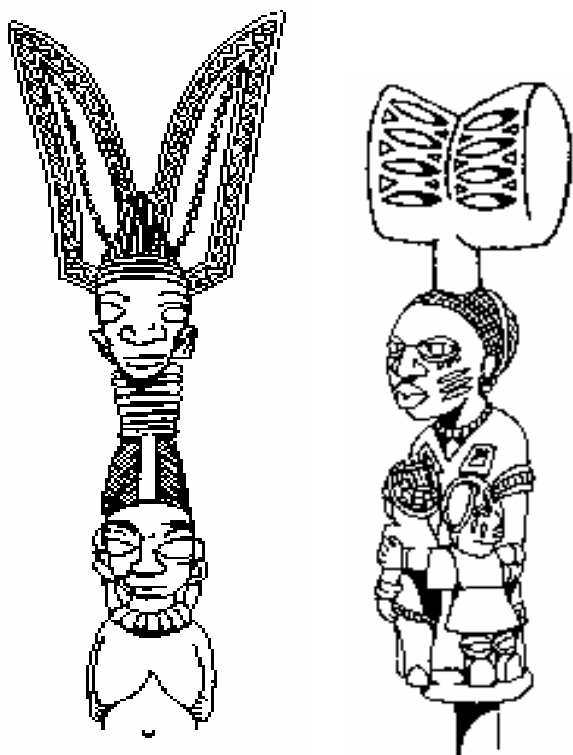
Identified with the Sun, and with the concept of Light, Horus was often pictured as a falcon or as a falcon headed man. The Disk of the Sun, that is it's physical form, was the *Utchat* or Eye of Horus.

LUGH -Also called Lugus and Lleu, Lugh is the Celtic version of the dying and reborn God. Born of the Sky Goddess Arianrhod (Silver Wheel) Lugh was raised by His uncle Gwydion, God of Sorcery. Because the magic of His Mother prevented Lugh from marrying any mortal maid, Gwydion used His magic to create a bride for Lugh from nine kinds of flowers. This was Blodeuwydd (Appearance of Flowers). For a time Blodeuwydd lived happily with Lugh, and the world abode in Summer. But after some months, Blodeuwydd fell in love with Hafgan, and together they plotted Lugh's death. But the same magic which Arianrhod had used to prevent Lugh's marriage to a mortal woman, also made Him impervious to any injury either upon land or in water, either indoors or out-of-doors, either mounted or on foot, either clothed or naked. And so it was necessary for Blodeuwydd and hafgan to go to some lengths to bring about the God's death. So Blodeuwydd prepared a bath for Lugh under an outdoor pavilion. When time came for Him to get out of the bath, Lugh found the tub was too high to easily step out. So He wrapped himself in a towel, and had a nearby goat brought over to use as a stepping stool. As Lugh stepped out of the bath -balanced with one foot on the goat, the other on the rim of the tub, wearing only a towel under an open pavilion- Hafgan struck during the few moments that the God was vulnerable, running Him through with a spear. Thereafter the world fell to Winter. Grief stricken Gwydion searched for Lugh for many months. At last Gwydion found Lugh, reincarnated as an eagle, perched in a tree. Gwydion used magic to restore Lugh to His former self, and the world returned to Spring, thus inaugurating the cycle of the seasons.

TAMMUZ -According to an ancient Mesopotamian myth, Tammuz was the King of Uruk, and husband of the Goddess Ishtar. Killed by a wild boar -an animal often used to represent the Deity of the Otherworld- Tammuz crossed into the realm of Death, ruled by the Goddess Allat, sister of Ishtar. Grief stricken, Ishtar resolved to go into the land of Death and reclaim Her beloved consort. Descending through seven symbolic gates, representing the seven planes of existence and the seven Chakras, Ishtar arrived at the realm of Her sister Allat. Through means which vary in different versions Ishtar convinces Allat to release Tammuz and all the other spirits of the dead, thus inaugurating the cycle of Death and Rebirth. The myth speaks on several levels to the mysteries of Death and Rebirth, the Cycle of the Seasons, and also the Spirit's entry into the world of Matter. Ishtar, Tammuz, and Allat are the Semitic names of Deities Whom the Sumerians had earlier known as Innanna, Dumuzi, and Ereshkigal.

Some people believe that Dumuzi was a real King of Uruk near the end of the Age of Gemini (4400 - 2800 BC) who became identified with the pre-existing myth.

XANGO -Xango is the Afro-diasporic God of fertility. Lord of storms, Xango is accompanied by thunder and lightning, and governs the rains which fertilize the Earth. Xango is thought of as the epitome of masculine beauty and virtue. Xango is the God of courage, honor, and skill. Like the Germanic Odin, Xango hung Himself from the World Tree and died, only to be resurrected through the efforts of the Goddess Oya -thus inaugurating the cycle of the seasons and of Death and Rebirth. Xango's symbol is the two-headed thunder-axe, the



Two examples of the Oshe Chango, or Staff of Chango. Artwork reprinted from the *Wheel of Hekate* #4, Spring '89. Copyright Don Lewis 1589 Pisces (1989 AD)

Oshe Xango.

GLOSSARY

ALLEGORY -Allegory is the use of a symbol or group of symbols to convey a more complex idea in simple terms. Allegory allows a single artwork, story, or symbolic action to convey many meanings at once, on many levels. Allegory allows subtle ideas to be conveyed through simpler, blunter forms, so that they may be more easily understood.

DESCENT OF THE GODDESS -The descent of the

Goddess is one of the most important Wiccan myths, and has meanings on many levels. The Descent of the Goddess is used to illustrate ideas of reincarnation, and of the cyclical nature of time. More importantly the Descent of the Goddess speaks to the nature of spirit and matter and the way in which they interact to form the Universe, and the purpose behind this all. The Descent of the Goddess speaks of how the God "fell into matter." That is to say that when the Goddess separated the physical parts of Herself from the spiritual parts, creating the God, the physical aspects solidified becoming the material world. To redeem these the Goddess entered into matter Herself, in the form of the millions of souls, reuniting with the God in this way. In time these souls, combining both material and spiritual aspects, will return to their origin, just as the Earth returns to Summer after each Winter, and the soul is reborn after each lifetime.

SUPERSTITIONS -The great Pagan philosopher Plutarch, in his book *De Superstitiones*, defined the difference between religion and superstition in this way: Religion is based upon love of Deity, superstition is based upon fear of Deity. Superstitions are practices based upon fear of consequences which do not in reality come about. Thus they are illogical and senseless ideas. For example, no one ever broke their mother's back by having stepped upon a crack in the sidewalk. An omen is not a superstition. Rather an omen is a message from spirit which can help you to improve or correct a situation -thus it wholly positive and is to welcomed rather than feared.

DEVOTEE -A Devotee is a person who is particularly attached or "devoted" to a particular thing -as a Patron Deity, a certain Temple, or a particular skill. Thus one can be a Devotee of Tarot reading or of music for example.

TAROT CARDS -Tarot cards are a system of divination based upon a series of allegorical images drawn or printed upon cards. The deck is shuffled and specific cards are drawn, from which which messages are



divined. Tarot cards appear to have been created in the 1300s AD (900s Pisces) or a little before, drawing upon very ancient and traditional symbols. Contemporary Tarot decks have 78 cards encompassing 22 Major Arcana cards, and four suits of Minor Arcana cards. The suits of the Minor Arcana correspond to the Four Sacred Tools of Wicca -Wands, Swords, Cups, and Pentacles- as well as to the four suits of common playing cards, which descend from them.

TEA LEAVES -In former times tea was not made from tea bags, but from loose tea leaves. These would leave residue in the cup when the person had finished drinking the liquid. Skilled diviners interpreted this residue by means of the pictures it seemed to form, and by their placement in the cup. Once widely popular, the reading of Tea leaves is now a rather rare form of divination. The same technique was also used to read the residue left in the cup by Coffee Grounds.

RUNESTONES -Runestones are a system of divination based upon a series of stones or plaster markers inscribed with the letters of the ancient Germanic *Futhark* alphabet. They are read in a number of ways, but most commonly by drawing one or more stones from a bag, and interpreting based upon the meaning of the Runes inscribed upon them.

DIVINE PLAN -The term "Divine Plan" refers to the idea that nothing happens accidentally or randomly, but that everything is united as part of a single Divine whole, all of Whose parts have meaning. The Divine Plan is an intrinsic part of Deity that is contained within every thing which exists, since every thing which exists is ultimately a manifestation of Deity. The Divine Plan can be accessed through the *Monadic* level of the being, which though separate from Deity retains all of the essential nature of Deity at the core of the individual soul. The idea that the totality of the Divine Plan is present in all things, and can be seen through them, is the ultimate meaning of the ancient maxim of Hermes Trismagistus: "As Above, So Below."

ENERGETIC -The term "energetic" as used here refers to things pertaining to psychic energy. Thus "energetic healing" refers to healing by means of psychic energy. The Chakra system is part of one's "energetic" body and the movement of energy between Chakras is through "energetic circuits."

RUNES -Runes are magical symbols that are used to communicate ideas or messages. The term refers specifically to simple line symbols which are or resemble letters of an alphabet. Most commonly the term refers to the Germanic *Futhark* alphabet, but it can also be used to describe other magical alphabets as well notably the *Theban* magical alphabet which are also called "Witches' Runes." In addition to alphabetic symbols, a number of pictographic symbols have been

traditionally termed "Runes." These pictographic symbols were used to represent ideas such as "prosperity", as well as professions, marital status, and degrees of kinship. In traditional German half-timbered buildings one can often see this sort of Runic symbol built into the facade of the house, to make a statement about the people who lived there, or to attract something which the family needed.

FUTHARK -"Futhark" is a modern term used to describe the ancient Germanic runic alphabet. F-u-t-h-a-r-k are the first six letters of that alphabet. In recent years there has been a great interest in using the runes of the Futhark for magic and divination, and so most commonly the term "runes" is used in reference to these. There are several variations of the Futhark alphabet, including Scandinavian, Saxon, and German forms. Some Celtic peoples also adopted the Futhark alphabet in certain periods. The Germanic peoples were very superstitious about the Futhark runes, and considered them very powerful. People who worked with runes, magically or otherwise, were called *Witca* -a word closely related to the modern "Witch."

SIGILS -A sigil is a magical symbol representing a Deity, spirit, or concept in picture form. A sigil is usually very abstract and easy to draw, so that anyone can use it. Sigils are very important in magic, both because they convey complex ideas in simple forms, and because in former times people who used magic often could not read, and so relied upon pictographic forms to convey ideas much more than people tend to do today.

INTENT -We do magic by consciously focusing energy. We shape that energy through thought and emotion. The energy takes its direction from the "*intent*" we set into that thought and emotion. "*Intent*" is your goal or purpose -what you wish to achieve. And it is very important to be clear in *intent*. When you concentrate upon your *intent* during a magical working, you are imprinting the energy with your *intent*, so that it will shape itself to bring your *intent* to pass.

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC -Sympathetic magic is based on the idea of "Sympathy" -that items which have similar qualities can be used to represent each other, and can be used to magically effect each other. Thus because growing plants are green, green is the color of growth and increase -therefor burn a green candle to bring prosperity. Because fire brings transformation -changing raw food to cooked, wood and other materials to ash -burning a magical charm on a piece of paper can bring transformation to a situation. In reality these are "keys" or symbolic tools that we use to focus our energy and intent, which is what really makes the change.

Exam for Lesson IX

You may take the exam online at WitchSchool.
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