

LADY SABRINA

CAULDRON OF TRANSFORMATION

A NEW VISION
OF WICCA



FOR MODERN
PAGAN PRACTICE

Co-Creation Spirituality: A Breath of Fresh Air

Are you ready for an exciting spiritual challenge? Finally, there is a well-thought-out way to bridge the gap between Pagan/Wiccan practice and the esoteric Christian Mysteries.

Founded upon the universal truths of all positive religions, Co-Creation Spirituality is a non-judgmental approach to Divinity. *Cauldron of Transformation* is a refreshing alternative to all forms of mainstream religion.

Cauldron of Transformation contains everything you need to create your own spiritual tradition. This material is based upon the experience of over 20,000 people who have benefited from the teachings offered by Our Lady of Enchantment—one of the first Pagan/Wiccan metaphysical centers in the United States open to the general public.

Cauldron of Transformation skillfully examines the wisdom of Buddhism, the lore of Celtic Druidism, and the grace of Christianity while exploring the ecstatic vitality of Santería and Shamanism.

Cauldron of Transformation shows you how to reclaim the power of the Old Religion without needlessly throwing away the compassion and wisdom of early Christianity. Decide for yourself what is spiritually satisfying and begin the rewarding work of creating a personally meaningful religious tradition with the guidance of *Cauldron of Transformation*.

About the Author

For the past eighteen years, Lady Sabrina has been actively involved in the study of comparative religion, the metaphysical sciences, and the Wiccan/Pagan movement. Sabrina is well versed in comparative religion, Wicca, and the Pre-Christian mystery traditions. She is an initiated High Priestess and a legally ordained minister of Wicca.

In 1978, Sabrina founded Our Lady of Enchantment, a church and school of the Old Religion. Since those early beginnings, Our Lady of Enchantment has blossomed into the first Wiccan Metaphysical Center open to the public in the United States.

Sabrina has personally written and prepared all six of the school's home study courses, along with her first book, *Reclaiming the Power*, a Llewellyn publication. She actively works with students in comparative religious studies and in the magical arts through public presentations and workshops.

To Write to the Author

If you wish to contact the author or would like more information about this book, please write to the author in care of Llewellyn Worldwide and we will forward your request. Both the author and publisher appreciate hearing from you and learning of your enjoyment of this book and how it has helped you. Llewellyn Worldwide cannot guarantee that every letter written to the author can be answered, but all will be forwarded. Please write to:

Lady Sabrina

c/o Llewellyn Worldwide

P.O. Box 64383, Dept. K600-9, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, U.S.A.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope or \$1.00 to cover costs.

If outside the U.S.A., enclose an international postal reply coupon.

Free Catalog from Llewellyn

For more than 90 years Llewellyn has brought its readers knowledge in the fields of metaphysics and human potential. Learn about the newest books in spiritual guidance, natural healing, astrology, occult philosophy, and more. Enjoy book reviews, New Age articles, a calendar of events, plus current advertised products and services. To get your free copy of *Llewellyn's New Worlds of Mind and Spirit*, send your name and address to:

Llewellyn's New Worlds of Mind and Spirit

P.O. Box 64383, Dept. K600-9, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, U.S.A.

Cauldron of Transformation

*A New Vision of Wicca
for Modern
Pagan Practice*

LADY SABRINA



1996

Llewellyn Publications
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0383, U.S.A.

Cauldron of Transformation. Copyright © 1996 by Lady Sabrina. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from Llewellyn Publications except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Cover design: Maria Mazzara

Cover photography: Russell Lane

Interior illustrations: Tom Grewe and Maria Mazzara

Photographs: Lady Sabrina

Book design and layout: Ronna Hammer

Editor: Rosemary Wallner

Project Coordinator: Jessica Thoreson

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sabrina, Lady.

Cauldron of transformation: a new vision of Wicca for modern pagan practice /

Lady Sabrina. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-56718-600-9 (pbk.)

1. Witchcraft. I. Title.

BF1571.S22 1996

133.4'3—dc20

95-51457

Llewellyn Publications

A Division of Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.

P.O. Box 64383, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

To all the members of Our Lady of Enchantment, especially Aristaeus, Autumn, Balaam, Brie, Cassius, Damaclease, Galadriel, Lisa, Leonard, and Lucy. Also, thank you Nancy, Jessica, and all the Llewellyn staff who made this book a reality.

Contents

Preface: A New Vision of Wicca	ix
Introduction: Co-Creation Spirituality	xiii
PART I: The Cauldron of Reflection	1
<i>Where History and Tradition Meet</i>	
1. Religion: The Dream of the Human Mind	3
<i>Preface to Tradition (Chapters 2 through 6)</i>	13
2. The Druids and Celtic Paganism	15
3. Christianity: A Covenant with Christ	23
4. Santería: An Old Religion in a New World	31
5. Buddhism: The Ascetic Way of Life	41
6. Shamanism: The Natural Way of Spirituality	47
 PART II: The Cauldron of Light	 53
<i>The Birthplace of Divinity</i>	
7. Discovering Divinity	55
<i>Preface to Deity (Chapters 8 through 12)</i>	61
8. Africa: Home of the Orisha	63
9. Asia: The Land of Many Gods	75
10. Egypt: Valley of Temple and Tomb	83
11. Europe: Alive with Myth and Mystery	95
12. Those Who Ever Shine Brightly	107

PART III: The Cauldron of Inspiration	119
<hr/>	
<i>Where Symbol and Spirit Unite</i>	
13. Tools and Symbols of the Sacred	121
14. The Oracle as a Voice of Truth and Wisdom	135
15. Harmony and the Elements of Nature	147
16. A Place for Prayer and Worship	159
 PART IV: The Cauldron of Transformation	 171
<hr/>	
<i>A New Vision of Expression</i>	
17. The Office and Obligation of the Priesthood	173
18. The Observance of Essential Requirements	181
19. Sacraments, Sacred Rites, and Prayers	195
20. The Creative Spirit	265
 Bibliography	 271
Index	275

A New Vision of Wicca

Over the last eighteen years, almost 20,000 people—mostly mail-order students—have passed through Our Lady of Enchantment. The majority of these people were well-educated, over thirty years of age, and from a Christian background. For the most part, they were tired of the politics and dogma of the Christian Church but still had a healthy regard for deity and spirituality. They were looking for something new and different—something that would support their future but not invalidate their past. Most found what they were seeking through our study programs.

Our Lady of Enchantment teaches a form of alternative spirituality that is based on the principles of metaphysics,¹ magic,² and mysticism³ in combination with ceremonial worship of the God and Goddess. This formulation of doctrine and ritual, what we call *Co-Creation Spirituality*, essentially sprouted from Wiccan/Pagan roots.

Like all offspring that have been cherished and nurtured, our system has grown and matured far beyond our original expectations. Because we have refined and perfected our theology and practices, the commonly accepted term “Wicca” no longer accurately describes our religious practices. For the most part, Wicca has become a social movement based on politically correct agendas to which a sprinkling of New Age spirituality has been added. Wicca’s religious aspect seems to have been lost somewhere between the Eco-feminism and the Poly-amorous lifestyles.

Wicca, in its principal form, traces its origins back to the early 1940s and to Gerald Gardner, a British occultist. Gardner’s frustration with both Christianity and the complexity of ceremonial magic prompted him to create something different. The result was a system combining the worship of deity with the practice of ritual magic.

Gardner’s spiritual child has grown, developed, and amassed a great many followers over the years. Just like all children, it has created many of its own problems. Some of these problems, such as the absence of specific rules and regulations concerning beliefs and practices, were ones we could not tolerate. The disregard for

structure within the Wiccan movement has created confusion and chaos, leading to constant jousting between Wiccans for validation of doctrine and positions of superficial power.

This lack of comprehensive spiritual direction, coupled with the fact that Wicca does not allow the expansion of its “keep it free, easy, and simple”⁴ doctrine into any of the Christian mysteries, prompted us to renovate our system. There was also the problem with the word *Christian*. For some reason, that word seems to cause a flurry of criticism and ridicule from those practicing the Wiccan faith. We felt this was unreasonable because esoteric Christianity, like all mystery traditions, had something of value to offer.

Because of Wicca’s lack of spiritual regulations and the basic Christian phobia, Our Lady of Enchantment formulated a new system of study that allowed us to combine many different esoteric practices into one working religious unit. We wanted something that would bridge the gap between Wiccan-Pagan ideology and the original intent of the Christian mysteries. We wanted something that everyone could relate to and feel comfortable with. Our efforts produced a progressive arrangement based on both Pagan and Christian principles—Co-Creation Spirituality.

Co-Creation Spirituality is a more extensive and inclusive religious system than the singular, tradition-bound Wiccan method. Because it is more extensive, we were able to create a comprehensive doctrine and incorporate a variety of spiritual disciplines into our practices. Also, by encouraging Co-Creationism, we open the doors of our religious system to all sincere seekers—be they from a Christian or Pagan background.

A principal characteristic of our system (to which some object) is this inclusion of Christian thought and symbolism into our practices. This inclusion, coupled with the fact that we acknowledge the Cosmic Christ—as in Jesus Christ, sun⁵ of god—seems to send chills down the spines of most Wiccans. And when we express our understanding and appreciation for the symbolism of Christ’s passion—as a divine victim or sacrificial king—their Pagan feet start running.

The combination of Christian symbolism and our structured doctrine has created a major wedge between us and some more vocal members of the Neo-Pagan/Wiccan movement (not to mention the distress we seemed to have caused by having an image of Jesus Christ in our chapel, even though there are far more Pagan deities represented therein). Personally, I think this aversion to Jesus is pure foolishness that stems mainly from ignorance. Wiccans, like Christians, seem to confuse deity with the political faction of the presumed offending religion.

To my way of thinking, all gods and goddesses are divine and, therefore, should not be subject to simple human prejudice. Jesus, in his spiritual aspect, was a composite of previous solar-savior divinities.⁶ He was the Mithras, the Sol Invictus, and the Unconquered Sun of the Piscean Age. In the corporeal sense, he was a rebellious Jewish rabbi on a collision course with the religious establishment of his day.

Jesus was a mystic, healer, and a man of enlightenment. The followers of Jesus and those who came later distorted the teachings and esoteric symbolism of the Christ. They are the ones who should be censured, not Jesus the man or Christ the god.

As a religiously inclined individual, I have a problem with this vehement prejudice toward any and everything Christian, when in fact Christianity, especially Catholic Christianity, is nothing more than Pagan-plagiarism with some exasperating patriarchal overtones.

The whole Christian concept began with a group of insurgent Jews and Pagan Gentiles who wanted to start a religious movement of their own—something new, different, and separate from the established religions of their time. What they envisioned way back when is totally different from what we have today.

For those who have taken the time to do any research at all, it is no secret that the early Church absorbed most of the rites and symbology of the ancient Greek, Roman, and Persian mystery religions. Most importantly, these early merchants of theological wisdom could read and write when most everyone else didn't know the difference between a book and stepping stone. Because of their knowledge, many of their records and writings are invaluable when delving into the history of religious beliefs and practices. It is a shame that today's Wiccans and Pagans cannot see past the Church's politics and appreciate some of its initial beauty and mystery. This reminds me of a story I want to share with you.

I once had a Great Dane named Ralph who weighed in at 150 pounds. One afternoon, I was invited to a barbecue party at a friend's house. She had a good deal of property, so I took the dog with me. Dogs being dogs, Ralph was a pest and had his nose into everything. One exceptionally astute guest chained the 150-pound dog to an aluminum yard chair (chairs weigh approximately three pounds). Ralph moved, the chair collapsed, and pandemonium ensued.

The dog took off like a bat out of hell with the devil in hot pursuit. We took off after the dog. No matter how fast poor Ralph ran, he could not get away from the chair, which, of course, was chasing him.

After the hysteria was over, the flower beds were ruined, the lawn was torn to pieces, and the vegetable garden was uprooted. When we stopped running, the dog calmed down and someone was able to free poor Ralph from his object of terror.

My point is that no matter how fast we run, we cannot outrun the shadow of our Christian heritage. However, if we stop running and calm down, maybe, just maybe, the hand of reason can free us from our imagined bondage.

The purpose of this book is to help you decide for yourself what is spiritually satisfying. Every person on the face of this earth is unique. Because of this, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs vary from person to person. Many students have expressed their discomfort with Pagan deities, which presents a problem. People are not happy with the dogma of the Church but are still devoted to Christian deities. What do they do? They create their own spiritual paths.

For the most part, this book embodies and advocates the use of Co-Creation Spirituality as the alternative to most modern religious systems. Symbolically, Co-Creation Spirituality is a cauldron that can simultaneously brew many different combinations of ingredients. Like the cauldron, our system allows for the mixing and merging of many concepts and beliefs to create a potpourri of spiritual refreshment.

The cauldron's principal purpose is change. Through time, we see the symbolic cauldron transform itself from the magical brewing pot of our ancestors into the mythical Grail of modern spiritual quests. Likewise, our Wiccan ideal grew and evolved into Co-Creation Spirituality, becoming a more sophisticated and comprehensive form of Paganism.

In conclusion, there is no one right and only brew when it comes to personal spirituality and religion. The only stew or brew in your spiritual cauldron should be the one of your creation or choosing. What makes you feel good, enhances your life, and allows you to progress spiritually is what you should be cooking!

ENDNOTES

1. *Metaphysics* is an accepted doctrine that all things are a part of one source and that each thing—animate or inanimate—should be respected for its particular form, independent function, and contribution to the main source.
2. *Magic* is an art that comprises a system of concepts and methods using the more subtle forces of nature to help individuals balance their emotions. Magic develops control of human will; magic uses incantations, ceremonies, symbols, and objects to manipulate the subtle forces to achieve a desired result.
3. *Mysticism* seeks hidden wisdom and a relationship between visible and invisible beings and powers. Mysticism attempts to enjoy a communion with the highest energies and eventually God; it seeks union with God and understanding of the laws that make this union possible.
4. *Simple* does not mean to imply, in any way, that Wicca does not have value or substance. It is a valid spiritual path and certainly has its own merits for those who feel comfortable with it.
5. *Sun of god* refers to Jesus the Christ as the spiritual sun or light at the center of the soul and spiritual universe. In the ancient mystery traditions, the spiritual sun was Mithras, the “Sol Invictus” or Unconquered Sun.
6. Solar-Savior divinities would include Mithra, Osiris, Tammuz, Dionysus, Adonis, and others from earlier Pagan pantheons.

Co-Creation Spirituality

What I am sure of is that any future forms of religious experience will be quite different from those we are familiar with in Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, all of which are fossilized, outmoded, drained of meaning. I am sure that new forms, new expressions, will come. What will they be? The great surprise is always the freedom of the human spirit, its creativity.

Mircea Eliade in *Ordeal by Labyrinth*

The following is a description of Co-Creation Spirituality and what Our Lady of Enchantment promotes as an extensive working religion and personal spiritual system. We find these principles highly practicable because we view spirituality as an ongoing process of learning, growing, experiencing, and progressing. Realizing this, we constantly strive to improve our theology, rites, and personal spiritual discipline.

Throughout this book, Co-Creation Spirituality is used to illustrate the method by which a religion is created and takes form. If one wishes to practice this form of the Wiccan religion, it is necessary to follow the basic format of the system. Of course, you will need to supplement the structure with your own individual symbols, prayers, and practices. No hard and fast rules exist when it comes to spirituality. However, there are universal truths, intelligent decisions, and certain formulas that are known to produce a working system.

A Definition of Co-Creation Spirituality

Co is a prefix meaning “complement of.” *Creation* is “the continuous cyclically recurring process that emanates through our universe.” As Co-Creationists, we see ourselves as a complement to the Unmanifested¹ and all physical nature. We have the ability to imagine, devise, and conceive of new ways to progress spiritually. We

align ourselves with natural forces, cycles, and seasonal changes to bring harmony back into our lives.

We see our place in the universe as a counterpart to both the creative force and manifestation process. We do not seek to dominate our universe nor do we subjugate ourselves to it. We try to *co-exist*, in a peaceful yet meaningful way, with the world around us.

We view the nature of the Unmanifested, or God Force, as the ultimate source of all power and energy. The God Force is without gender, physical attributes, or emotion—it always was and always will be. Because the God Force rules such a vast universe, it has no time to involve itself directly with human affairs. Therefore, it is considered that the God Force rules in absentia by the projection of its energy as an expression of itself through the universe's primary natural principles.

The co-creation system teaches us that the God Force or Unmanifested is too extensive to be understood in its totality. So as individuals we pick a portion of the God Force and try, through comprehension of the part, to gain some knowledge of the whole. These portions of the God Force are lines of energy that are channeled through a deliberately conceived multicultural pantheon of masculine and feminine deities. These heavenly gods and goddesses, as well as many other spectral beings, form a communication link between our spiritual consciousness and that of the Unmanifested. By attuning ourselves to these intermediary deities, we learn to appreciate and use our own god-like qualities to achieve spiritual satisfaction.

Through sacred myth, a reverence for nature, and an acceptance of reincarnation, we co-create continuity and balance and learn the truth of life. We have found that the most effective way to reach spiritual inner harmony is through religious ritual and ceremony. Ritual provides a physical expression of spirituality, bringing it out and making it real. Because we are all unique and have different views of divinity, we stress the importance of individual participation and connection with deity.

We believe that each person is both co-creator and experiencer of his or her reality. As such we have the right and responsibility to reaffirm our god-like abilities through acts of magic, ritual, and worship. Ritual not only strengthens and encourages our spiritual being, but also makes us feel good about ourselves.

We recognize the power, potential, and universal truth in all genuine belief systems. Although we are not of the Christian persuasion, we are not by any means anti-Christian. We find merit in righteousness no matter what its origin. As Co-Creationist and sincere seekers of enlightenment, we respect and use all universal truths to aid us in our practices.

Our ceremonies become plays for the benefit of the higher consciousness, with the participants as the actors. By physically acting out what we want to happen, we become one in sympathy with our desires. These desires, once acted upon, become thought forms that in turn are projected into the universal consciousness. With the right amount of force and energy, proper thought forms will become reality.

The Co-Creation Principal Belief System

As Co-Creationist, we believe in the existence of the original source of creation known as the Unmanifested. We believe in and realize the importance of the communicative secondary creative powers revealed through various forms of gods and goddesses, as well as in the subtle forces of nature.

As Co-Creationist, we are neither matriarchal nor patriarchal in our religious focus. We seek the middle path of balance. We realize the truth, wisdom, and creative power that comes from the union of the masculine and feminine forces of nature.

As Co-Creationist, we believe in the value and need for organizational structure within our religious system. Structure and organization begin with good leadership. We value the opinions of all our devotees, and so our administration of spiritual knowledge is expressed through an equal-partnership priesthood comprised of both men and women. We also respect the authority given to those who are spiritually mature and advanced in the theology of other valid religious systems.

As Co-Creationist, we believe in magic, defined as “the ability to create change at will.” We use physical symbols and tools, as well as metaphysical concepts, to help focus and direct our energies toward the manifestation of desire. We respect the abilities and rights of all our members to work toward their own goals and spiritual progress within and without the group.

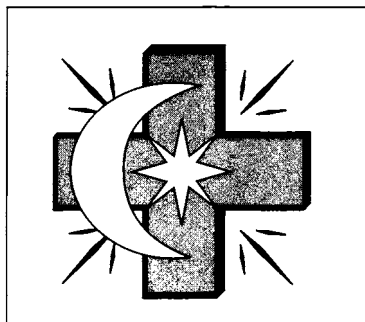
As Co-Creationist, we believe there is a need to respect and harmonize with the social structure of our time, while maintaining our individual rights and personal freedoms. Simply, this means we maintain a level of moral ethics acceptable to our present-day society.

As Co-Creationist, we believe that our religion as well as our lives are part of an ever-changing process that is integral to our personal and spiritual growth and progress. Because everything we see or know is in a constant state of change, our practices, beliefs, and expressions of spirituality must also change to fit the system² in which they are personified.

As Co-Creationist, we gladly accept and encourage suggestions, additions, or modifications to our beliefs, practices, and magical systems from our student membership, congregation, and priesthood.

The Co-Creation Symbol and What It Means

Crescent (waning) Moon: Signifies the wisdom, authority, and good judgment that comes with experience and age.



Equal-Armed Cross: Embodies the masculine and feminine powers of heaven and earth; represents the four cardinal directions and the crossroads of choice.

Eight-Pointed Star: The light coming from the East, the vision of tomorrow, the spirit of enlightenment, and the ability to see beyond the physical.

Together, these create and reaffirm balance, vision, and the ability to co-create a new reality.

ENDNOTES

1. The Unmanifested is the source of all creation, the divine spirit, the Universal Force, the God in sense of neutral—both male and female, good and evil, all that ever was or will be.
2. System here refers to the twentieth century in which we live. Regression into the Paleolithic or romantic Renaissance ages can be fun, but has little to do with progress of any kind.

The Cauldron of Reflection

*Where History and
Tradition Meet*



Religion: The Dream of the Human Mind

Religion. A daughter of Hope and Fear explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914)

Man is born to believe. And if no Church comes forward with its title-deeds of truth...to guide him, he will find altars and idols in his own heart and his own imagination.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881)

Religion and Reality

Creating a religion or spiritual path is similar to building your own home. The first requirement of home building is the drawing of a set of plans. If you don't have experience with architecture, you take a course or have someone teach you how to lay out and draft your design. Next you purchase land and pour the foundation. Then you start on the framework, exterior walls, and roofing.

Sound like a big project? Well, it is. This is why most people buy a house already built or stick with what they have—those solutions are easier and more convenient. Nowadays, almost everything—including religion—is based on the “buy it ready made or make it yourself” concept. If you want something truly unique and different, you must make it yourself. However, before you attempt to create anything, you need a basic understanding of the essential elements required to produce the end product.

Like the home builder who needs a background in architecture, the spiritual craftsman needs a background in religious studies and concepts. Once you have the

necessary knowledge, you will be able to draft your own set of plans and create something original.

As we begin to study religion as a whole, we find humanity's greatest accomplishments and most conspicuous failures. Respectively, the religions of the world should bring peace, love, and harmony. Instead, they seem to be the cause of war, hatred, and destruction. In human history, more people have died in the name of religion than for any other cause. Something is wrong with the system when the religions of the world do exactly the opposite of what they should.

The problems most religious organizations incur stem from their ecclesiastic severity and unmanageable size. Humans by nature are independent and territorial first. Subordinate and tribal needs place second, and then only when hearth and home are threatened. In other words, individuality and personal space are prerequisites over communal supervision and support.

When in their own backyard, by all rights, individuals are the ever-reigning king of the mountain. However, when they gather with others, certain social regulations prevail, and they are not necessarily lord and master of all they perceive. Individuality is relinquished for the common good of the group and for the sanction it creates through sheer mass power. Crowd domination is necessary for political conquest and military purposes, but it leaves much to be desired in conjunction with spirituality.

This condition of "quest for validation through majority approval" is not limited to the Christian religions. Every religious body seems to suffer from it—including those within Neo-Paganism. Head count and notoriety seem to be the priority, with theological significance coming somewhere after the social hour. This need for sanction by vast numbers of people induces power struggles in leadership and creates a political rather than spiritual agenda. Left unchecked, the politics soon infects the system and eventually causes its decline and spiritual death.

The contradictions within our species are numerous. We enjoy our privacy, but are social by nature and seek a certain amount of interaction with others who have similar ideas. This is especially true for the spiritually inclined who seem to seek out others of like mind. These champions of religious zeal also manage to gather frequently in order to show their spiritual prowess.

Religious and spiritual gatherings should be times of celebration and worship, not partisan assemblies where people meet to compete with each other. The sad part of this is that most of the New Age earth religions have mimicked, as closely as possible, the Christian gathering neurosis of "the more people you have, the more valid you are." It's not the substance of what they offer anymore that counts, but rather the ability to lure many people onto their turf or into their campgrounds.

Nothing is inherently wrong with proselytizing if the religious body has strong, unified binding principles and beliefs that its followers can all agree upon and work toward. However, from what I have seen, most large Pagan gatherings are more like

Easter Sunday at the Catholic Church. Everyone shows up to see who has the most flamboyant hat—only to go home and ridicule them while devising equally outrageous concoctions of their own.

The primary goal of religion is to transform the individual soul through a progression of spiritual initiations and incarnations, not to engage in spiritual buffoonery. Sadly, this concept has been lost and the essential spiritual initiation process has been replaced with secular objectives. The entire point of becoming involved in religion and spirituality is to learn how to receive and assimilate divine energy through identification with deity. Once the identification process has been completed, a bond or communication link between the individual and his or her god is established. This bond of communication then empowers the individual with those eminent qualities of the deity itself. In time, the individual is able to raise his or her level of spiritual consciousness.

Unfortunately, in their quest for copious amounts of followers, most religious systems have strayed from this original goal. In the face of their unresponsive and indifferent demeanor, tolerance and consideration for individual spiritual needs has been lost. For years now mainstream religious movements have herded people into their churches only to bore them to death with fund drives, moral rebukes, and impersonal theology. Is it any wonder that the once faithful are looking elsewhere for their spiritual comfort?

What is really amusing is the lack of insight from the seemingly astute theologians, both Pagan and Christian. These individuals should at least be able to see, if not get a grip on, what is happening. History repeats itself. The same conditions of religious populace appeasement that prevail today existed in the Roman Empire over 1600 years ago. Only then, a state type of Paganism and the Mystery cults were the dominant means of spiritual expression.

Then, like now, humanity was growing¹ into a New Age. Change was in the air and what used to be was in the midst of passing away. Over the decades, Paganism and the Mystery traditions had become vapid, sterile, and lifeless. They were losing their adherents to Christianity, the new, more enigmatic, system. Christianity was fresh, modern, and different. It presented itself to the majority rather than the minority. Rich or poor, illiterate or scholarly—there was a place for everyone and everyone was able to receive the sacraments of the god.

Christianity began like all religions do, in secret, for fear of condemnation and persecution. The teachings that would bestow on it world importance were a compilation of Mosaic Law, cultural Paganism, and a synthesis of Mystery cult symbolism. People were familiar with and could relate to these teachings. The only difference was that Christianity presented these teachings in a new, more organized format and with zealous enthusiasm.

Christianity captured the attention and admiration of the majority not only because it was new, but also because it offered something for everyone. Judaism had

become entirely too rigid and punitive; Paganism seemed pointless and was boring; the Mystery cults were closed, exclusionary, and sexist, allowing only military, state elite, or the well-educated to become distinguished members.

With the entrance of the Piscean Age, Judaism retreated into itself; Paganism saw its final sunset; and the Mystery traditions lost their appeal. Now with the coming of the Aquarian Age, the Christian Church and all its factions are floundering and are about to beach themselves like dying whales. Each of these religious traditions, in their own time, had something special to offer. Like everything, they sprouted, blossomed, and brought joy; faded; and passed away. Birth, life, and death are part of the cycle that affects all things, whether they are animate or inanimate, conjecture or fact.

With the coming of the New Age, it is once again time for religiously progressive individuals to show initiative and be creative. The archaic morality and political commercialism of today's mainstream religions need to be discarded so the true essence of spiritual idealism can once again flourish. The morals, doctrines, and rites that represent known truths need to be revised and presented in a new and compelling way. When this happens, religion and spirituality will once again rekindle the divine spark within and reunite humanity with deity and its destiny.

Religion by Definition

From the earliest times of prehistory down to the present day, religion has provided humanity with a means of explaining our deepest thoughts and convictions. It is through a complex mixture of conjecture, doctrine, and intuition that religious traditions are formed and become repositories of spiritual energy. When devotees tap into these repositories, they provide a revelation or mystical experience. The joy that follows the revelation or mystical experience is what keeps the individual's divine spark alive and creates a living religion.

Because of its illusive nature, religion and the mystical experience are difficult to define in precise terms. For this reason, most religions tend to express their esoteric nature through ritual or some form of art, such as sculpture, music, or dance. These symbolic methods of interpretation bridge the language barrier, allowing the individual to experience within (rather than verbalize, which tends to inhibit) the true ecstasy of spiritual enlightenment.

Religion is universal ideation that is necessary for balanced existence—which is why it can be found in every society and culture at all stages of human history. The word itself comes from the Latin *religio*, meaning re-linking or reunion and is the restoration of the bond between humans, nature, and god. The entire concept of religion, at least in theory, is to bring humanity into alignment with deity for spiritual enlightenment, progress, and eventual reconciliation with the creator.

One of the most outstanding features of religion—and why it has always been important—is that it gives value and meaning to life. Religion helps to develop an awareness, or feeling, that life is not accidental and meaningless but has direction and purpose.

Religion and most forms of genuine spirituality create a sense of security and stability within the believer. This sense of stability, of knowing there is something more to life than just the physical, brings promise for the future. When this sense of security is combined with true love and affection for deity, the void of the soul is filled and the need for constant distraction² ceases.

All religions have something in common and can be seen to have five separate, though related, divisions. No aspect by itself constitutes a religion, but when they are combined they create a working spiritual arrangement. As you read through the following divisions, speculate on how they relate to your own personal beliefs and spiritual realizations. By reflecting, you begin the creation process that in time will give form to your own system.

1. Beliefs and Faith

Beliefs and faith are the essential part of any religion and show how those involved deal with the universe, life and death, ancestors, spirits, magic, and divinity. The beliefs can be written down as in scripture, passed on through myth, or acted out in ritual.

2. Practices and Ceremonies

Group activities are an important part of any religion. Through religious practices, members express their beliefs and faith in practical terms. These practices include praying, performing rituals and ceremonies, making sacrifices and offerings, and observing special customs. Because each religion has its own method of practices, I can only generalize about common observances. The most common group activities are seasonal celebrations; harvest remembrances; rites of passage for birth, puberty, marriage, and death; festivals for deities and ancestors; and appreciation or recognition of natural phenomenon.

3. Religious Objects and Places

These are the items and places that have been set aside as sacred or holy. They are not commonly used except for a specified religious purpose. Many religious objects and places are considered to be sacred. Humans created some; nature herself created others. Once something has been designated as sacred and holy, both the community and the individual practitioner hold it in high regard.

All religions have special tools, symbols, and objects that designate their intention and purpose to both priest and practitioner. These objects and the places where worship occurs help to formulate the religion's physical aspect.

4. Values and Morals

Values and morals include truth, justice, right and wrong, good and evil, respect for people and property, rights, and responsibilities. Values and morals also exhibit the character and integrity of those involved in the belief system. The values and morals help individuals to live with one another, settle their differences, maintain peace and harmony, and allow them to have a relationship with their environment.

5. Leaders and Priesthood

These are religion's trained, initiated, or designated leaders. They conduct the ceremonies, lead the people in prayer, perform divination, and provide counseling for their believers. They can be found in all religions and may hold office as the medicine man, local king, parish priest, diviner, rain maker, or church elder. The position and title of the leader or priest will depend on the tradition, philosophy, and social and cultural designation of the religion itself.

Whatever their title, the leaders are trained specialists and experts in religious matters. They are the human keepers of the religious tradition, its laws, rituals, and heritage. They are the arbitrators in matters of disputes and the dispensers of divine wisdom.

Religion and the Spiritual Process

As you can see, religion is a complex mixture of social, cultural, and philosophical impressions. The five aspects mentioned above are essential to its makeup and together create a whole orderly process. In reality, these divisions constitute the formula used to generate new religions based on eternal truths, established procedure, and contemporary thinking.

Working with Co-Creation Spirituality as the example, I will show how the five divisions help to compose and structure a religious system. In addition to the required elements, Co-Creation Spirituality as a new religion sanctions the individual interpretation of deity and its related expression in ritual. This inclusion of personal perception into a structured religious system creates an active rather than passive process. When this happens, the devotees become participants rather than just spectators—and their religion manifests as a progressive means of spiritual growth.

Co-Creation Beliefs

From the Introduction, it is evident that Co-Creation Spirituality believes in a Supreme Being. This Force is referred to as the All or Unmanifested and is a form of pure energy beyond the comprehension of human understanding. This ultimate

Force exudes and radiates primal energy that transforms itself through a set of secondary principles, which in turn manifest as the gods and goddesses comprising the various pantheons of different world religions.

The Co-Creation system teaches that it is ultimately up to the individual to choose the god and/or goddess he or she wishes to work with. As we commonly appreciate and hold in high esteem all genuine forms of deity, we are in essence omnithetic³ and therefore nonjudgmental in our approach to deity.

For the church and Sabbath Masses at Our Lady of Enchantment, we use Cerriden and Cernunnos as the projections of the masculine and feminine energies of deity that form the link between us and the Unmanifested. We use both a god and goddess because all life is shared between the negative and positive, masculine and feminine forces of the universe. For our established ceremonies, we have found it best to support the same god and goddess each time. This allows the group, as a whole, to build a relationship with a centralized spiritual force that in turn helps to spiritually unite the members.

In addition, we encourage our members to seek out their own special gods and goddesses. This creates a balance between group worship and solitary work, allowing for the expansion of spiritual knowledge and growth through shared experience.

Co-Creation Ceremonies and Practices

Co-Creation Spirituality stresses the value of energy that resides within the universe, nature, and the human form. Therefore, as a group as well as individually, we stress the importance of personal alignment with the rhythms and vibrations of our environment. We work with the seasonal changes⁴ for planning, planting, nurturing, and accepting in accordance with desire and the life cycle. These times of reverence include Yule, Imbolc, Vernal Equinox, Beltane, Summer Solstice, Lughnasadh, Autumn Equinox, and Samhain.

In addition to celebrating the eight divisions within the calendar year, we also acknowledge the god in his aspect of the Divine Victim and resurrected Lord. This special Eucharist Mass takes place at sunset on Good Friday. On September 7, we celebrate the Feast of the Blessed Virgin in honor of the goddess in all her sacred forms. The Eight Seasonal Sabbats, along with Good Friday and the Feast of the Blessed Virgin, constitute our Ten Days of Holy Obligation.

In practice, Co-Creation Spirituality also stresses the concept of initiation as a palingenesis of individual consciousness. Because of this, Our Lady of Enchantment makes ordination into the priesthood available for those who wish to progress. Even though we have three levels of achievement when one has been initiated and ordained as a priest or priestess, the individual becomes a fully functioning member of the organization with all rights and privileges.

Co-Creation Religious Objects and Places

Co-Creation Spirituality as practiced at Our Lady of Enchantment designates sacred space as a permanent area set aside for worship of deity. We believe that energy can be confined and maintained over a period of time in a properly constructed space. All our members set aside a room or area for personal prayer and worship in their home. For our common meetings, we gather in the chapel at Our Lady of Enchantment, which has been consecrated, blessed, and dedicated specifically for the worship of the god and goddess.

As Co-Creationists, we value and appreciate all religious symbolism and works of art. We understand that some items are passive, such as icons, paintings, and statues. We see these as having the ability to contain the eminent force or energy of the god or goddess. However, we realize these objects are not in reality the god or goddess they represent, but a receptacle for the deity's specific force field.

We also recognize the value of religious objects, which in symbolic form constitute an active part of our worship. Some of these come from traditional Wiccan roots, while others are borrowed from the Pagan Mystery traditions and early Christian teaching. We also have added several other objects that have a traditional significance but are in a new form and therefore are unique to Co-Creation Spirituality.

The sacred tools and symbolic objects we use to represent deity and the elemental forces of life are the Chalice, Vessel of Creation, Dagger, Rod of Authority, and cauldron. In addition, we use the censer, aspergillum, bells, and Paten—all of which will be thoroughly discussed later in this book.

Each of these objects takes on a special significance when used in the context of ritual. The most important contribution tools make is in their ability to help the individual focus his or her attention at the proper time. Eventually, if properly cared for, all sacred objects retain and become reservoirs of divine energy that, when needed, can be tapped by the sincere devotee.

Co-Creation Values and Morals

Our values and morals reflect the substance of the culture and society in which we live. State and federal laws take precedence over individual impulse, which we consider to be common sense. In addition, we have personal reflections that we feel are realistic and beneficial to our membership.

Moderation: A criterion whereby we judge our works and our actions. Excess of any kind leads to imbalance in both the physical or spiritual sense.

Function: Realism as to the attitude and actions of members in regards to their place and purpose within a group or social structure. Everyone is unique, has his or her own talents, and is respected according to his or her works, not words.

Respect: For leaders, as in the Priesthood, in regards to their earned ability to direct and produce spiritual realization within the congregation and working structure of ritual.

Observation: Of the lack of perfection within the scope of individual participation. We see these imperfections as an obvious flaw in all humanity, which does not create or cause disruption but is a reason for understanding, tolerance, and love.

Knowledge: We expect those in positions of authority to express what they know and be willing to learn about what they are not in possession of. Knowledge is a privilege and should be treated with respect, and so should those who give of it freely.

Wisdom: We regard all positive religions with an open mind and do not fear accepting or using those beliefs that are in alignment with our philosophy and teachings, be they Christian or Pagan. We know our position and walk the middle path with awareness and understanding of those around us.

Co-Creation Leadership

As Co-Creationists, we firmly believe in a strong, trained, and disciplined priesthood. The quality of leadership is a direct reflection on the fundamental endowment of philosophy, belief, and practice of our—or any, for that matter—religious organization.

We consider a central authority to be mandatory. Just as a building has one foundation, so our religious association has one common ground of management. This central authority is evidenced through our board of qualified priests and priestesses who have been fully trained and educated in the comparative religious studies of Wicca and Co-Creation Spirituality. By having this point of reference, there is continuity and perpetuation of our specific religious and spiritual ideals.

This structure in no way hinders the individual from freedom of expression but instead provides guidelines for personal growth and development. Simply, without direction and established rules of conduct, chaos exists. Everyone needs to know their boundaries. When boundaries are fully recognized, the growth process is productive, not random and dysfunctional. For this reason, Our Lady of Enchantment has a two-step program designed to help educate those who wish to become members of the priesthood.

The program we offer is simple and straightforward and provides extensive training in religious theory and the Metaphysical arts. Upon completion of our training program, the student may apply for ministerial credentials and eventual initiation and ordination into the Wiccan priesthood.

The path of the priesthood is not a vocation for everyone or for every member of our organization. Many of our members feel the need for spirituality in their lives but have not been called to the priesthood. These people share and participate in all

our public Masses and enjoy all the privileges of a formal religious tradition. It is the interaction of the priesthood with the laity that generates the constant flow of new energy and spiritual revelation that benefits all of us.

In closing, we feel that Co-Creation Spirituality complies with the five necessary requirements that constitute a working religion. Because we see the need for personal interpretation in spirituality, we stress knowledge as a fundamental requirement for both the congregation member and the ordained priesthood. The more someone knows and understands about his or her religion, the more likely he or she is to get involved and progress spiritually.

ENDNOTES

1. At this time, we were at the very beginning of the Piscean Age. Pisces is represented by two fish swimming in opposite directions, coincidentally the symbol for Christianity. Pisces was an age of duality, internal struggle, and world conflict. Pisces can never seem to make up its mind one way or the other.
2. Distraction is usually concealed in the form of excessive habits: the constant need for buying or acquiring new and better toys; the longing for physical affection or attention; in some cases, illness and substance addiction.
3. Omnitheistic/Omnitheism is the belief in all forms of theism, as in all deities, gods and goddesses, as both separate from but connected to all other life and spiritual forms.
4. A complete explanation of the eight seasonal Sabbats and their accompanying rituals is found in Chapter 19.

Preface to Tradition

Chapters 2 through 6

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to thoroughly describe all the world's major and minor religions in a single book. First, too many of them exist; second, religion is a complex subject. Even though all religions have something in common, social and cultural differences lead to major variations in beliefs and practices.

Not being able to cover all religions presents a problem. In order to understand religion as a whole, one needs to examine and compare a variety of traditions. By learning and comparing, the student can then separate a tradition's politics and social customs from the mysteries and spiritual truths upon which the tradition is based. Once this has been accomplished, a real sense of religion's rationale becomes apparent and it is then possible to choose or create wisely.

The following chapters discuss five different systems in reference to their origins, customs, and beliefs. These discussions will help you become familiar with the various traditions available, as well as introduce you to some of their practices and sacred symbology. Through comparison, obvious similarities and truths will surface and distinct differences and political factions will become apparent. Knowing the difference between spiritual fact and social custom will be useful if you decide to compose your own belief system.

Chapters 2 through 6 cover Celtic Druidism, Christianity, Santería, Buddhism, and Shamanism. These religious traditions were selected because I feel they are good examples of popular belief, spiritual discernment, and metaphysical discipline. In one way or another, all these traditions have contributed to Our Lady of Enchantment's system of Co-Creation Spirituality. Another reason for my selections was the fact that all these traditions are still being practiced today and therefore allow for further examination.

Besides the reasons already mentioned, I felt the traditions' separate and distinct regional positions, living conditions, and societies presented an extensive view of

cultural religion. Personally, I think that by using dissimilar systems it is easier to pinpoint spiritual truths in contrast to the political and social precedents, which tend to color all religious traditions. As truth is the one concept all religions value, once it has been uncovered, it is only a matter of applying the truth in order to produce a workable system.

To introduce as much information as possible, each religious tradition is presented in an extended outline style. Though these outlines are complete in their primary form, they are in no way conclusive in their entirety. To fully explain any religion in detail, one would need more space than I am allotted here. However, plenty of references are listed for the curious student to follow up on.

The Druids and Celtic Paganism

To the peoples of antiquity, the isle of Britain was the very home and environment of mystery, a sacred territory, to enter was to encroach upon a region of enchantment, the dwelling of gods.

Lewis Spence, *The Mysteries of Britain*

The History of the Celts

To understand the Pre-Christian Celtic religion—of which the Druids were the Magi, philosophers, and priesthood—it is necessary to appreciate the early Celtic lifestyle. Religion is, and always has been, a community affair, reflecting the cultural and social structure of its time.

The Celts were a branch of the Indo-European people who migrated from their homeland, west of the Black Sea, into Europe around 3000 B.C. From around 400 B.C., they became recognizable as a culture. They were by tradition a cattle-herding, horse-breeding, and a head-hunting people.¹ Short swords, lances, and chariots were some of their sophisticated war-making implements. Among their sports were fishing, hunting, and, of course, fighting—which they loved above all. They were not a docile, peaceful race, but aggressive, barbaric, and war-loving.

As a whole, the Celts were tall and robust in comparison to the shorter and slighter Greeks and Romans whose territory they invaded. Because of their size, tattoos, and bleached hair, the Celts must have seemed like weird giants to the civilized Romans. Even their clothing was strange as both sexes generally dressed alike in breeches, knee-length tunics, and brightly colored cloaks. They adorned themselves with rings, bracelets, armlets, and ornate buckles along with intricate gold and silver brooches, which held their cloaks in place.

The Celts were known for their fairness in law, which among other things guaranteed the place of women. In Celtic society, a woman could own property, choose her own husband, and divorce her spouse. Women also took their place in the line of battle next to their husbands. If a woman's husband died, she ascended to his role as chief in their family line.

Within the Celtic tribe or clans, three divisions of recognition existed. First was the king, a descendent of a hero or warrior leader who was recognized for his prowess in battle. Next were the warriors, chosen for their ability to protect and defend the tribe or clan during times of attack. The last designation was the common people, who were the herders, farmers, and other producers of products needed for sustaining daily life.

Separate from the tribe or clan, yet intrinsically part of it, were the Druids or Celtic priesthood. This special clergy, like the clan or tribe, was divided into three classes or grades, each with its own functions and responsibilities. First in order was the Druid/Derwydd, who was advisor to the chief or king and acted as judge and lawyer to the people. He also held authority in worship and ritual. Next were the Ovates/Ovydd, who were the priests and priestesses in charge of prophecy and divination. The last grade was the Bards/Bardd, who were poets, musicians, and keepers of tradition. They were trained in music, history, and song-spell. An Arch-Druid ruled all these groups. The senior brethren (ones considered to be the most learned) elected the Arch-Druid by lot.

The Celtic cosmology and Drudic system were based on the fundamental belief in the law of three or the logical order of the triad, which was the association of humans with nature combined with divinity. This produced a religious system that was monotheistic (belief in one creator) in its underlying creed, but polytheistic (belief in many gods and goddesses) in its ritualistic practices. Prior to Christianity, this dualistic approach toward religion was common, especially among the agricultural and livestock breeding peoples. By virtue of their association with the land and animals, these people were more aware of the subtle energies and power potential of natural phenomenon.

The one problem with accurate Drudic and Celtic religious history is that some zealous Christian priests destroyed most of the written records. According to historian Dr. Kennedy in *Dissertation about the Family of the Stuarts*, more than 300 volumes of the Celts' fables, superstitions, and worship were burned. These, along with other lost books written by Roman historians who had contact with the Druids, leave us with little viable information. What is left comes to us from the records of liberal Irish monks who wanted to preserve their heritage, and what can be gleaned from archeology and ancient art. As with anything, the astute individual—with time and patience—will be able to piece together a fairly accurate picture of the Celtic spiritual system.

Beliefs and Practices of Celtic Druidism

The Druids were the priests of the Celts, which therefore puts them in the position of religious dissemination. The term *Celtic* refers to the culture of the people. *Druidic* indicates their religious system.

The Druidic faith centered on One Supreme Creative Force that manifested through:

- a. *Divinity*: the gods, goddesses, angels, and nature spirits.
- b. *Nature*: the elements of earth, air, fire, and water—places where energy was present, such as caves, rivers, wells, mountains, tree groves, and the ocean.
- c. *Animated Existence*: humanity, animals, birds, fish, and all living creatures great and small.

Druid beliefs extended to reincarnation as expressed in the Spiral of Abred, the circle of creation. This was the great circle on which the cycle of life moved like a wheel from birth to death and then back again. Each turn allowed for more experience to be gained in order to elevate the individual's spirit closer to its original source.

Belief in reincarnation or an afterlife was paramount with tribal people. Living conditions and life in general were less than comfortable; with effort and work, one could almost guarantee a position of reason in the afterlife and progress in those lifetimes to come.

The Druids' systematic view of God was expressed in a triad known as "The Transcendent Three."²

The Transcendent Three

1. The principal employment of God is to:

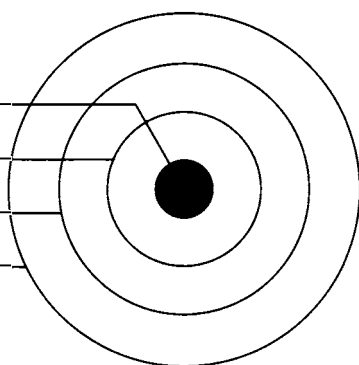
- enlighten the darkness
- invest nonentity with a body
- animate the dead

Annwn (the circle of birth and learning)

Abred (the circle of life and knowing)

Gwynyd (the circle of death and wisdom)

Ceugant (the Unmanifested)



*The Spiral of Abred
(the circle of creation)*

2. The three agents of God are:

- will
- wisdom
- love

3. The three things beyond the human realm are:

- extreme limits of space
- beginning and end of time
- the work of God

Along with their philosophical viewpoints and ideas about God, some physical areas of significance carried great amounts of power and deserved people's respect. It must be remembered that these were people of the land—farmers, herders, and craftsman—who honored and revered anything of natural importance. Nowhere is this more clearly communicated than in their “Five Forces of Influence.”

The Five Forces of Influence

1. Influence of place
2. Richness of time
3. Treasures of tribe
4. Glory of ancestors
5. Joy of journey

The Celtic culture was based on livestock breeding and agriculture, which no doubt influenced their religious customs and the practices of the Druids. Because of their dependence on the land and the herd, they recognized the four elements and the seasonal changes as being of great consequence. As with most early peoples, everything that affected the tribe—including the weather—had some sort of mystical significance.

The Four Elements and Their Corresponding Symbols of the Land

- | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| Air | Slea Blue (spear) |
| Fire | Climah Solis (sword) |
| Water | Cauldron of Dagada |
| Earth | Lia Fail (stone of destiny) |

The Eight-Fold Plan of the Year

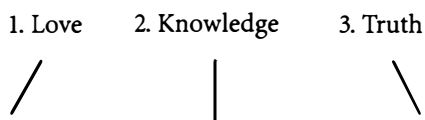
As a pastoral people, the Celts had great respect for the land and all that rose from the soil. From their appreciation for the bounty of Mother Earth came their observance of seasonal rites. In the eyes of the Celts, planning, planting, and harvesting were an integral part of life that could be governed through ritual observance. Their legacy of celebration is still with us today in the form of the eight Sabbats.

The Eight Sabbat Celebrations

1. *Imbolc/Candlemas*: February 1; the time of natural beginnings and preparation for the growing season.
2. *Alban Eiler/Spring Equinox*: March 21; the time of fertile ground when planting begins; also the time of equal day and night.
3. *Beltane/May Day*: May 1; the time of fertility when both animals and land are ready for impregnation by seed.
4. *Alban Heruin/Summer Solstice*: June 21; the highest point of the sun; the time to nurture the young and appreciate the eternally moving circle.
5. *Lughnasadh/Lammas*: August 1; the marriage of light and fire; the baking of the first loaf; the beginning of the harvest.
6. *Alban Elued/Autumnal Equinox*: September 21; the time of ripened achievement; equal day and night; also known as the harvest home.
7. *Samhain/Hallowmas*: October 31; the union of the two worlds of spirit and man; slaughter of the animals for winter food; the beginning of rest.
8. *Alban Arthuan/Winter Solstice*: December 21; the death and rebirth of the sun; the lowest point of the sun; the prayers for the return of the sun.

Commentary: Co-Creation spirituality recognizes the subtle changes of the seasons. As human beings, we are connected to each other and the earth; therefore, what influences one will have direct bearing on the actions of the other. When it is time to plant, it is time to plant; and when it is time to accept reward, it is time for celebration. We do not attempt to plant the seeds of our desires in the dead of winter just as we do not expect compensation with the first bud of spring. Cooperation with and participation in the seasons is enjoyable and rewarding and the reason why some customs never die out. Because of their impact and specific energy force, Our Lady of Enchantment incorporated the Eight Seasonal Festivals into our system as part of our Holy Days of Obligation.

The Druids, like many religions and spiritual traditions, had a symbol that expressed their philosophy in a simple form. This sacred symbol was the three columns that translated into the letters *O*, *I*, and *U*. These mystic letters and corresponding lines represented the three attributes of God:

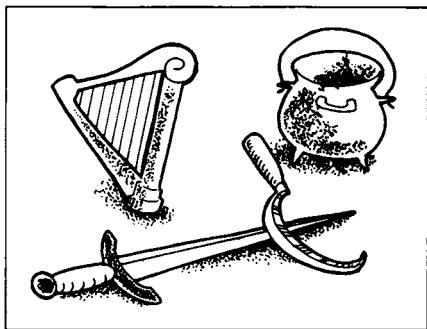


The Celtic Druids were deeply appreciative of nature and her marvelous wonders. Because of their relationship with the land, they did not believe that God should be housed in a building. Thus they practiced their faith in what was called a Nemeton, sacred ground that had been consecrated for spiritual use. For added power and energy, the Nemeton was set in a grove of trees, upon a hill, or near a sacred well.

The Nemeton was usually made in the form of a large rectangle, marked on the ground and surrounded by a ditch in which water was placed. The fire pit, sacrificial altar, votive depositories, the sacred stone, and those items used for ritual working were placed within the boundaries of the Nemeton.



The Nemeton



Celtic and Druidic Symbols

Celtic and Druidic Symbols

Cauldron, sword, spear, oak, harp, flute, drum, horse, apple, silver, gold, shell, chalice, golden-sickle, holy-stone, earth, air, fire, water, pearl, emerald, ruby, sun, moon, dragon, snakes, mistletoe (All Heal), well, Ogham Tree Alphabet, rainbow, egg, glass boat, lots of three, bread, wine, white robes.

Synopsis

The influence of both the Druids and the Celtic culture cannot be ignored. Because of their association with the land and natural phenomenon, they left a rich heritage of symbol, celebration, and worship. Probably the most recognized of their customs are the seasonal celebrations. The Druid festival of Samhain became All Hallows Eve, which we celebrate as Halloween. The fertility festival of Beltane became May Day. Carving pumpkins, kissing under the mistletoe, Easter egg hunting, and May pole dancing were all passed down to us from our Celtic ancestors.

As the priesthood of the Celtic people, the Druids taught a belief in the soul's eternal nature and that all forms of creation contained a living spirit. An ancient Druid saying portraying this outlook was, "Spirit sleeps in the mineral, breathes in the vegetable, dreams in the animal, and wakes in man." The Druids also believed

that souls could be contacted after death and that eventually the soul would reincarnate.

The Drudic teachings as a whole are consistent with the beliefs of most pantheistic nature religions, including those of Neo-Paganism, Wicca, and Shamanism. The major differences between the modern nature religions and Druidism is that the Druids were highly structured, systematic in their training, authoritative in their disposition of hierarchy, and persistent in proper procedure. They realized early on that, without structure and suitable leadership, chaos and corruption were unavoidable. Unfortunately, these conceptions of structure and leadership are missing in today's Neo-Pagan and Wicca movement. When someone is foolish enough to broach the subject, that person is usually met with contempt or shunned altogether. Goddess have mercy if anyone should infringe on the free spirit of anarchy!

For the most part, Druidism is a practical approach to living in harmony with the world around us. It teaches respect for nature, god, and the creative force within. The major problem with Druidism is within its structure of practice. Today's urban community is not prepared to accommodate practitioners of nature religions. The availability of private woods, isolated mountain tops, and secluded oceanfront property do not exist—and where they do, they are usually posted as private property. Therefore, in order for Druidism to work, it needs to be modernized. Rituals need to be rewritten for the urban practitioner in a manner that preserves their original essence and at the same time supports a twentieth-century lifestyle.

ENDNOTES

1. The Celts, like a lot of barbarian tribes of this time period, took heads as war trophies. The Celts placed the heads on poles as warning signs; triumphant warriors hung the heads from their belt.
2. The reason for the belief in threes was due to the fact that it takes two to create a third, which is in essence part of both original components and at the same time separate and individual. This is one concept that Co-Creation embraces, as we firmly believe that the continuance of life involves the union of the masculine and feminine aspects of nature.

Christianity: A Covenant with Christ

Even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor ardor of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old.

The Brothers Karamasov, 1880, Part II, Book IV

The History of Christianity

Christianity is a vast and overwhelming subject—you would need volumes of text and a lifetime to explore it. Even then, I am not sure you would be able to do justice to the phenomenon of its jurisdiction. In addition to its formidable history and extensive size, hundreds of divergent sects deserve consideration. One small chapter can do nothing more than present a fleeting, but concise, glimpse into the events that led up to this wonder child of the Piscean Age.

Looking back, we find that Christianity actually started several hundred years before Jesus stumbled into it—which makes one wonder about the nature of Jesus himself. Was he the Messiah foretold in Jewish scripture or did he identify with their myth for reasons of his own? Did Jesus die on the cross or did Mary Magdalene revive him and orchestrate his escape? Will we ever know, and does it really matter? We know Jesus was there, Christianity was born, and its effects are with us today.

From the conventional viewpoint, Christianity seems to have blossomed forth from profoundly Jewish soil with a focus on the teachings of Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah. But this view lacks foundation for several reasons—one of which was that

Jesus was critical of the practices of Judaism. He preached love instead of Mosaic law and was quick to condemn the religious leaders for hiding spiritual truths from the people. It also seems reasonable to assume that Jesus had no intention of being part of the old Judaic tradition or of starting a new religion of his own. He was too opposed to the organized and political piety of what he saw in the temple.

Then there is the problem with Jesus himself, who was a thorn in the side of the Jews from his birth. The Jews were looking for a liberating monarch to ride in on his proud steed and rescue them. What they got was an insurgent Jewish Rabbi who came from a simple background, consorted with fishermen and prostitutes, and had the audacity to dispute religious rulership. It is suspect that Judaism may not have played a role in Christianity that some would like to think it did.

In reality, Christianity is basically a Greek religion, and one that was in development long before Jesus was a twinkle in his mother's eye. At the time of Christian inception, Orphism was a popular movement.¹ Its doctrine taught, through a resurrection myth, that humans contained a divine spark that came directly from deity, although humans were prone to evil as well. It was the responsibility of the individual, through purification by initiation, to free the divine part from the evil part in order to attain everlasting life. This concept was Hellenistic in principle, but decidedly foreign to Jewish doctrine.

It is true that Judaism provided Christianity with the notion of a Messiah as well as some eccentric social rules and laws. But the most important aspect of Christianity is in the Greek concept of resurrection, which came from the reincarnation myth of Dionysus.² This was the primary appeal of Christianity to the average believer. Through Christ it was possible to have a personal relationship with a resurrected divinity, thereby being granted everlasting life. The idea of such a thing would have rankled the most permissive Jew, as this type of thinking was alien to them.

Orphism rather than Judaism helped pave the way for Christianity because Orphism already taught the concepts of original sin, punishment of the wicked in an afterlife, the metaphorical interpretation of myth, and the belief in eternal life. Similarities existed between Orpheus and Jesus as well. Orpheus possessed the power to move stones and tame wild beasts. He was also known as the "Good Shepherd."

Parallels between Christianity and the Pagan Mystery traditions existed as well. One glowing example was the similarity between the solar divinity Mithras and Jesus.³ Both deities celebrate their birthdays on December 25, which marks the return of Sol Invictus, the Unconquered Sun. It is also believed that Mithras, like Jesus, was born in a cave or grotto.

The Mithraic mysteries have other things in common with Christianity, such as a meal of bread and wine and the shedding of blood for the salvation of humankind. Though these similarities are not exact in their presentation, they are similar in consequence—as is the way Mithraism promoted initiation as a death and rebirth process whereby the individual was "born again" into the light.

There is no doubt that Christianity was an amalgamation of a variety of traditional beliefs and practices. The most obvious contributions come from the Pagan practices of Mithraism, the Orphic beliefs, and Mosaic Law. When these are combined, the final result was the new religion called Christianity. In its pristine state, Christianity was intended to synthesize the best elements of Greek, Jewish, Egyptian, and Persian spirituality for a world religion. Unfortunately, somewhere it slipped off track and became infected with political greed and corruption.

What was and could have been is past. Christianity captured Rome and the Roman Catholic Church became the wonder child of the civilized world. It also absorbed every bit of Paganism it could. What it did not absorb, it eliminated. The church, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, confiscated all written records, accounts, and information on philosophy and the Mysteries. For this reason, it is crucial for the seeker to investigate some of the Catholic Christian mysteries and read between the lines as he or she searches for the truth.

Beliefs and Practices of the Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church bases its beliefs on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who came to redeem humanity from sin. He gave his life and shed his blood on the land so the faithful would be granted everlasting life through his resurrection.

Jesus (Yeshua ben Joseph) was born around 4 B.C., toward the commencement of the Common Era, just before the death of Herod the Great. He was born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph and raised in Galilee. Little is known about his early life except that he received a full education in the Old Testament, may have spent time with the Essenes, and worked as a carpenter, like his father.

Jesus' meeting with John the Baptist set in motion the future of his public ministry. John had called Israel to return to God. In the river Jordan, he baptized those who responded to his message. Jesus joined John's ministry and stayed with him until John was imprisoned. Jesus returned to Galilee to continue with the ministerial work he had begun with John.

Jesus was a charismatic and authoritative speaker and drew large crowds whenever he preached. To those he attracted, as well as his disciples, he brought a message of love, purity, deliverance, and repentance. He also warned against becoming preoccupied with material possessions. Jesus was popular with the common people, but he soon aroused opposition with the Jewish leaders and authorities. His habit of mixing with ostracized people, his contempt for affluence, his free attitude toward Sabbath observance, and his high regard for women made him a threat to the Jewish religious establishment.

It no doubt was this last sacrilege, his attitude toward women, that finally brought about the animosity of the Pharisees. In Jewish society, women had no rights. One saying was, "Be it better to burn the Torah than teach it to a woman, as she is considered inferior in all things." Jesus found this attitude intolerable and did not help things when he said to the priests and elders, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31).

Jesus' ministry lasted only three years. His teachings and influence on his followers, as well as the general populace, was perceived as threatening to the Jewish priests. The opposition came to a climax at the Passover festival when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem in a deliberately messianic gesture, then carried out a demonstration against the temple. He proceeded to get into a serious and bitter argument with the Jewish religious authorities who charged him with blasphemy.

Temple guards subsequently arrested Jesus with the help of Judas, a disgruntled apostle. He was tried for blasphemy under Jewish law, and the Sanhedrin no doubt gave him a death sentence. But this sentence was not good enough for the Jewish leaders who were incensed by Jesus' claim of his messianic character. They wanted as much public fanfare as possible, so they pushed for a Roman conviction as well.

Early on Friday morning, Jesus was taken to Pilate, who made a futile effort to transfer him to another jurisdiction. The Jews cornered Pilate and threatened him with denunciation. They said that if he acquitted Jesus he would be "no friend of Caesar." Jesus was found guilty of sedition. Pontius Pilate carried out the execution that very day by having Jesus crucified.

It was not so much the passion or death of Jesus that launched the Christianity we have today, but rather Jesus' resurrection three days later. His followers and apostles saw his resurrection as both vindication and validation of his claims to be god's agent. The resurrection, coupled with his appearance to Mary Magdalene and his disciples, is what crystallized and set the foundation for the Christian ministry.

Practices of Roman Catholicism

Christianity is a social religious system, and the Church represents the spiritual and moral pattern of the community. This pattern is expressed through the organized teachings, rituals, and celebrations conducted by the priesthood for the benefit of the community or congregation.

The word *Catholic* means "universal" and *Roman Catholic* refers to the Latin western church. Roman Catholics recognize the Pope, through apostolic succession, as the head of the Church and final authority on doctrine. The emperor Constantine granted religious freedom to Christians in A.D. 313 and subsequently converted the entire Roman Empire to Christianity, which dignified the Roman Catholic Church.

The basic format of the Catholic Church is the belief in:

- The existence of one God, the Creator and Lord of the universe.
- The idea that humans are made in the image of God, but rebelled and now stand in judgment.
- Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who was revealed to and rejected by the nation of Israel.
- The idea that someday God will establish his rule with Jesus Christ as his appointed agent.
- The Holy Bible as the word of God, especially the New Testament.
- Redemption of sin, at death, which means humans are assured a place in heaven with God and Christ.

The Seven Sacraments

The above beliefs in combination with the following Seven Sacraments, or seven obligations, are what give foundation to the Catholic creed.

1. *Baptism*: The ritual washing by which a person is made clean of sin and thereby ready for admission into the fellowship of the church.
2. *Confirmation*: A public confession of faith in the church and a ratification of vows from baptism. A bishop or priest administers this sacrament by the laying on of hands and anointing of the candidate.
3. *Holy Communion or Eucharist*: Eucharist⁴ comes from the Greek word *eucharistein*, meaning to give thanks. The Eucharist is the central act of worship or sacrament of the church. The giving of thanks was a direct request of Jesus at the Last Supper before his death. At the Last Supper, he requested his followers to do this in remembrance of him.
4. *Confession*: Penance or repentance for sins or wrongdoing in accordance with the individual's religious beliefs. Here the person, by going through the priest, is granted absolution for his or her errors in judgment.
5. *Holy Orders*: The act of ordination in which a person is admitted to the ministry of the church. A cup or chalice and a Host resting on a Bible is this sacrament's symbol.
6. *Matrimony*: The sacrament whereby a man and woman enter into an agreement to give and receive rights over one another for the act of generation and the fostering of mutual love.
7. *Extreme Unction*: The act of anointing with sacred holy oil an individual who is in a state of grace and in danger of death. A bishop or priest administers the sacrament and completes the act of penance.

Commentary: Co-Creation Spirituality has similar ideals of sacraments. We use Dedication as our Baptism; Initiation in place of Confirmation; The Great Rite of Union as the Eucharist celebration; Ordination is our method of bestowing Holy Orders; Marriage is basically the same no matter who you are; and for Extreme Unction we use the Ceremony of Release. Although our names are different, the basic principles remain the same. It is for everyone's benefit to have the regular ceremonial observances defined in an organized manner.

Holy Days of Obligation

Holy days commemorate important events in the history of the Catholic Church. These special times are celebrated by attending mass and partaking of the Eucharist. The mass is usually followed by a social gathering of family and friends. These gatherings are reminiscent of a time when people gathered to give thanks and praise to their gods and celebrated with a feast afterward.

Advent is the beginning of the Christian calendar. It is the four weeks of preparation before Christmas in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent begins on the Sunday following St. Andrew's day, which is on November 30. Advent is marked by the making of wreaths and the lighting of candles.

Christmas, the English name for the Feast of the Nativity, is celebrated on December 25 and coincides with the Pagan festival of Yule as the rebirth of the sun. Because Jesus Christ was considered the Sol Verus, or true sun, his birthday was commemorated on this date.

Lent is a forty-day period of preparation for Easter. It corresponds to the forty days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry.

Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, recalls Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and is marked by the blessing of palm branches.⁵

Good Friday commemorates the passion of Jesus, beginning with the agony in the garden, scourging at the pillar, crowning with the thorns, carrying the cross, and the crucifixion.⁶

Easter Sunday is the greatest of the Christian festivals and celebrates Jesus' resurrection. The date of Easter changes each year and is calculated from the first Sunday after the full moon following the Spring or Vernal Equinox.

Ascension Day is when Jesus ascended to heaven. It is celebrated forty days after Easter.

Pentecost/Whitsun is the celebration of when God sent his Holy Spirit to the apostles ten days after Jesus' ascension. This festival marks the birth of the church.

Christian Symbols

Almond, altar, angels, apple, ark, arrow, bell, Bible, bramble (acacia), candle, censer, chalice, circle, Chi-Rho, cope, cross, dagger, dove, eye, font, four elements, gold, goose, grapes, heart, incense, key, lamb, ladder, lamp, lance, lily, mirror, owl, palm, paten, rainbow, ring, rock, rosary, salt, scales, shell, sparrow, tabernacle, throne, triangle, veil, vine, wafer, wand, water, whip, yew.

Synopsis

How does one sum up Christianity? It is a difficult topic to begin with, and one that seems to bring out animosity in the most docile of people. What makes a summarization so hard is that no matter which side an individual takes, the other side comes raging forth all teeth and claws. This subject can not be broached without arousing someone's anger and subsequent resentment.

To its early followers, Christianity was a social and spiritual ideal of collective religious teachings. These visionaries saw it as the New Song, the New Hope, the Promise of Universal Harmony. In their wildest dreams and worst nightmares they could never have imagined what it would become.

The creative scholars, mystics, and philosophers of the early Piscean Age perceived their new religion as a synthesis of the great spiritual wisdoms of the known world. By drawing on the Greek, Hebrew, and Egyptian mysteries, they hoped to assemble a collage of the most celebrated teachings of their time. By bringing these concepts together, they would create a worldwide living spiritual temple—one that would invite a diversity of thought and practice to all who participated in it.

Early Christianity was far more eclectic than most of our religious systems today. The developers were zealous, energetic, and devoted. They picked, chose, and appended where necessary in order to create a cohesive working process. There was room for everyone and their opinions, and every aspect was a subject for discussion. These individuals were truly inspired and sought to set a new spiritual precedent.

The Golden Age of Christianity came and went, and with it died the hope of a universal religion. Once Christianity became a formal organization, the retention of funds for jobs, operating expenses, and the building of churches was necessary. It was not long before the Church's secular side became more important than its original spiritual ideals. As the growth and power of the Roman Catholic Church continued, it became increasingly more rigid, dogmatic, and orthodox.

The Church soon began to emphasize the bishops' historical claim to being the true emissaries of Jesus and God through apostolic succession, and as such were the sole dispensers of spiritual truth. This was purely a political move to justify their ecclesiastical existence and to maintain their temporal authority. It was not long before these same pompous merchants of theological wisdom proclaimed that the

Catholic Church was indeed “The one truth and only way to salvation.” No other religion except Judaism had ever been so bold.

In closing, I want to say that I am not promoting the Catholic Church nor am I condemning Christianity. The purpose of this chapter is to help the individual distinguish between politics and spirituality. As far as I am concerned, all religious philosophies—and I stress *philosophy* rather than political agenda—are open for investigation. This is why Co-Creation Spirituality is so important; it does not pigeonhole any one specific tradition. Judgment is left to a higher authority and participation is invited by the sincere seeker of truth and spiritual wisdom.

ENDNOTES

1. Orphism is a religious movement supposedly founded by Orpheus. It was the first Greek religion to embody its doctrines in literature.
2. Greek myth relates how the young god Dionysus was slain and dismembered. He was then put back together, restored to life, and sent up to heaven.
3. Co-Creation Spirituality recognizes Jesus as the Sol Invictus and/or the composite form of all past solar-savior deities who do not necessarily belong conclusively to any specific tradition. We feel his energy is as available to us as to anyone and without judgment.
4. The celebration of the Eucharist is a concept that was easily worked into Co-Creation Spirituality. From the basic meaning of giving thanks, it only makes sense to include this age-old practice in our rituals and make it as elaborate and ceremonial as possible in a show of true respect and appreciation.
5. Palm branches are a Pagan symbol of victory, adopted by the early Christians to signify the triumph over death of their saints and martyrs. Palms were spread before Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem as the Messiah.
6. For Our Lady of Enchantment, Good Friday and the concept of deep appreciation for Jesus the Christ and all solar-savior divinities who have shed their blood and given their lives for the good of humanity—whether in actuality or symbolically—is in arrangement with our Co-Creation belief system.

Santería: An Old Religion in a New World

Santería is a miracle of spirit brought out of crushing human suffering. Its history shows that a people placed under the most difficult conditions imaginable can fashion a spiritual world of beauty and hope.

Joseph M. Murphy, *Santería: An African Religion in America*

The History of Santería

To millions of practitioners, Santería is more than just a religion; it is a way of life, involving a complex mixture of social morals, spirit contact, and deity worship. To fully appreciate this intricate system, you must understand its Cuban beginnings. Through a meshing of African myth and Spanish Catholicism, in combination with cross-cultural integration, the path for this new religion was paved.

From A.D. 1500 on, Spain enticed people to relocate to Cuba by offering land grants and monetary rewards. As the Spanish settled in their new land, they established their own form of government, which included Roman Catholicism as the state religion. All other forms of worship, including Judaism and Islamic practices, were forbidden. This created problems because of the diverse ethnic background of the local as well as emigrant populations.

During this time period, the Catholic Church prevailed and enveloped all phases of life with its antagonistic oppression and domination of spirit. Cuba, however, was different from other Catholic countries because Spanish Catholicism was not like its rigid Roman ancestor. This difference may have been due to a counter reformation or a negative reaction to the Protestant movement, or it could have been the response to living in a new country with other races. Whatever the reason, differences existed between the two.

In Cuba, the Spanish Catholic religion was divided into two systems. The first was a basic cult dedicated to the Seven Sacraments that seemed to be the province of Church officials and affluent land owners. The second division, embraced by the lower Creole classes, was a cult predisposed to the personages of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and every conceivable Saint known to humans. This second division was the most widely practiced form of Catholicism. Followers actively celebrated the legends and miracles of the Saints through yearly festivals and pilgrimages to their shrines.

From this second cult, dedicated to the Saints, a third faction emerged and was considered to be a form of Catholic folk magic. The practices of this third division involved lighting candles, saying prayers, and providing offerings to the Saints in exchange for their blessings. These folk incorporated herbal remedies, love potions, and all manner of natural substances in their craft. Had they not been devoted Catholics working under the watchful eye of their Saints, they could have been accused of Witchcraft.

During the 1700s, Cuba was growing by leaps and bounds, and it was impossible for the Church to govern everyone's actions. As a result, this third cult, with its veneration of the Saints, transformed into a form of domestic worship that the Church seemed to ignore. Home altars, local shrines, and personal spiritual practices soon took precedence over Church doctrine, especially among the Creole and country population.

The Church being the Church, it tried to get its hands in everybody's pocket, including those of the large sugar plantations. The Church made every effort to teach the slaves Christianity. However, this venture was soon considered a lost cause because the plantation owners resented the Church's interference, and the slaves, who worked eighteen-hour days seven days a week, did not have time for religion.

By the late 1870s, Cuba's black population began to grow due to an influx of Africans the British had set free on Cuban shores. These people migrated into the cities and smaller farming communities. This influx of Africans, coupled with the local growth from the black Creoles, created a discrimination problem. Everyone wanted to be white, and mulattos, along with other races, were buying white citizenship. Segregation of the races, which up to now had been a class issue, was becoming a color issue. Few spheres of life existed where people of African descent and European descent met on any level of equality.

One area of integration was religion, because there was no segregation in the Catholic Church; blacks had equal rights with whites. The Afro-Cubans could also take refuge from racism in their own clubs and fraternal organizations. The number of African clubs and bars increased and soon became meeting places for the preservation of the Yoruba (traditional African) religion and Creole culture.

These clubs, or *Cabildos*,¹ served as centers for recreation, spiritual devotions, and general social interaction. The Church saw these centers as the perfect place to convert the Afro-Cubans to Christianity. Under the direction of a diocesan priest, each *Cabildo* was assigned a Saint to watch over it and the activities of its members.

As long as Christian doctrine, prayers, and practices were taught, the African customs were allowed to prevail. It was hoped that in time the Africans would give up their Pagan rites and follow Christianity.

In the Cabildos, the syncretism of the Yoruba religion and Catholicism began. This religion was not a forced consolidation of beliefs and practices, but a gradual combination that took place over generations. With the Catholic authority always present, and in view of the Church's social position, it is only natural that it would influence some of the Yoruba customs. With the help of the Church, not only was the Yoruba faith allowed to continue, but also, through assimilation and adaptation, it evolved into the new religion of Santería.

By looking at the religion of the Yoruba, which is called Ifa, we get a basic idea of the formal principles that helped fashion the Santería religion. Ifa is an intricate combination of theology and ritual, revolving around the teaching of nature as God or the Supreme Being. The significance of this presents itself in a belief that nature is a divine being composed of many different controlling forces. These forces manifest in natural phenomena such as thunder, rain, fire, and lightning. The controlling forces also appear as human interest and endeavor in love, war, marriage, and fertility.

In Ifa, Olodumare is the supreme God who is thought to be a sort of cosmic energy from which the universe was made. Because Olodumare has to care for such a vast universe, he rules in absentia through Olofi, a personal god set to care for humanity.

Olodumare transmits a pure vital energy force which is called *ashe*. This *ashe* is transmitted from Olodumare to Olofi, who in turn channels it through a pantheon of other deities, called Orisha. The intention of the religion is to determine which Orisha need to be appeased or praised through *ebbo* (sacrifice) in order to receive some of their *ashe*. This in turn will help the individual maintain a balanced and happy life.

Belief and Practices of Santería

The five distinct aspects of Santería include the following: the worship of the Orisha and Saints; the use of divination to ascertain the wishes of the Orisha or Saints; initiation in order to receive the mysteries of the Orisha; *ebbo* or sacrifice in order to appease or give thanks to the Orisha; and ancestor worship.

Santería also functions on the basic principle that the spiritual and physical aspects of an individual should work together. Their philosophy is that each individual should live up to his or her potential. If you wish to be rich and famous, you should strive for that. On the other hand, if you wish to serve and help the needy, this should be your goal. It does not matter what you choose to do as long as you do it to the best of your ability.

The religion also stresses the concept of good sense and for the most part loathes the idea of “thou shalt not.” God gave us brains and we are expected to use them; through right effort, work, and communion with deity, humans will learn to live in harmony with each other and nature.

The Orisha

Each Orisha represents a different² aspect of the creative force and has the ability to manipulate his or her *ashe* according to the sphere of influence each exemplifies. In Santería, each of the Orisha, besides being independently powerful, is identified with a corresponding Catholic Saint. The Saint which represents the Orisha is also believed to be endowed with the Orisha’s *ashe* or power.

In Santería, the Orisha’s *ashe* or power is contained in the *otanes* (sacred stones) that are kept in a *sopera* (tureen). Also inside the *sopera* are a set of tools that symbolize the expression of the owner Orisha. During Asiento, the initiate is presented with four *sopera*, corresponding to Oshun, Yemoja, Obatala, and Shango.³

At this point it is necessary to introduce the Orisha because it is impossible to explain Santería without understanding their significance. The Orisha are the religion’s main purpose and point. But because several hundred Orisha exist, it would take an entire book to relate them all. For this reason, following is a list of the most popular, including the “Seven African Powers” conveyed in the initiation of Asiento or El Santo.

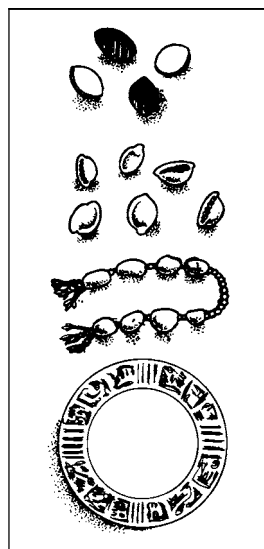
Orisha	Saint	Attributes
Olofi	Christ (God)	One of the three aspects of Oldumare
Obatala	Virgin of Mercy	Father of Orisha; guardian of morality, order, and tradition
Shango	Saint Barbara	God of thunder, lightning, and fire; the wrath of Oldumare; rules passion
Oya	Virgin of La Candelaria	Guardian of the cemetery and justice; concerned with death and the business world
Oshun	Virgin of Caridad del Cobra	Patroness of love, money, sex and marriage, and yellow metals
Yemoja	Virgin of Regla	Mother of the saints/Orisha, Goddess of the sea; mother of the world; rules maternity

Eleggua	Holy child of Atoche	Messenger of all Orisha; keeper of doors and crossroads; rules chance, communication, and hazards
Babaluaiye	Saint Lazarus	Patron of the sick; father of the world because of his power over sickness
Ogun	Saint Peter	God of iron, warfare, and sacrifice; rules employment
Orunmila	Saint Francis	Owner of Ifa divination; guardian of Assisi; knowledge of past and future

Divination

Santería's major object is to find out, through different methods of divination, what the Orisha want. What is needed in order to appease them, through *ebbo* (sacrifice), so they will grant you some of their *ashe*? The four methods of divination used in Santería follow:

1. *The Obi* are four coconut rinds and is the most common method used to determine what the Orisha want and if they are pleased with an offering. Although anyone can use this system, only people who have undergone the initiation of the warriors should do so.
2. *The Diloggun* is a set of twenty-one cowrie shells, of which sixteen are used for the reading. This system is complicated and proficiency requires many years of practice; only initiated priests and priestesses use this system.
3. *The Okuele* is a chain set with eight medallions made of coconut shell. Only high priests of Santería, known as Babalawos, use this method of divination.
4. *The Table of Ifa* is the Oracle of Santería and is the highest form of divination. Only Babalawos use this form during rituals and ceremonies where the ruling Orisha of a person is to be decided.



Santería Divination Tools

Commentary: This concept of being able to talk with, and get an answer from, deity inspired the creation of Our Lady of Enchantment's Vessel of Creation. As will be explained in Chapter 13, the Vessel contains symbols and tools along with a set of Speaking Stones, which are attuned to the practitioner's principal goddess. By

working with this specific tool, the individual is allowed to speak directly to his or her goddess and, most importantly, receive an answer. Because all of the symbols and objects in the vessel are receptive to the goddess, they act like a magnet, attracting her essence and energy into the Vessel.

Initiation: El Santo

Essential to the practice of Santería are four secrets that make up the formal initiation ceremony of “El Santo”—the use of herbs, water, cowrie shells, and stones. Without these, the practice of the religion is next to impossible.

The initiation ceremonies in Santería make it possible to practice the religion. One can be an adherent of the philosophy without being initiated, but in order to really practice Santería, initiation is mandatory. The secrecy involved in the religion and the fact that the information needed to work with the Orisha is only given to initiates are two reasons why initiation is mandatory. The four initiations are the *Collares*, or *Elekes*; *Los Guerreros*; *Asiento*; and the *Consecration of Ifa*.

The *Collares*, or *Elekes* (necklaces). This is a one-day ceremony in which the recipient receives a set of beaded necklaces representing Elegguá, Obatalá, Changó, Yemója, and Oshún. The necklaces protect the initiate from danger.

Los Guerreros (Elegguá and the warriors). In this special ceremony, the initiate receives a cement head representing the Orisha Elegguá; a cauldron of working implements belonging to Ogun and Oshosi; and a small cup surmounted by a rooster and bells, which represent Osanyin. *Los Guerreros* and the *Collares* initiations are considered to be the foundation of Santería.

Asiento, also known as *Kariocha*. This is the major initiation in which the person's guardian Orisha is placed in his or her head. This initiation takes seven days to complete and a year of training, during which the initiate is referred to as the *iyawo*. After this initiation, the person is now a priest (Santero) or priestess (Santera) of Santería.

Santería is an initiatory religion that involves a traditional hierarchy. When one enters training under a Santero or Santera, he or she becomes that teacher's godchild. From this point on, the godchild refers to his or her Santero or Santera as *Padrino* or *Madrina*. Each Santero or Santera has his or her own working group, which is designated as his or her “house.” Each group or house is independent in their worship and magical workings. On special occasions, such as the initiation of *Asiento* and designated holidays of importance to the Orishas and Saints, houses will gather in celebration.

Consecration of Ifa is also known as *Olofi* or receiving of “God's mysteries.” These are the highest initiates known as the Babalawos and are always men. In Santería, they are considered the high priests and diviners serving in a judicial capacity, largely as consultants for the Santeros and Santeras.

Sacrifice, the Ebbo

The term *ebbo* means sacrifice⁴ or offering and is probably the most misunderstood aspect of the entire religion. Santería is not the first religion to incorporate sacrifice into its practices. Almost every religion in the world—both Christian and Pagan—at one time or another has done the same. Most of the Pagan religions, however, died out long ago and are only now reviving; they are choosing not to use sacrifice. The religion of the Yoruba did not die out; it only changed its name and appearance for a new world.

Sacrifice is believed to be essential to human well-being. Thousands of items are used for sacrifice, including money, fruit, liquor, kola nuts, palm oil, special foods, and virtually anything else that may appeal to the Orisha. On occasion, when the problem is severe, the life of an individual is at stake, or during an initiation, the sacrifice may include the offering of blood. When an animal is offered, all of the animal is put to use. The meat is properly butchered, cooked, and eaten by those in attendance. The hooves, hides, and horns are used for drums and magical implements.

Ancestor Worship and Reincarnation

Ancestor worship is very much a part of Santería but separate in its placement and rituals. The idea of ancestor worship is more in the form of respect for those who have passed on, realizing they may have beneficial knowledge to share with the living.

This concept of the ancestors also involves reincarnation. In Santería, as in Ifa, it is believed that when one dies he or she spends time on the other side being refreshed before returning. During this transition time, loved ones may communicate with relatives on the earth. Once the transition of reincarnation takes place, the person is believed to be reborn in the same blood line in which he or she once lived.

Symbols and Celebrations

The symbols used in Santería are all associated with the Orisha and Saints; they will sometimes vary from house to house. The celebrations are geared to coincide with Saint Holy Days and days associated with certain Orisha. The following are some of the more popular days celebrated:

Feast of Yemoja: September 7; celebrated by acknowledging the power of the Mother aspect of the Goddess.

Feast of Oshun: September 8; celebrated to give thanks to Oshun for the love and prosperity in one's life.

Feast of Changó: December 4; recognizes the power of the fire and passion of the god.

Feast of Babalúaiye: December 17; a time to ask for protection and give thanks for personal blessings.

Feast of Eleggua: June 13; a time for those who have received Eleggua to celebrate his function within the pantheon.

Synopsis

Because I have received several initiations in Santería, I feel qualified to speak about this system. Santería is a beautiful and powerful religion. The power comes from a pantheon of deities that have survived for thousands of years in their original form. The beauty comes from the ability to communicate directly with these gods on a personal level and incorporate their desires with a modern lifestyle.

Santería is not an easy religion to get into. First, it is held in the greatest of secrecy and, second, most Santeros, who are of Hispanic descent, do not trust the average white American. Only after several initiations and a dedication to learning will the Madrina or Padrino open up, and even then with much reserve and resistance. In some ways, this resistance is good because it protects the religion from the insincere.

Santería—unlike many of the New Age, earth-oriented religions—cannot be gleaned from reading books and then dubbing oneself high priest or priestess. The religion requires both study and training, which can only be gained by learning from a trained Santero or Santera. The discipline, training, and initiation through proper channels has allowed this system to remain alive, pure, and powerful.

Santería allows for the expression of the individual both physically and spiritually. Even though there are set procedures and etiquette that must be followed, plenty of room exists for each person to be creative, interact with deity, and contribute original material to their practices. In fact, creativity and personal input are encouraged and seen as the way to keep the religion in a continual state of progress and growth.

My last comment on Santería is on the concept of sacrifice and to those who object to it. I have been to many Neo-Pagan gatherings and seen people dressed in elaborate animal skin costumes complete with horned head gear and feathers. I wonder, did these people ever consider for one moment how or why the animal—which now adorns their body for the sole purpose of admiration from their peers—died? “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.”

ENDNOTES

1. A *Cabildo* was any assembly, meeting, council or cathedral chapter, or temple of the Afro-Cuban peoples where African religions and culture were taught.
2. *Different* is a concept that Co-Creation spirituality recognizes as well. We believe that all gods and goddesses are different. Each god and goddess is a separate and distinct energy force or emanation extending from the All. As such, each has a specific quality and distinct energy force.

3. This concept of the power of the deity being attracted to and residing within symbolic objects kept in a special vessel is applicable to any system; and one we readily accepted and worked through in our Co-Creation tradition.
4. Sacrifice is the giving of something valuable and loved in thanksgiving or for the petitioning of a request. Valuable depends upon the situation. To a poor farmer, a basket of vegetables or a chicken would be considered valuable, but to a bank president these would have little meaning.

Buddhism: The Ascetic Way of Life

*Does the eagle know what is in the hole?
Or wilt thou go ask the mole?
Can wisdom be put in a silver rod?
Or love in a golden bowl?*

William Blake, *The Book of Thel*, 1789

The History of Buddhism and Buddha

Asia is a land of 70,000 temples, exotic incense, and the mysterious chanting of saffron-cloaked monks. This land is where we find Buddhism, the great missionary religion of India. Here, Siddharta Gautama, who was dissatisfied with the conventional sacrificial religion of Brahmanism and the excessive austerity of Jainism, discovered the fundamental truth of the Middle Way.

Siddharta Gautama, later to become known as the Buddha or Enlightened One, founded the Buddhist religion. He was born about 560 B.C. and died at the age of eighty. His father was the rajah of Kapilavastu and raised Siddharta as a prince in resplendent luxury. Siddharta married at an early age and had a son. When he reached the age of twenty-nine, however, he decided to leave his world of splendor and become a homeless holy man.

Several events contributed to Siddharta's choice. The first was his shock and horror at seeing suffering in the streets, which he had been unaware of due to his sheltered life. The second was his knowledge of the Upanishads¹ and their orientation toward a more inward approach to religion. These two motivations, coupled with the idea of homelessness as the true and proper method of seeking spiritual truth, led Siddharta to embark on his remarkable journey.

Siddharta studied with many religious teachers, learning the disciplines of an ascetic way of life. After an extended fast, when all his body hair fell out, he found his enlightenment. This event marked the turning point in his life, as he realized the futility of denying the physical in search of the ultimate spiritual truth. He found that without food and the necessities of daily life, the body becomes weak, the mind distracted, and spiritual concentration decreases.

Shortly after his experience of enlightenment, or return of common sense, Siddharta began to teach and won many disciples who followed him in his vagabond way of life. The mission of the Buddha and his disciples was to imbue on their followers, and the general public, a more meditative lifestyle, which they believed led to nirvana.²

Eventually, Buddhism evolved and developed into many different traditions. Though their practices may vary, they all hold to the core of the Buddha's teachings of the Four Noble Truths. The most widely practiced forms are Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism, with Tibetan Buddhism and some of the others being offshoots of the two larger denominations. The selection here discusses the Middle Path of Mahayana Buddhism.

Beliefs and Practices of Mahayana Buddhism

Buddhism is a solitary system that grew out of the basic tradition of Indian religious thought. It is not a religion that leads to ecclesiastical approval; rather it stresses the importance of following the Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Path taught by the Buddha. In essence, it emphasizes the principles of gentleness, reverence for life, and profound self-reflection.

The Four Noble Truths

1. The universal human experience of suffering—mental and emotional as well as physical—is the direct effect of karma.
2. The perception of such suffering is due to craving or grasping for the wrong things, or for the right things in the wrong way. The basic human problem is a misplaced sense of value, assigning to things or persons in the world a value they cannot sustain. Nothing in the material world is worthy of reverence or can be depended upon in any ultimate sense.
3. It is possible for human suffering to cease and for the ultimate human dilemma to be solved.
4. The Noble Eight-Fold Path is the solution, which forms the basic teaching of the Buddhist lifestyle.

The Noble Eight-Fold Path

The first two truths of the Noble Eight-Fold Path come under the classification of wisdom or understanding, the next three under ethical conduct, and the last three under mental discipline.

1. Right knowledge
2. Right attitude
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right living (occupation)
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right composure

Reincarnation: Through reincarnation, all human beings reap good or evil, depending on the quality of their actions, thoughts, and deeds in previous lives. What one did in his or her last life will determine the circumstance and quality of a future life.

Karma: The law of karma is the law of cause and effect. It operates on both physical and moral levels of human behavior. To gain liberation from karma, one must understand the human situation and observe the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

Nirvana: Nirvana is the goal of life. This is not the annihilation of the self, but the transformation of the human consciousness. It is the true refuge, a state of blissful inactivity or spiritual enlightenment.

Dharma: Dharma is an unknown principle that pervades the whole universe and regulates its harmonious action. It is the way to the goal of nirvana. Dharma is a personal dynamic that gives inner power and quality to life.

The Buddhist Calendar

A visit to the Buddhist temple to pray might take place at any time as there are no fixed weekly meetings. However, like all religions, certain times of the year are set aside for celebration and ritual.

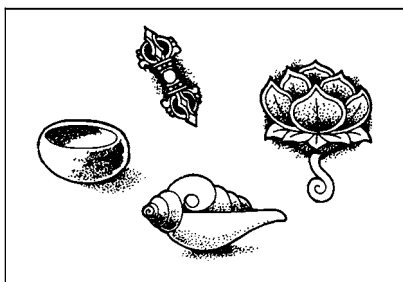
The New Year: On this night, the ritual known as *Joya No Kane* is celebrated with the toning of the temple bells 108 times (symbolizing the 108 forms of defilement) as midnight approaches to mark the end of the old year.

Annual Ceremonies for the Dead: These ceremonies are held on March 21 and on September 23 or the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes in remembrance of the family members.

Obon: The traditional Japanese “All Souls Day” is usually celebrated sometime between July and August.

Birthday of the Buddha: Known as Hanamatsuri, this holiday is also known as the annual Flower Festival and celebrated on April 8.

Death of the Buddha: Celebrated on February 15, this marks Buddha’s entrance into nirvana.



Buddhist Symbols

Buddhist Symbols

Conch, umbrella, canopy, mystic knot, fish, lotus, vase, scroll, Wheel of the Law, rope, begging bowl, incense burner, sacrificial cup, fan, cock and sun, hare and moon, fly whisk, rosary, goad, spear, ax. The footprint of the Buddha, which contains the swastika, wheel, conch, fish, varja, crown, and vase.

Synopsis

Buddhism has contributed a great deal to both religion and the New Age movement. One of the most important aspects of Buddhism is its ability to transcend the mundane physical world and look within. This introspection allows the individual to realize his or her true place within the universe and at the same time creates a feeling of oneness of self and nature. This feeling, coupled with the ability to discipline both the mind and body, provides the training necessary for working with other realms of awareness.

For people born and raised in the Western culture, some drawbacks to Buddhism exist. The major obstacle comes from the West’s conditioned thinking, motives, and actions that extend from an outward point of view. In the East, the mind is reflective and meditative, creating an inward nature or outlook. Because all religions reflect the culture and frame of mind in which they are developed, it is difficult for the Western mentality to adapt easily to the Eastern intellectual process of looking within.

This opposition of outlook creates the biggest problem for the Westerner. First is the lack of adventure in discovering spiritual truths for oneself. To the Buddhist,

everything has already been done, written down, and preformulated by former teachers. All the seeker needs to do is learn the appropriate discipline in order to achieve results. In Western traditions, on the other hand, are spontaneous encounters, adventures into other realities, and discoveries of new approaches to age-old mysteries.

Another problem is that the Buddha preached a religion devoid of any metaphysical speculation. Questions—such as: *Is the soul the same as the body or is it something different?*, *Is the world infinite or not?*, *Is there life after death?*—were considered unimportant. Buddha considered this type of discussion to be superfluous and nothing more than a greed for views. Unfortunately, asking these types of questions is why most people become interested in religion—they want and need answers.

The biggest obstacle with Buddhism, at least from my point of view, is that anything even faintly resembling the supernatural is condemned. This includes any type of divination or forecasting. I find this irrational, as the whole purpose of religion is to reunite the individual with deity. To me, this means there has to be communication between humanity and God. How can people ever hope to evolve spiritually if we are denied the ability to emit and receive divine inspiration?

What it amounts to is East is East and West is West and cross-cultural coupling is difficult, if not, in some ways, impossible. Our natural instincts, reasoning attitudes, and spiritual perspectives are different. Many Westerners are impulsive, aggressive, and presumptuous; many Easterners are reticent and speculative. One is not superior or inferior to the other, far from it; it is two different ways of approaching the same concept.

Even though I find it difficult to relate to much of Buddhism, this in no way hinders my affection for and admiration of the Buddha himself. The vast majority of his teachings were oral and what was in actuality his, or what has been reworked through time, is only speculation. The Buddha's most important contribution was his realistic attitude. So many people get involved in spirituality and feel that to be truly spiritual they must drift off into the fog of austerity or relinquish all their worldly goods and live on bread and water. These ideas are not what the Buddha taught; he taught moderation as the key to enlightenment and believed that deprivation or excess would cause imbalance.

ENDNOTES

1. The Upanishads are ancient teachings of the Hindu religion, containing the records of spiritual experiences of the sages of ancient India.
2. Nirvana is an awareness utterly devoid of content; a state of blissful inactivity; a state of spiritual enlightenment or illumination that releases the individual from suffering, death, and birth.

Shamanism: The Natural Way of Spirituality

Shamanism is a great mental and emotional adventure. In Shamanism, the maintenance of one's personal power is fundamental to well-being.

Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*

Shamanism, Nature, and Spirituality

Shamanism is more a personal approach to life, the universe, and god than an organized religion. However, with the coming of the New Age and the awareness of how we treat Mother Earth, Shamanism should be considered as an option. For the most part, North American Neo-Shamanism will be examined, as it is most readily available to those who feel this path to be their calling.

Shamanism is probably the oldest spiritual system in the world and traditionally comes from Siberia and Central Asia. Its practices include the use of visions, altered states of consciousness, and contact with nature gods and spirits. Evidence of Shamanism can be seen almost everywhere; the most often cited examples are found in the cave paintings in southern France. These paintings date back to 35,000 B.C. and depict early humans dressed in animal skins, performing a hunting ritual. Through imitation and participation with the animals and the natural world, the shaman obtained his or her empowerment.

When our Paleolithic ancestors came to North America from Siberia by way of a land bridge across the Bering Strait, they brought their spiritual practices with them. As these groups spread across the continent, different cultures, folkways, and belief systems developed among the tribes. Many forces dictated the behavior and characteristics of each tribe. Climate and terrain also influenced their way of life, prompting some to become hunters, some farmers, and some fisherman.

The beliefs of the Shaman ancestors was expressed according to their region, social structure, and cultural viewpoint. Individually, however, they held certain theories and truths in common. Respectively, most Shamans believed in a God that was presented as the “Great Mystery” and was responsible for the movement of all things. There seemed to be a common mindset as to the earth representing creation and all living things, including humans, and being interconnected. It was also accepted that the earth did not belong to humans exclusively, but rather humans belonged to the earth. This belonging was seen as a form of a stewardship in which humans served and rendered assistance where needed.

The Shaman had respect for the earth and all that resided on it. He or she also observed the spirits inherent within all living things, communing with them through daily activities and ceremonies. It was believed that as the Shaman worked with the spirits, the spirits worked with the Shaman in return. Most often, the Shaman communicated with these spirits while in an ecstatic state of consciousness that allowed him or her access to the upper, lower, and middle worlds.

The practices and rites of the Shamans were geared to the tribe’s cultural orientation. The Shaman of a hunting tribe would usually work with the spirits of animals; the Shaman of a tribe involved with agriculture would work with the elements that supported a good harvest. Special times such as births, deaths, marriages, and puberty were also considered to be of importance, as were the changing of the seasons.

When the French, Spanish, and English began to conquer North America, they imposed their Christian religion on the native peoples. Like many other earth-oriented religions, Shamanism secreted itself away, allowing only the most dedicated and sincere to partake of its mysteries. For hundreds of years, it seemed to lay dormant except to those who were of its privileged priesthood. In the 1960s and early 1970s, a new, more-spirited version of Shamanism appeared as a practice of hippies, Witches, and Neo-Pagans. Today, Shamanism is once again reclaiming its place in the spiritual world.

Beliefs and Practices of Neo-Shamanism

Originally, the Shaman was a member of the tribe who, through trance, journeyed to other worlds. While the Shaman was in this altered reality, he would commune with spirits, gain wisdom, and acquire new methods of healing. The prime purpose of the Shaman was to bring back information from his journey. Other activities, such as physical healing and ritual work, were presided over by the medicine men and women.

In today’s world, Shamanism implies a wider range of activity that basically combines the journey or pathworking of the Shaman with the physical healing and ritual work of the medicine man or woman. The techniques and procedures to follow are

generally considered to be those practiced by most Neo-Shamans. However, as with most New Age spirituality, methods and standards will vary from group to group and Shaman to Shaman.

The Journey and Vision Quest

The Shaman is a trained individual who enters and leaves states of consciousness at will. When in these states of altered consciousness, he or she journeys to various domains of the inner world. This journey usually puts him or her in contact with spirits of ancestors, totem animals, and higher plane teachers. The purpose of the journey is to obtain power, knowledge, and wisdom from the inner world contacts, and bring it back to the realm of reality.

Also included in the process is the custom of going on a *vision quest*. In the traditional vision quest, the individual is sent off into seclusion, without food and only a blanket for warmth, to “catch a spirit.” During this time of separation from the world of reality, the person acquires his or her guardian spirit and a portion of his or her medicine power.

Medicine Power

The term *medicine* refers to an individual’s own unique talent or skill and the ability to blend these skills or talents with the forces of nature. When it is combined with the knowledge and wisdom gained from an inner world journey or vision quest, it becomes the *medicine power* used to heal and help others.

Places, personal objects, fetishes, and animals are also considered to have medicine power. When the Shaman goes into a trance, it is for this special power of the place, object, or spirit that he or she searches. Once the answer to the question, problem, or situation has been acquired, the Shaman returns to the world of reality, bringing the healing answer with him.

Cleansing and Smudging

Prior to every ceremony or healing, the individuals participating are cleansed of bad feelings and negative vibrations that may be attached to them. This cleansing is accomplished by passing smoke from the burning of certain herbs over the body. The most commonly used herbs are sage (to drive out unwanted spirits), cedar (to carry prayers to the creator), and sweetgrass (to bring in good spirits and influences).

Another form of purification (considered to be the best) is that of the sweat lodge. During the rite of the sweat lodge, all the powers of the universe—earth, water, fire, air, breath, and sky—are called upon. The lodge is built from red willows covered with hides. In the center of the lodge is a pit into which heated rocks, called

the *Stone People*, are placed. As each stone is placed in the pit, it is named and receives a force or power of nature. During the sweat lodge, the sacred pipe along with smudge and prayers are used to cleanse and purify those taking part in the ceremony.

Commentary: Every religion or spiritual path should include some sort of cleansing procedure to release negative energies from the physical and mental body. Before coming to any ritual at Our Lady of Enchantment, all members ritually bathe to clean and refresh themselves. Fasting for at least four to six hours prior to a ritual helps eliminate lethargy caused by the digestive system. Meditation and breathing exercises also help prepare the body for assimilating divine energy.

Drumming and Dancing

The drum is one of the Shaman's most used possessions as it is literally the vehicle that carries him or her to the other world. Often, the drum is associated with a horse or other animal whose skin is used in its manufacture. There is also the association between horse and drum because the drum is used as a mode of transport from one reality to another. The monotonous rhythm of the drum allows the Shaman to "ride" into the upper and lower worlds.

Dancing in combination with drumming aids in entering an ecstatic state of consciousness. Once the individual has entered another state of reality, he or she is able to acquire new knowledge. For the Shaman, there are many ways of dancing. One method is referred to as "dancing your totem animal," which brings one closer and more in tune with an animal. In ceremonial medicine wheel dances, members strengthen their individual contact with the earth and nature. Dancing is almost always used in rituals that celebrate and mark changes in seasons and personal lives.

The Sacred Pipe

The sacred prayer pipe is the "tool of tools," the most powerful and cherished gift of all the Native American tribes. The prayers and desires of humans are carried to the Great Spirit and Sky Father on the smoke of the pipe. The pipe is used in all Native American ceremonies and is considered to be the "axis mundi"¹ that forms the bridge between earth and sky. The pipe acts as a traveling altar, which becomes the center of focus for all rituals or ceremonies.

The pipe's bowl represents the feminine, goddess, and Earth Mother aspect of the Great Spirit. The pipe's stem is seen to be the masculine, god, and Sky Father part of the Great Spirit. When these two elements are united for the purpose of sharing breath, they create peace, harmony, and unity among those participating in the ceremony.

The Medicine Wheel

The medicine wheel is a symbol of the universe and represents completion. It is a place where men and women learn to sing the song of the world, become whole again, and unite with the Earth Mother and Sky Father. When properly constructed, the medicine wheel becomes a powerful tool for transition, self-realization, and communication with the spirits of nature.

The wheel is constructed by clearing an area large enough to accommodate the people using in it. A stone or stake driven into the ground to symbolize the Great Spirit marks the center of the wheel. Stakes or rocks painted in corresponding elemental colors mark the four cardinal points. Other rocks, sticks, sacred objects, flowers, and feathers may be used to mark certain areas. Simple or elaborate, the medicine wheel serves as a place for meditation, a symbol of the universe, or a circle of protection for sacred ceremonies.

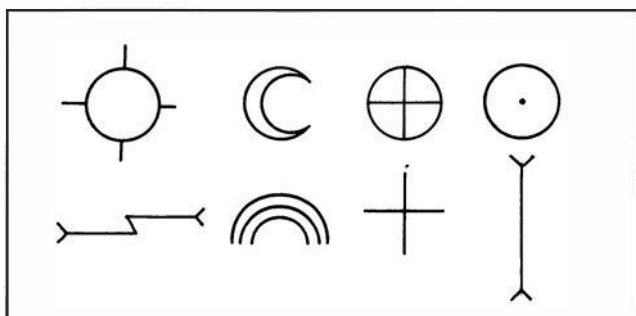
The Guardian and Totem Spirit

The Shaman believes that everyone is born with a guardian spirit. This belief is common among many peoples, especially those practicing nature-oriented religions. During initiations, vision quests, and trance, the individual is able to communicate with his or her guardian spirit. Some societies believe that this guardian spirit is related to the spirit of the individual, a sort of eternal cosmic twin energy.

The totem spirit can be a badge or emblem of a tribe or clan, representing their principal purpose or focus. The totem can also serve as a sacred personal talisman, chosen for its special relationship and symbolism pertinent to the individual's personality. In either case, it usually provides protection, gives counsel during times of trouble, and, when properly appeased, brings prosperity.

Traditional Symbols

Sun, Moon, Medicine Wheel, Great Spirit, Sacred Pipe, Rainbow, Four Directions, Life Tree



Synopsis

Shamanism is an outgrowth of humanity's desire to work and live in harmony with nature. Everything the Shaman does revolves around a special awareness of and connection to the earth and all the living spirits that inhabit it. The respect and

appreciation with which all creatures, both great and small, are treated speaks of the Shaman's sincerity.

The beauty of Shamanism is that anyone, anywhere, can practice it. All you need is imagination, quiet time, and a desire to reconnect with the living forces of nature. There are no complicated rituals that require years of training—only the truth and beauty that comes from honest prayer and worship. Because of the simplicity of Shamanism and its reunion of humans with nature, it has become a popular alternative for many New Age enthusiasts. When the majority of one's time is spent engulfed in a crowded city—surrounded by all manner of high-tech equipment—Shamanism and its alignment with nature is a breath of fresh air.

Today's Shamanism is a personal path of rediscovery and alignment with the earth. You can find your medicine power through personal symbols, meditation, and simple prayers to the gods and spirits of nature. The only problem with Shamanism is the nonrestrictive value it places on human behavior. By this I mean trust in personal integrity. There are those who claim to be pipe carriers or initiated Shaman healers who are not. This abuse can lead to a corruption of the system, which in turn affects those who sincerely practice it. If you choose Shamanism as your path, and wish to teach and help others, find a reputable teacher who can properly train and initiate you.

I feel the one major contribution from Shamanism, especially where Co-Creation is concerned, is in the idea of personal involvement and experience. It is important to get actively involved with your religion, if you expect to receive any benefit from it. Sitting in a pew or standing at the rim of a circle once a month is all well and good, but the only ones benefiting from the performance are the acting priests. For sensory stroking, this type of religious encounter is fine, but for the awakening of the spark within it leaves much to be desired.

ENDNOTES

1. Axis mundi is the cosmic axis, the central point of time and space; the supreme support of all things; that which connects heaven and earth. It is sometimes seen as a rod, staff, tree, pillar, spindle, or umbilical cord.

The Cauldron of Light

*The Birthplace of
Divinity*



Discovering Divinity

Divinity is in its omniscience and omnipotence like a wheel, a circle, a whole, that can neither be understood, nor divided, nor begun, nor ended.

Illustrations of Hildegard of Bingen

History and the Divine

The existence of God has been heavily debated for millenia. When it comes to this issue, humans are the same today as they were thousands of years ago. Although our lifestyles may have changed, our curiosity about the creative forces of the universe has not changed. We still poke our noses into every conceivable hypothesis available, as we desperately search for information that will shed light on the nature of divinity.

Throughout history, the wonders of the universe have been a constant inspiration to the indomitable questing soul of humanity. And while men and women studied and observed the world around them, time and nature moved on. Were our lives not so short, we might be able to determine the reasons for this constant need to know the answers to the questions *Why are we here? Who put us here? What should we be doing?* But our time is limited and so we feel compelled to find answers about our origins, purpose, and destiny. Amazingly, these questions always seem to culminate with thoughts of deity.

In all probability, our ancestors had a better chance than we do of answering these questions and understanding the world. They were not constantly bombarded

by media propaganda, distracted by television, or caught up in this high-tech world. Because they led simpler lives, they were closer to the awesome powers of creation. Granted, some of their familiarity with the world around them was necessary for their survival. Even so, they still had an aptitude for blending with, and becoming part of, nature that we just do not have today.

Looking back, we find it was humanity's relationship with the environment that led early humans to discover the real essence of their divine potential. Through observation and instinct, early humans realized there was more to nature than what they could see and feel. Something greater than themselves had control of the world, and they needed to develop a relationship with that greater power if they were going to survive.

Just when humans began to designate and separate the forces of nature is not known. But they did step back, identify, and classify all they could see, hear, feel, and touch. Along with the identification of the physical, the unseen forces and powers of creation were included as well. Eventually, through the projection of a greater awareness, these forces manifested into a multitude of intangible, invincible beings and sympathetic spirits.

From the beginning, our ancestors sensed the wonder in a storm, recognized the power of a raging flood, and marveled at the miracle of birth. It did not take a genius to distinguish between the times of abundance and plenty and the times of scarcity and destitution. Somewhere along the line, humanity figured out there had to be something that would compensate for both their successes and misfortunes. Whatever that something was, it was all-encompassing and responsible for life's obstacles and pleasures.

Through a combination of anxiety and awe, the worship of deity came into being. Out of instinctive emotion, humans created living repositories for the designated forces of nature. These reservoirs of dynamic energy were classified according to their power, function, and use. They were the living potentials of nature; though they were independent from humanity, they were dependent upon humans for their survival. Humans believed that if they ignored these forces, destruction would result. However, when humans showed deference and made offerings, peace prevailed.

From the start, these energies were considered to be higher octaves of humans. They were endowed with individual characteristics and assigned personal qualities, symbols, and areas of emphasis. They were the gods of nature; everything possessed, in some form, a portion of their energy potential. The larger and more impressive the object, the more powerful the god or spirit who occupied it. This principle was applied to the unrestrained forces of nature as well.

The most powerful of these gods inhabited the sky, shone forth as the sun, and ruled the mountain tops. When heated by passion, they brought the thunder, lightning, and fire from the heavens. The great goddesses were in charge of the earth, the

night sky, and the nourishing river waters. When provoked, they manifested as the tempest storms and raging winds; they brought barrenness to the land and all that lived on it. Our ancestors were uncomplicated. When the gods were happy, all was well. When they were not, all hell broke loose. In most cases, whether the result was feast or famine, the actions of the gods were thought to be in direct relation to human activity.

As humanity evolved, developed, and matured, the gods did likewise. They moved with their people and left the natural habitats of their origin. From sacred groves to sanctuaries, from mounds to monuments, the gods progressed as their worshippers demanded. From simple cave paintings and primitive clay sculptures came noble statues and majestic temples proclaiming the glory of the gods.

Creating a Relationship with Divinity

One of the essential elements of all religions is the interpretation of deity, which must be both specific and conceivable in its intrinsic and functional nature. For a complete understanding to be attained, an explicit analysis of the appearance, temperament, position, and archetypal expression exhibited by deity is required. In other words, one needs to have a reasonable explanation of the deities and know what they represent and how they function before they can have a relationship with them. It is impossible to become comfortable with an unknown entity, let alone an abstract concept. Identification of the god form is necessary before developing a relationship with it or beginning worship.

This introduction to deity is not a difficult process and should remain simple. All that is needed is an acceptance of an originating concept in and of itself, and the energies that radiate from it. Monotheism, polytheism, and pantheism are three methods of identifying a deity.

Monotheism recognizes an ultimate cause of all creation. This omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient source is referred to as the *All* and is the infinite causation of the universe.

Polytheism states that many gods and goddesses exist, each with separate and distinct functions and various aspects of nature to supervise.

Pantheism is the doctrine that God is All; the sum total of everything that exists. God is part of creation but not separate and distinct from it.

These three definitions are correct and usable for people creating their own system. But which one do you choose if you happen to relate to more than one explanation of theism?¹ Co-Creation spirituality uses the term *omnitheism*,² which considers all forms of theism to be equally valid.

Omnitheism's definition eradicates the right-wrong duality that is so prevalent in world religions and allows for everyone to be right. From the standpoint of Co-Creation spirituality, omnitheism proclaims a belief in a single source, the All, which exudes energy in order to form a divine dualism, the total feminine or Goddess concept and the total masculine or God concept. These two dynamics create a secondary³ pantheon of deities that help humanity develop, progress, and spiritually advance through the various stages of personal experience and initiation.

Who are these magnanimous beings we call gods and goddesses? How do we get to know them? In reality, these beings are the energy forces that emanate throughout the universe. These beings have been restrained and are compelled to make known their potential through the manifestation of spiritual revelation. In the ancient world, these beings were considered to be etheric world intelligences that could communicate with humans. In today's world, those people who are devoted to this idea relate to the gods in much the same way. The gods are seen as higher forms of natural intelligence with the potential for providing guidance, protection, and hope for the future.

The God

Like all deities, the God has many faces. He appears as the radiant, brilliant, and illuminating Sun of Righteousness; the divine victim who spills his blood for the love of the land; the warrior king whose fight for truth and justice is revealed in the battle between good and evil. To the followers of Neo-Pagan religions, the God is the symbol of virility, the fertilizing and regenerating energy force of nature. He is the personification of all that is masculine, potent, and powerful.

The God's most obvious and dominant characteristic is his ability to regenerate. Although his countenance may change with time and culture, he continually returns to live and die for the land he loves. We have known him as Osiris, Tammuz, and Adonis. We have seen him manifest as the Unconquered Sun or compassionate savior Mithra, Helios, and Christ. Whatever his incarnation, he is always the potentate of power, strength, and authority—and the final judge before the gate of the Goddess.

The Goddess

After centuries of exile, the Goddess has made her way back to her land, people, and position as the personification of feminine dominion and perception. She is the Earth Mother and Mistress of Magic; she is all that is beauty and bounty. What the God inaugurates, the Goddess materializes. The God impregnates her with the seed of desire and she gives birth to reality. The Goddess is the creative process through which all physical levels are made manifest.

From the spiritual aspect, the Goddess is the intuitive and instinctive side of nature. Her inconceivable powers of transition and transformation radiate like the

translucent beams of celestial light, for she is the mystery and magic. Beneath her full moon she is invoked as Arianrhod, Diana, and Hecate by those seeking her favors. Everything psychic and mysterious belongs to her alone.

Together, the God and Goddess permeate all levels of existence. Their presence promulgates life in its purest state. Once an intimate relationship has been developed with them, it is impossible to imagine living without their divine inspiration. For the most part, they become the principal considerations in daily life and primary factors in all religious ritual and worship. Whether individually or collectively approached, they are the fundamental reasons behind all spiritual enlightenment.

Synopsis

“All gods are one god, and all goddesses are one goddess.” This is a popular euphemism that is both erroneous and misleading. While all deities share the same nature in that they are omniscient, omnipotent, and divine, the similarity ends there.

Deities, like human beings, are channels of consciousness that receive outside information or input and then transmit to an original source. Each channel or strain of consciousness—be it human or god—is unique, and so is its feedback. The ultimate logic of the universe testifies to its intention by having created millions of separate life-forms. There would be no reason for this multitude of energy forces if all life-forms were transmitting the same message. We must realize that it is the incredible amount of diverse information—processed and fed back to the Ultimate Force—that maintains the momentum of universal existence.

Simply put, early humans learned how to relate to the energy patterns of the universe; they learned to recognize their differences and identify with them. One does not mistake a raindrop for an earthquake, and so one should not confuse a goddess of fertility with one of war. It is understood that each goddess is feminine and therefore capable of feminine actions, just as all gods are masculine and capable of masculine actions. However, gender capacities do not suppress or diminish individual ability. It is therefore best to learn what type of energy a deity will manifest before one proceeds to invoke their wrath, rather than their blessing.

ENDNOTES

1. Theism is the belief in the existence of gods and goddesses.
2. *Omni* is the Latin prefix meaning all. Omnitheism is the belief in all theism, or gods and goddesses, including the original causation.
3. Secondary refers to the thousands of deities that confirm natural energies, emotions, and concepts important to the structure of the universe.

Preface to Deity

Chapters 8 through 12

Images of gods and goddesses grace our museums, great cathedrals, and personal altars. Tales of fearless encounters, passionate love affairs, and enchanting rites of magic are passed from generation to generation. Through myths and legends, their power, folly, and wisdom quietly enrich our lives and the lives of our children. Paying tribute to each god and goddess we revere would take great amounts of time and volumes of printed material. Even though my space is small, it is still possible to present an extensive list of deities by limiting the selection.

As the enthusiastic student of mythology is well aware, innumerable texts listing god after god exist. These texts pay little if any attention to detail, other than giving the deity's name and his or her placement within a pantheon. Helpful as this may be with identification, it does little to inspire or encourage the connection to deity within the life of the seeker.

Personally, I feel it is better to have comprehensive information about a few deities rather than a multitude of names with only basic facts. For this reason, chapters 8 through 12 focus on the principal deities from the most popular pantheons. By limiting the selection, you will find a more extensive arrangement of details concerning the qualities and correspondences related to each god and goddess.

The deities were chosen with respect to their authority, classical image, geographical location, and function within the pantheon. As much information as possible has

been given for each deity. Though the information is by no means complete, it will help you get started.

Remember that the gods and goddesses are representations of natural energies that have been culturally humanized. The deities authorized, if not encouraged, this classification in order to make their dominion felt by those seeking their knowledge and wisdom. Acceptance of their virtue is primary to understanding their sovereignty and their ultimate relationship with humanity.

Personification of deity is the heart and essence of all religions. Whether you worship at a local church or create your own system, the delegation of deity should be your primary consideration. Through personal experience and use of these forces, the ultimate realization of divinity manifests. The only way to get to know the God and Goddess is to actually learn about them, and then, through prayer and supplication, approach them with an open mind and heart.

Africa: Home of the Orisha

Aye! There's places in Africa where you get visions of primeval force....In Africa the past has hardly stopped beating.

Trader Horn

The Land of Great Mystery

Africa is the mysterious land of vast jungles and dark secrets. It is a place where witch doctors summon spirits of the dead and the steady drumming of the Bata¹ fills the air. It is a land abounding with superstition, strange magic, and exotic gods—a land where ancient customs and rites still live on.

To some, Africa is the birthplace of humanity and the location of the Garden of Eden. Whether this is true or not, Africa remains the home of some of the oldest deities known to humans. These charismatic gods and goddesses have controlled the elements of African culture and life for thousands of years. To the people of the jungle, these gods are the original intention, power, and purpose behind reality.

The Orisha are viewed as being very much alive and anthropomorphic in their appearance, attitudes, and desires. Because they are so human-like, African religious practices are festive occasions, with music and much food and drink—because humans like and enjoy these things, the gods must delight in them as well. For the most part, Africans see their Orisha as friends and allies rather than as remote or indifferent gods who take no interest in human affairs.

These wonderful beings are believed to reside in certain objects and places. By coming in contact with them in their homes, a measure of their *ashe* can be absorbed. By procuring the Orisha's *ashe*, humans gain the power to protect themselves and their families as well as manifest their desires. To receive a portion of *ashe*, favorite foods and drink are given to refresh and cool² the Orisha. This concept of exchange—giving in return for receiving—helps maintain the balance between humanity and the gods.

Africans keep a close working relationship with the Orisha. One of the primary reasons for this closeness is that the Yoruba believe that as a person grows, the world hardens him or her and tends to throw the person off balance. The individual must contact his or her guardian Orisha and learn what to do to get back into alignment with his or her fate. Once the person finds out what is required to live correctly, he or she will offer *ebbo* (sacrifice) as a means of thanksgiving. Because of this giving and receiving custom, a constant flow of energy exists between the individual and his or her Orisha. As a result, great friendships develop between the Africans and their gods.

The Orisha described below are considered to be the most powerful and popular of the pantheon. Because of their widespread acceptance, practitioners of both Ifa and Santería usually contact and work with these Orisha during ritual. Because of their popularity and the growing interest in African traditions, Orisha's statues and sacred objects are easily obtainable.

The Orisha, Gods of Africa

Yemoja (Mother of the World, Origin of Life)

Yemoja is the ultimate symbol and personification of motherhood. She represents the place of origin and the maternal source of divine, human, animal, and plant life. She is considered the top level of the ocean where plant life grows, which is the largest environment for life on earth.

Yemoja embodies the principle of everlastingness; she gives humans the ability to exist. Yemoja is the matriarch who presides over the bloodstreams of the world. All rivers by their natural motion dump their cargoes at Yemoja's door. She is in a state of constant motion; never at peace, never resting. Even when she is calm on the surface, things are brewing below. Yemoja is the ultimate manifestation of female power and therefore the greatest Witch of all.

In myth, Yemoja had a son named Orungan. He became so inflamed by his sexual passions that he pursued his own mother. His approaches repelled Yemoja and she made every attempt to avoid him. She became so tired of fleeing his presence that she fell to the floor. When she fell, Yemoja's chest and stomach opened up and vast amounts of water flowed from her, creating a lagoon. From this lagoon the Orisha were born.

Yemoja's connection with water is shown in her association with docks, boats, and all other maritime activities. Her altar is round and usually placed on a mound covered in blue material. During her festivals, people dance around her in a circle to emphasize the idea of roundness and the cycle of life with which she is associated.

Correspondences

Archetype	Divine Mother
Expression	Mistress of magic
Element	Water
Nature	Emotional, nurturing
Association	Our Lady of Regla
Symbols	Fish, ocean, river, docks, boats, ship's wheel and anchor, mermaid, ducks, birds, seagulls, the peacock feather, shells, rattle, fan
Colors	Blue, white, crystal-clear
Number	7
Plants/Foods	Sheep, goat, turtle, rooster, duck, pork, bacon, watermelon, green grapes, plantain, coconut candy, popcorn, cane syrup, white yam, lettuce, black-eyed peas, lettuce, spearmint, purslane, watercress, river fern
Places	Ocean, shore, river
Misc.	Feast day: September 7

Oshun (Love, Beauty, Civilization)

Oshun is the Goddess of love and beauty. She is considered to be the enchantress, expressing the quality of beauty that comes from within. She is refinement, taste, and delicacy. Oshun represents all human sentiments and deep feelings. She is the virgin because of her purity of spirit, but she is also the temptress of deep and unexplained feelings.

Oshun is the river and sweet water that sustains life and makes everything worthwhile. She is the energy force that focuses on the present as well as on life's comfortable sensual pleasures. Oshun is the desire that raises human passions. Through her sexuality she is able to fulfill her goal of conceiving and bearing children, whom she leaves in the competent care of Yemoja.

From myth we learn that Oshun met the great god Chango at a Bembe³ and fell madly in love with him. Chango, however, was busy eating and dancing and did not notice her. Oshun dipped her finger in the honey pot she carried at her side and spread the sticky liquid on Chango's lips. Chango reacted to the sweet honey and began to dance with Oshun. It wasn't long before Chango and Oshun became lovers.

As a result of his admiration and love for Oshun, Chango allowed her to wear his red beads in her yellow necklace.

Oshun is also important when it comes to money and possessions, as she provides the tenacity to maintain achievement. She is a master of strategy and understands the use of charms and magic, especially when it comes to the manipulation of the sexes. However, she can also be overindulgent in the pleasures of life and sometimes needs to be reminded of her true place and goal in the scheme of things.

Correspondences

Archetype	Creator of Civilization
Expression	Love, beauty
Element	Water
Nature	Loving, soothing, unpredictable
Associations	La Caridad del Cobre, Venus, Erzulie
Symbols	Peacock feather, pumpkin, fan, mirror, comb, gold, cowrie shell, brass bells, needle, anything brass or copper, fish, honey, butterfly, mermaid
Colors	Yellow, amber, red
Number	5
Plants/Foods	Castrated goat, hens, red snapper, egg custard, raw fish, cornmeal mush, white yam, cooked pumpkin, pineapple, yellow rice, honeydew/muskmelon, watercress, pumpkin, aniseed, corchorus, cinnamon
Places	River, shore of river, lakes, streams
Misc.	Feast day: September 8

Obatala (Judgment, Purity, and Wisdom)

Obatala is the “King of the white cloth” and is considered the king of the Orisha because of his great age. In the Yoruba culture, age is a key factor in the ability to wield power, and Obatala holds this position because of his honored maturity. He is the force of nature that represents the morals and obligation to do the right thing.

Obatala is humility, calmness, ethics, clearness of thought, and purity. God selected him to be the leader; he owns all the heads, even those of the other Orisha. Owning these heads gives Obatala prominence because it is believed that the human soul exists in the head, making it the seat of the soul. Because the head holds the soul, everything in Santería is done to the person’s head.

Obatala is considered a creator deity because he shapes the fetus within the womb. Folklore states that Obatala got drunk from palm wine while he was sculpting humanity from clay. Due to his intoxication, he misformed some of the human beings, thus creating people who are dwarfs, hunchbacks, disabled, and with limited

hearing and sight. It is believed that these people are Obatala's special children.

Obatala lives on top of a mountain where he maintains a clear view of humanity. He is represented by both sexes, because good judgment and reason are not considered to belong to one particular sex. He has a sense of humor and tries to see the element of laughter in all situations. His totem animals are the snail, boa, chameleon, and elephant—due to the enormous strength these creatures possess in comparison to their size. The exception is the elephant, which is not only strong but also wise.

Obatala represents the wisdom attained through age and is the one who appreciates the nuances and calamities of life. Wisdom and experience enable him to see the humor behind human's follies.

Correspondences

Archetype	Father, creator
Expression	Judgment, propriety, moderation
Element	Earth
Nature	Cool headed, amicable, confident
Associations	Our Lady of Mercy, Mercedes
Symbols	White cloth, clay, white shells, sun, gorilla, snail, elephant, boa, chameleon, judge's gavel, cotton, cascarilla, white doves, fly whisk
Color	White
Numbers	8, 16, 24 (any combination of 8)
Plants/Foods	Female goat, doves, milk, pears, white grapes, rice pudding, meringue, custard, breads of all kinds, rice and rice bread, white cornmeal, white yam, farina, sage, black-eyed peas with skin removed, green grapes, tobacco, basil, cotton (Obatala's offerings must never contain salt)
Places	Mountaintops, hills, close to the sky
Misc.	Feast day: September 24

Eleggua (Choice, Options, and Balance)

Eleggua is the Orisha who offers choices. He sits at the threshold of every decision and offers the options that decide the future. He was present at the creation of the world and will be there when it ends. Eleggua represents our ability to choose and bring about new circumstances. He teaches that the present is a reflection of the past and an indication of the future.

Eleggua likes to bring out the fool in humans. He is the provocateur and instigator who tricks humans into making wrong decisions for no other reason than to see how they will rectify the situation. As Eleggua is always right, he looks for right action



Eleggua

and proper conduct in those he chooses as his children.

Legend tells that Olodumare became ill and none of the other Orisha could make him well. The elder deities did not consider the young Eleggua to be someone who could help the situation. However, when Eleggua learned that Olodumare was ill, Eleggua rushed to his side and asked for the chance to heal him. The elder

Orishas laughed at Eleggua, but Olodumare silenced them and gave Eleggua a chance. Eleggua reached into his knapsack, which always hung by his side, and pulled out some herbs. He prepared an herbal brew and gave it to Olodumare to drink. As soon as Olodumare drank the liquid, he was healed of his illness.

Olodumare called all of the Orisha together and proclaimed that from that day forward Eleggua would be honored first in their ceremonies. He gave Eleggua the keys to every door. Olodumare also gave him the power of life and death and the ability to solve problems. Because Olodumare knew that Eleggua possessed a great sense of justice, Olodumare also made him the arbitrator of human affairs and the master of fate.

Eleggua is the perfect balance in nature; the Equinox is his symbol because everything is in perfect balance at this time. Eleggua is the guardian of the crossroads and potentiality. He is the communicator between the worlds, between humans and the Orisha. He changes human's language into nature's language and nature's language back into human's language, creating a link between them.

Correspondences

Archetype	Divine balance
Expression	Trickster
Elements	Earth, Air, Fire, Water
Nature	Unpredictable, mischievous
Associations	Anthony of Padua, Saint Martin
Symbols	Comb, whistle, spoon, cross, checkerboard, erect penis, toys, red car, red parrot feather
Colors	Red, black, white
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Coconut, goat, rooster, baby chick, bush rat, smoked herring, dry fish, cigars/tobacco, dry wine, all fruit, cakes, yellow bananas, popcorn, boiled yams, cornmeal, okra, toasted corn, rum, guava, corn, bastard lime, dub grass

Places

Crossroad, house threshold, marketplace, curve in the road

Misc.

Feast days: June 13, August 16; he is also honored at all Santería ceremonies and rituals

Chango (Instant Illumination and Retribution)

Chango can be considered to be the wrath of God. He is instant illumination and retribution. He is the lightning that illuminates the night sky—allowing you to see in a flash things that otherwise would remain in the dark. When Chango spits fire at someone, he is showing who he is angry with as well as letting others know they could be next.

Chango is suave and debonair; he is a Casanova who loves to dance. It is said he also possesses the gift of gab. He is quick-witted, able to think on his feet, and can excite the masses with his wit and words. He is and can be everything to everyone; the consummate politician.

Chango was not only a great warrior and dancer, but he was also a skillful diviner and owner of the table of divination. However, Chango's real love was dancing. One day, upon meeting with Orumila, the Orisha's gifted dancer, Chango offered to trade his table and gift of divination for Orumila's ability to dance—Chango knew his proficiency at dancing would greatly increase his popularity with the ladies. Orumila and Chango traded and have lived happily ever after.

Chango is a fireball and lives for adversity. He enjoys being able to get out of tricky situations that he has created, mainly to test himself. He is the idea of surviving against the odds and represents two things: force and wisdom. He is the ultimate adventurer, connoisseur, visionary, and artist. Chango is the "King of Divination," the owner of drums; a revolutionary, herbalist, magician, bum, and dancer.



Chango

Correspondences

Archetype	Illumination
Expression	Force and power
Element	Fire
Nature	Vitality, dominant, charismatic, passionate
Association	Saint Barbara
Symbols	Double-headed ax, horse, cats, inverted mortar, Bata drum, gourd rattle, wand, sword, palm or cedar tree, tortoise shell

Colors	Red, white
Numbers	4 or 6
Plants/Foods	Ram, tortoise, turtle, rooster, dry white wine, green bananas, red apples, pomegranate, cornmeal, okra, rice bread, fufu, black-eyed peas, obe ayaba, cinnamon, cedar, teak, camwood, plantain, bonset
Places	Foot of the palm or cedar tree, woods
Misc.	Feast day: December 4 or 6



Cauldron of Ogun

Ogun (Energy, Strength, and Firmness)

Ogun is energy, war, inheritance, medicine, and perspiration. He is the force of nature that keeps matter in motion—and is in constant motion himself. Once God gives a being life, Ogun sustains it. Ogun is one of the oldest gods in the Yoruba pantheon. He is force, locomotion, contraction, expansion, and give and take. He is the magnetic stone.

Ogun is an earth deity who lives inside an iron cauldron, which represents the womb of the earth, the mine, and the primordial abyss.

Symbolically, the womb or cauldron is the individual's ability, and Ogun's tools are a gift that will help to bring out or extract their potential and wealth to enhance life.

The main tools of Ogun are the anvil, the ability to transform; shovel, the ability to dig for one's potential; machete, used to clear the path and protect; rake, used to gather and smooth rough areas of the self; hoe, human's ability to cultivate one's potential; hammer, used to bend and shape one's faculties; and pick, used to pierce or penetrate the hardened areas of the self.

Ogun is the force that animates life—he is the only one allowed to take a life. During a blood sacrifice, he is always fed first. Ogun is the owner of the knife, which is the first thing to taste the blood in any sacrifice; only a person who has received the initiation can perform a sacrifice using a knife.

When working with Ogun, it is necessary to understand that he deals with things that are in reach, within the reality of the person. He must be able to keep an eye on what he is doing.

Correspondences

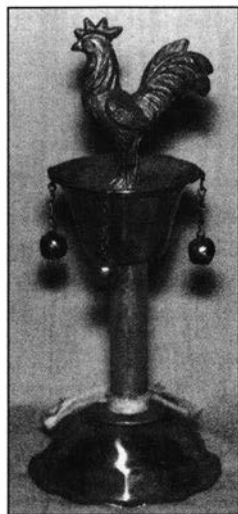
Archetypes	Force and motion
Expression	Strength and will
Element	Fire
Nature	Strong, self-determination, initiative
Association	Saint Peter
Symbols	Cauldron, anvil, shovel, machete, rake, hoe, hammer, pick, magnets, railroad spikes, iron train, knife, dog
Colors	Red, green, black, white
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Pigeon, white rum, red wine, black-eyed peas, roasted hen, same foods as Elegua
Day	Tuesday
Places	Deep forest, woods, door with Elegua
Misc.	Feast day: June 29

Osanyin (The Balance of Nature)

Osanyin is the Yoruba god of herbalism who lives in the forest and controls the power contained therein. In this sense, he controls the curative and poisonous herbs and plants that grow in the forest. The leaf is his knife and his wand. He is the chemist of the Orisha; he represents the two sides of herbal power: the side that cures you and the side that kills you.

Osanyin represents the balance of nature. Just as the tree stands on one leg, Osanyin helps humanity retain balance by preventing and curing diseases of the mind and body. He symbolizes the scientist who ventures into the unknown. Nature is his sanctuary, where one escapes the hazards of civilization. Osanyin is also the permanent sentinel of sacred groves where the individual can go for refuge of the mind and cool, logical thinking. Osanyin is the owner of all herbal ingredients and, therefore, protects one against the evils of witchcraft.

Osanyin is considered a weapon of war because of his knowledge of witchcraft, potions, and charms. He is the greatest of witch doctors. He is the king of the trees and is compared to the Araba tree (the tallest tree in Africa). Many believe that his symbol of the staff surmounted by a bird represents his tree. The bird is symbolic of swiftness and has the ability to carry prayers to God.



The Osun (Symbol of Osanyin)

Correspondences

Archetypes	Nature and movement
Expression	Swift hunter
Element	Air
Nature	Quiet, strong, fast, wise
Association	Saint Joseph
Symbols	Osun (staff surmounted by a cup with bells and a rooster), leaves and all herbs, birds, bow and arrow, all trees, beads
Colors	Green, red
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Guinea hen, venison, fish, almonds, liquor, beans, toasted corn, all fruit, cigars, yams, same foods as Eleggua and Ogun
Places	Forest, trees, outland, inside of house door
Misc.	The Osun is placed in a high place for protection; if it falls over, it is a bad omen and a warning of trouble Feast day: December 31

Synopsis

An entire book, if not several, would be needed to fully explain and elucidate the qualities, properties, and functional capabilities of the Orisha, not to mention their contemporary Saint versions. The most I could hope to convey in this short chapter is their essential characteristics and corresponding symbolic purpose.

One needs to realize and understand that the Orisha are *not* the Catholic Saints with whom they are associated. The Orisha are natural forms of energy that have been designated to correspond with human emotions and needs. These energies are brought to reside in Otanes (stones), tools, and symbols that are kept in specially prepared vessels called *sopelas*—these, not the Catholic Saints, are the living, physical representations of the Orisha.

The Saints, on the other hand, are not African gods but Christian deities who have evolved from righteous humans into divine beings. They are represented by their statues, colors, symbols, and attributes. Because of the syncretism or spontaneous combination of Orisha with Saint, the Saint has become an intermediary through which the Orisha energy is channeled. It was this syncretism that made it possible for the early Orisha worshipers to commune with their deities under adverse conditions.

Becoming involved with the Orisha is a big responsibility. These are not deities who have been neglected and forgotten for hundreds of years—they are very much alive. The Orisha are raw, primitive power, and should be treated with respect. As repositories of great energy, they are more than willing to lend a helping hand to humanity, but they do expect *ebbo* (sacrifice and offering) in return for their efforts.

Probably the most attractive concept of Orisha worship is the physical response the deity transmits to the devotee. When something is demanded of the Orisha, they respond and, more often than not, manifest a physical phenomenon as proof of their presence. I have seen them dehydrate fruit, wither perfectly healthy plants, and create temperature changes in short periods of time. When they are happy, everyone is happy; when they are not, it is better to hide.

If you are interested in Santería, Ifa, and the Orisha, take the time to find a reputable teacher, as this is not a religion that can be gleaned from books. You can gain a background from reading, but to understand and work with it, initiation is necessary. This secrecy is a safeguard to protect both the seeker and the Orisha's power from abuse.

It is possible, however, to set up altars to the Saints and through them get to know the Orisha. You can do this safely through personal study and organized observation of results. In time, if it is meant to be, the Orisha will provide the devotee with the proper teacher and guide.

ENDNOTES

1. The Bata is a double-headed drum sacred to the Orisha—especially to the god Chango—and often played in their honor.
2. *Cool* is a term meaning to make calm, to have a gentleness of character; it is the correct way for humans to behave.
3. Bembe (Bem-BAY) is a drum and dance festival celebrated for and in honor of the Orisha.

Asia: The Land of Many Gods

If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst into the sky, that would perhaps be like the splendor of the Mighty One.

Amaury de Riencourt, *The Eye of Shiva*

Hindu and Buddhist Worship

Aromatic incense, the resonating sound of a gong, and the melodic chanting of saffron-robed monks fill the air, creating an atmosphere of meditative tranquillity.

Asia, like Africa, still harbors pre-Christian religious philosophies, most of which are steeped in thousand-year-old myths and traditions. These captivating beliefs are based on mythical deities, local folklore, and inspired scripture. Although Buddhists and Hindus remain separate in some regions, an interweaving of doctrine has occurred in other regions, leading to a merging of deities and practices.

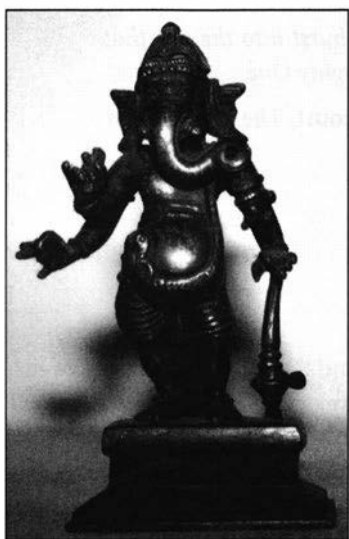
The teachings and beliefs that originated in the East are different from those of Western cultures. For one, the Eastern perspective does not fit the conservative, analytical boundaries of Western thought. The Western Judaic, Christian, and Islamic patterns focus on one (male) god whose laws must be obeyed unquestionably. In the Eastern point of view, universal truths and personal enlightenment are presented without judgment; salvation is considered to be an individual responsibility.

Many different traditions, representing a variety of spiritual disciplines and beliefs, comprise the culture and teachings of the Indian subcontinent. The beliefs are an established set of eternal truths gleaned by the Rishis, or great seers. The Rishis incorporated their knowledge into massive religious texts, one of which was the

Vedas. These volumes of spiritual knowledge contain a cosmology of polytheistic and pantheistic mythologies in poetic form, which describe humans' various relationships with God.

The most obvious aspect of the Asian deities is that they all express their nature. They are perfect examples of the transmutation of elemental energy into physical form. Each deity represents an aspect of life or nature that is fundamental to humans' pleasure or survival. Because the gods and goddesses of this area are so life-like, they have captured and held the hearts of people for thousands of years. Even though their culture is far removed from ours, the power and passion of these divine beings still project the magic and mystery of forgotten times.

The Gods of Asia



Ganesha

Ganesh, Ganesha (Lord of the Ganas, Dwarf-demon)

Ganesh, one of the most popular Indian gods, has the head of an elephant and the body of a potbelied man. As a god of good enterprise, his statues can be found everywhere—from the sacred temple to the common marketplace. He is practical wisdom, the remover of obstacles; he represents the union of humans with the universe.

Ganesh is the son of Parvati and Shiva and guards the gate of his mother's house. He is usually pictured with four arms and riding on a rat or mouse. In his hands he carries an elephant goad, a rosary, and an alms bowl.

This extraordinary-looking deity is also the god of the sciences and skills. He was the first scribe; in this aspect, he is likened to the Egyptian god Thoth. Ganesh is called upon when traveling and opening a business, before writing a book, and during wedding negotiations. Being part elephant and part man, he has a ravenous appetite and is pleased when offered abundant offerings.

Legend tells that Parvati created Ganesh. She wanted a guardian to prevent Shiva from spying on her while she was bathing. She took her bath oil and other secret substances and formed the body of a man with a fat belly. Then she sprinkled him with her bath water (Ganges water) and he came to life. When Shiva arrived, Ganesh would not let him near Parvati. In his wrath, Shiva cut off Ganesh's head. Fearing Parvati's displeasure, Shiva replaced the head of the man with that of an elephant.

In another myth, the gods thought that it was too easy for humans to enter heaven. They went to Parvati for help because the heavens were becoming overcrowded with meritorious people. Parvati rubbed her body with a special oil and in time gave birth to a fat man with four arms and the head of an elephant. She pronounced that this monster would present an obstacle to people's enterprises unless he was properly propitiated.

Ganesh is a popular deity. He is calm, generous, and loves humanity. His good sense of judgment and friendliness are only part of the reason for his popularity. Ganesh has been known to bestow riches and success on those he favors. Nothing should begin—whether it is worship or enterprise—until Ganesh has been honored.

Correspondences

Archetype	God of Knowledge
Expression	Benefactor of humanity
Elements	Water, earth
Nature	Kind, calm, generous, protective, philosophical
Associations	Thoth, Hermes
Symbols	Alms bowl, rat, snake, elephant goad, rosary, pen, elephant, books, ivory, tusks
Colors	Yellow, brown
Number	4
Plants/Foods	Apples, carrots, straw, all fruits and vegetables, sweet pudding, rice and coconut balls, candy, flour, sugar
Places	River, riverbank, jungle
Misc.	The feast of Ganesh is celebrated toward the end of August; at the end of the ten-day celebration, people create statues of the god from clay and throw them into the river for blessings

Kali Ma (Black or Dark Mother)

Kali is the Hindu triple goddess and venerated life force. She is the mother or virgin, great goddess, and ultimate reality. She has been identified as Parvati in her creative countenance and as Uma in her destructive aspect. Kali is the ideal image of birth and death, as she both gives life (as the womb) and reclaims it (as the tomb).

Kali's image is usually represented in black, wearing a garland of fifty human heads, symbolizing her knowledge and wisdom. Her girdle of human hands signifies the action of karma and accumulated deeds. Her three eyes indicate the past, present, and future; her disheveled hair forms the curtain of illusion. Kali has four arms and holds in one left hand a severed head, symbolizing freedom from the ego. In one of her right hands, she carries a sword that frees humanity from bondage. Her empty right hand gestures to dispel fear; her empty left hand proposes spiritual strength.



Kali Ma

Kali is the active power and the creative force, reminding us that to be born means to accept death. She calls people's attention to the process of liberation; she emphasizes that the concept of remaining in a confined space only creates stagnation. Kali is all that is benign and all that is terrible; she is against all evil in the eternal struggle of the cosmos. After all has come and passed, Kali alone remains—she was the inspiration behind the genius who created her, allowing for the birth of the gods.

In myth, Kali can be seen dancing on the dead body of her husband, Shiva, swinging his severed head in one hand and a sword in the other. During this seemingly terrible occurrence, Kali is also having intercourse with the body (reminding us of Isis copulating with the dead Osiris). As the goddess of death, Kali must destroy everything, including her husband, since no visible or physical thing is eternal.

Correspondences

Archetype	Destroyer
Expression	Ultimate feminine force
Elements	Water, fire
Nature	Creative, consuming, powerful, transcending
Associations	Parvati, Uma, Sekhmet
Symbols	Skull, sword, yoni, snake, lotus, bells, gold armlets, cowrie shell, trident, Ur-text, pot, triangle, Kali Yantra
Colors	Red, black, white
Number	9
Plants/Foods	Lily, lotus, cypress, crab, rose, beet, blood root, cucumber, yogurt
Places	River, cave, mountain, cemetery
Misc.	During the festival of Durga, special hymns to Kali are sung; many believe that Kali favors Wednesdays

Shiva (Benevolent, Moon God of the Mountains)

Often, Shiva is called the lord of the dance or the dancing god; he is the supreme example of cosmic rhythm and the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. It is said that he has the moon in his hair through which flows the River Ganges.

In the beginning, the gods agreed to the descent of Ganga, the heavenly river, whose sheer mass of water would have engulfed the earth. Shiva offered to lessen the shock of the river by allowing her to flow through his tangled hair. Ganga wandered

about his head for several years. Finally, Shiva divided the river into seven streams and she descended without causing harm.

As the lord of the mountains, Shiva sits facing the south, toward India. He is the master of the mountain; the one with whom the sages meditate, learning his exalted wisdom. Shiva sits on a tigerskin rug to demonstrate his control over greed and aggression; his snow-white hair signifies his asceticism. His faithful companion, Nandi, a white bull, and his son Ganesha accompany him.

In myth, Parvati, one of Shiva's consorts, playfully held her hands over his eyes, which were always open. At once darkness spread over the entire universe; there were no sun, stars, or moon—all was dark. Shiva created a third eye in the center of his forehead so that light would return to the world, and with the light came order and justice.

Besides being a god of the rivers, Shiva is also lord of the forest, indicating his ability as both fisherman and hunter. He holds a trident, expressing his capacity as a fisherman, and a bow, depicting his hunting abilities. In ancient times when humans wandered the forest in search of game, the hunters prayed to the god of the hunt, in this case Shiva, to send the animals their way. Hunters and fishermen often made offerings to Shiva before entering his forest so as not to offend him. Today, in some remote areas, bundles of fruit and vegetables are left as offerings in hopes of obtaining Shiva's favor.



Shiva

Correspondences

Archetype	God of Light
Expression	Master of magic
Elements	Fire, water
Nature	Creative, wise, justice, order, truth, wisdom
Association	Vishnu
Symbols	Trident, serpent, elephant, bow, moon, javelin, noose, deer, lion, spear
Color	White
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Rice, milk, dosa (Indian pancakes), yogurt, almond milk and pudding, pine, lily
Places	Mountain, river, forest
Misc.	Shiva's annual festival is Mahashivatri (The Great Night of Shiva), celebrated on February 19

about his head for several years. Finally, Shiva divided the river into seven streams and she descended without causing harm.

As the lord of the mountains, Shiva sits facing the south, toward India. He is the master of the mountain; the one with whom the sages meditate, learning his exalted wisdom. Shiva sits on a tigerskin rug to demonstrate his control over greed and aggression; his snow-white hair signifies his asceticism. His faithful companion, Nandi, a white bull, and his son Ganesha accompany him.

In myth, Parvati, one of Shiva's consorts, playfully held her hands over his eyes, which were always open. At once darkness spread over the entire universe; there were no sun, stars, or moon—all was dark. Shiva created a third eye in the center of his forehead so that light would return to the world, and with the light came order and justice.

Besides being a god of the rivers, Shiva is also lord of the forest, indicating his ability as both fisherman and hunter. He holds a trident, expressing his capacity as a fisherman, and a bow, depicting his hunting abilities. In ancient times when humans wandered the forest in search of game, the hunters prayed to the god of the hunt, in this case Shiva, to send the animals their way. Hunters and fishermen often made offerings to Shiva before entering his forest so as not to offend him. Today, in some remote areas, bundles of fruit and vegetables are left as offerings in hopes of obtaining Shiva's favor.



Shiva

Correspondences

Archetype	God of Light
Expression	Master of magic
Elements	Fire, water
Nature	Creative, wise, justice, order, truth, wisdom
Association	Vishnu
Symbols	Trident, serpent, elephant, bow, moon, javelin, noose, deer, lion, spear
Color	White
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Rice, milk, dosa (Indian pancakes), yogurt, almond milk and pudding, pine, lily
Places	Mountain, river, forest
Misc.	Shiva's annual festival is Mahashivatri (The Great Night of Shiva), celebrated on February 19

Kuan Yin (She Who Harkens to the Cries of the World)

Kuan Yin is a celestial Bodhisattva¹ whose origin is speculative at best. In some areas, she is the feminine aspect of Avalokita, a direct manifestation of Amitabha Buddha. Others feel that she is the unification of Tara and Mio Shan, brought together by Avalokita, in order to create the concept of compassion. How or why Kuan Yin came into being is of little consequence as she is probably one of the most venerated of all the Eastern goddesses. For thousands of years, all kinds of people have worshiped her. Today, her image can be found in almost every traditional Eastern temple and household.

As the goddess of fecundity and healing, Kuan Yin hears the cries of the world. She has sacrificed her Buddhahood for the sake of all who suffer and remains in the world to help others achieve salvation. She has been described as



Kuan Yin

a teacher of magic, an oracular goddess, and a protector of those who travel the seas.

One of Kuan Yin's most dramatic qualities is her ability to rescue those who call upon her. She has saved sailors, fisherman, and those caught in storms at sea. She is also a divine savior, guiding people to the Pure Land and helping them make the transition from life to death.

In myth, Kuan Yin descends into the land of the dead in order to alleviate the torments of those residing there. Her radiant and virtuous presence puts out the fires of torment and changes the instruments of torture into beautiful flowers. When she recites the Buddhist scriptures, the land of the dead becomes a paradise; everyone there exists in unbounded happiness.

Depictions of Kuan Yin can be found everywhere in China and Japan. Generally, she is idealized in human female form, wearing a long robe and hoodlike head dress. The ornaments that adorn her head, throat, wrists, and ankles symbolize her status as Bodhisattva.

Kuan Yin appears in two distinct positions. The first is standing on a giant lotus petal with one hand raised and the other pointing down in benediction. In this particular pose, she usually holds a dew pot (vase) in her pointing hand and a willow spray in the other. These emblems symbolize her compassion and wisdom. When seated, her right leg usually rests on her left thigh with the left leg extended. In this depiction, Shan Ts'ai, a young child, and Lung Nu, the dragon maiden holding a pearl, attend her.

Correspondences

Archetype	Divine Savior
Expression	Supreme love
Element	Water
Nature	Compassion, kindness, understanding
Associations	Tara, Mio Shan, Virgin Mary
Symbols	Lotus, dew pot or vase, rope, jeweled bowl, sword, vajra-dagger, bird, rabbit, bow and arrow, jade bracelet, mirror, rosary, conch shell, bell, golden wheel
Colors	White, blue, violet
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Lotus, willow, lily, rice, milk, honey, eggs, fish, fowl, grapes, jasmine, cherry, white rose, lilac, orchid, peach, pear, violet, yarrow
Places	Ocean, river, lake, docks, seashore
Misc.	Feast day: July 19 (the rites may last several days)

Synopsis

It is amazing how we incorporate, in most cases unconsciously, the forces and powers of deities into our lives. I was in an antique shop in an arty-tourist area of New England. Sitting on a shelf behind the counter—and looking very regal—was a statue of Ganesh. He was about two feet tall, made of brass, and wore a devilish grin. Being a greedy statue collector, I asked the Irish-looking gentleman behind the counter how much he wanted for the Ganesh. Well, you would have thought I had asked for a piece of the Great Isle Herself. In no uncertain terms, the man said that the statue was not for sale—it was his Ganesh and the protector of the store's profit. Since then, I have noticed many Ganesh and other deity statues gracing the marketplaces of this country.

Ganesh is not the only one I see watching from behind the counter, positioned over the cash register, or peeking around the corner. All manner of shops, businesses, and New Age stores possess favorite deities who protect and provide for them. Near my home, Kuan Yin graces the window of the health food store and Hoti proudly occupies center stage of the display window at a local New Age bookstore. At the Asian restaurant downtown is an altar to Shiva, bedecked with flowers and floating candles.

For the most part, I doubt that these people are religiously inclined but they still use the god's or goddess' power to benefit their life. Subconsciously, the energy of these deities attracts people.

Centuries ago, these Eastern gods and goddesses began crossing the oceans to grace us with their presence for mutual favor and support. They are helping us to understand that the mystery and magic of myth still lives and can enhance our lives if we only give it a chance.

Even if you are not of an Eastern mind, it is still possible to have a rapport with these gods and goddesses. A four-foot-high statue of Kuan Yin adorns the entrance to the chapel of Our Lady of Enchantment. In an alcove inside, a life-sized Buddha, from a temple in Taiwan, watches as we conduct ritual. Though the Buddha is not the center of focus, he lends much to the atmosphere and energy levels of our ceremonies. Hoti and Ganesh both keep an eye on our gift shop; Shiva and other deities greet visitors as they tour our metaphysical center.

The calm, quiet, meditative quality of Eastern deities can enhance everyone's life. You do not need a great deal of space or time to give one of these lovely gods or goddesses a home. Fresh flowers, incense, and an occasional token of appreciation will yield three times their worth in the peace and harmony that will prevail.

ENDNOTES

1. Bodhisattva is one intent on enlightenment and works to overcome imperfections and serve civilization as a whole.

Egypt: Valley of Temple and Tomb

Concerning Egypt I will now speak at length, because nowhere are there so many marvelous things, nor in the whole world beside are there to be seen so many things of unspeakable greatness.

Herodotus, fifth century B.C.

The Valley of Kings and Priests

The beauty of Co-Creation spirituality, Wicca, and Neo-Paganism lies in their diversity and freedom of choice. This is particularly true when it comes to worship of deity. Unlike most monotheistic Christian sects, nature-oriented religions delight in a variety of gods and goddesses to work with and worship.

For the most part, regional folklore, myth, and legend have kept many of the ancient gods and their traditions alive. Because of this, it is a fairly simple process to match a legendary god or goddess with his or her respective beliefs and practices. However, this is not the case with the gods and goddesses of Egypt. The actual beliefs and practices of the ancient Egyptians died with the last of the ruling pharaohs. We have only tombs and artifacts to speak for this once-great culture.

Rameses II was the last of the great pharaohs. In the ninety years following his death, eight more kings would take the throne. During this time they competed with the priesthood for power and managed to remove religion and its hierarchy from the control of the pharaoh. During this time of separation (about 1070 B.C.), Egypt went into its third and final decline.

When the religion of Egypt became less important than governmental concerns, the priests lost their power and position within society. No one was left to

protect or preserve the spiritual traditions which had made Egypt the marvel of the ancient world. Over the centuries, invaders chipped away at Egypt's empire; then Christianity arrived. What had not been obliterated by foreign warring factions was eventually eradicated by the cross. Around A.D. 500, the Islam Sunites made their move and consumed the last of Egyptian spiritual history, and the glory of Egypt was buried beneath the sands of time.

To this day it can only be hypothesized exactly what the religious practices and beliefs of these ancient people were. This is why there is no specific religious tradition chapter preceding this discussion of Egyptian gods and goddesses.

However, the lack of detailed theology should not discourage the student of Egyptian myth and legend. The gods and goddesses of Egypt are just as vital and relevant to us today as they were to the builders of the pyramids. In fact, many Wiccan and Pagan groups honor and worship these glorious forces of the desert sun. Because of this power, potential, and popularity, these deities are included in the text. If you feel a special kinship with, or calling from, the gods of Egypt, study their culture and create your own system.

The ancient Egyptians assigned an immeasurable amount of commitment to their architectural, religious, and scientific communities. The impact of the pyramids and their precision of measure are unequaled, as are the distinctive temples, sacred hieroglyphs, and tombs of gold. In almost every way, Egypt was and still is a focus of myth, mystery, and magic.

To some degree, people of classical Egypt were monotheistic because they thought of the universe as the conscious creation of one supreme force. This force, however, was expressed through a pantheon of secondary deities called the *Neterw*.¹ These secondary deities were Egypt's gods and goddesses who were a reflection of a particular aspect of the original potential. Also important was the belief that certain animals—such as the hawk, jackal, cat, and hippopotamus—were embodiments of specific divine principles. The acceptance of these forms as divinity led to the practice of polytheism, the worship of many gods and goddesses.

The Egyptians also believed that humans carried within themselves the spark or seed of the supreme god. However, this force or potential could only be realized through the king, who was the embodiment of the personal and spiritual destiny of humanity.

The king was a direct reflection of the supreme god force and as such duplicated the creator's heavenly actions on earth. The king generated order out of disorder and conquered the forces of anarchy and chaos. He represented the forces of light in their eternal conflict with the forces of dark; he was both ruler and spiritual leader of his people.

The Egyptian religion was elitist; participation was reserved for the privileged priesthood and the pharaoh. The temples were not open to the public and only certain priests and the king had access to the inner sanctuaries. Rituals performed in

the secrecy of these sanctuaries imbued sacred objects and the statue of the god or goddess who resided there with supreme power. During special religious festivals, the image of the god or goddess would be carried out of the temple, procession-style, among the common people.

The gods and goddesses of Egypt were served by both priests and priestesses. In most cases, the priests and priestesses were of equal rank and each serviced their own particular deity. Even though priests presided over most of the temples, some temples were dedicated specifically to a goddess and priestesses were entrusted with her care. Only at certain pageants or during designated festivals, where a god and goddess were brought together, would the priests and priestess perform conjointly. Otherwise, they kept to themselves, involved in their own religious activities.

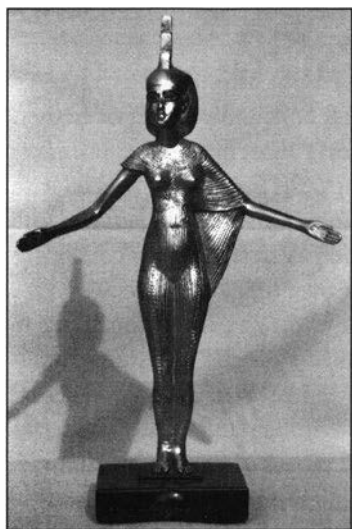
The temples in Egypt were like miniature cities, and their function was to see to the comfort of the god or goddess who dwelled within. These self-contained monuments to deity must have been a beehive of activity. From dawn to dusk the kitchens, bakeries, and laboratories were busy creating special foods, baking breads, and making unguents for the pleasure of the gods. There were morning purification rites, afternoon ablutions, and sacrifices, followed by evening prayers and devotions.

A typical day included the morning purification bath of the high priest or priestess, after which he or she dressed in white linen robes. The priest or priestess entered the temple and performed cleansing ceremonies in the outer corridors. When these ceremonies were completed, a procession of offering-bearers entered with their litters of foods, breads, libations, and incense. Singers and chanters praising the glory of the gods accompanied these lesser priests and priestess.

For the most part, daily rituals were timed to coincide with the movement of the sun. The morning purification ceremony paved the way for the celebration of high noon and the formal dressing of the god/goddess and his or her feast. What was left over from the god's feast was shared among the priesthood and constituted their main meal of the day. As the sun crossed the sky and dusk approached, all activities were geared to the closing ceremony, which consisted of prayers, invocations, and songs to the god or goddess and the ritual sealing of the temple for the day.

As mentioned earlier, the Egyptians' actual religious practices have been lost for centuries; no way to present an accurate tradition² for them exists. Because there is a great deal of interest in their folklore and customs, I feel it is appropriate to present their deities here. The gods and goddesses described below are some of the more popular members of the pantheon. Because they are more popular, much information is available about them, including fine paintings, statues, and artifacts.

The Gods of the Egyptians



Isis

Isis (The Great Goddess)

Isis (from the Greek for *aset*, meaning throne) is the personification of the Great Goddess in her aspect of maternal devotion. Isis is the daughter of Seb and Nut, wife and sister of Osiris, and mother to Horus. She is always represented as a woman and wears on her head a symbol of the throne, which is also the hieroglyph for her name. However, at times her headdress changes to that of the solar disk with horns or to the vulture's cap.

Isis was probably the greatest goddess in Egypt and was worshipped for more than 3,000 years. Her influence was not confined to Egypt and spread to Greece and the Roman Empire. Isis appeared in various images. She was the goddess of serpents of the primeval waters; milk-giving cow goddess; Sirius, the star goddess, who brought about the inundation of the Nile; fertility pig goddess; bird goddess; and goddess of immortality.

Isis was the female principle of nature and therefore a goddess of a thousand names. She was worshipped as "the great magic" who protected her son Horus from predators and other dangers. Because she protected her son, many believed she would protect mortal children from the perils of daily life as well.

Myth and legend confirm Isis as a true wife and mother. When her husband Osiris was killed by his jealous brother, Set, Isis spared no pains in finding his hidden body. Once she found the body, however, Set recaptured it, cut it into fourteen pieces, and scattered the pieces throughout the land. Isis hunted down all the pieces. She magically reconstituted the body and made love to it. Through this union with Osiris, Isis conceived Horus, who eventually revenged his father's death.

Correspondences

Archetypes	Mother, protector
Expression	Mistress of magic
Elements	Water, earth
Nature	Cultivated, authoritative, resolute
Associations	Ishtar, Demeter, Virgin Mary
Symbols	Thet (knot or buckle), scepter, cup, horns, mirror, snake, owl, hawk, ram, white cow, girdle
Colors	Sky blue, green, gold, white

Numbers	2, 8
Plants/Foods	Fig, willow, lotus, lily, narcissus, myrtle, myrrh, iris, date, sycamore tree, cooked goose, bread, beer, wine, honey, celery, papyrus
Places	Marshes, river's edge
Misc.	Feast days: May 14, August 21, October 31 (most festivals lasted for about three to four days each)

Osiris (He Who Occupies the Throne)

Osiris (from the Greek *asar*, meaning power of the eye) symbolizes the divine in mortal form. He is the personification of physical creation and the cycles of life. His death and resurrection symbolized the succession of the seasons and gave humanity hope for another life. He is the highest of all powers, the king who brought civilization to Egypt. He is husband and brother to Isis, father of Horus, and son of Seb and Nut.

It is believed that Osiris once lived as king upon this earth. Before his reign, the tribes of Egypt were nomadic hunters, constantly at war with each other. However, Osiris changed all this. He took his sister Isis for his queen and ruled the land. Osiris taught people the arts of agriculture and making tools to tend the crops. He showed them how to grow wheat, grind it, and make it into bread. He taught his followers how to grow grapes, make wine, and brew beer from barley, which was considered to be cultured behavior.

Osiris also founded temples and elaborately decorated them with fine carvings and statues. He organized the rituals of worship and designated religious practices. By his actions and works, he encouraged people to live noble and just lives, and he provided them with civil laws as well.

Set, Osiris' brother and the power of evil and darkness, treacherously murdered Osiris. After Osiris' death and resurrection, he became lord of the underworld and judge of the dead. He presides in the scenes of judgment, when the heart of the deceased is weighed against the feather of Ma-at and Thoth records the verdict.

Osiris is usually portrayed as a mummified, bearded man wearing the white crown of the North. At times, his mummy wrappings were colored green to reflect his nature as a god of growth and regeneration. Around his neck is an elaborate pectoral necklace and the menat counterpoise. He carries the shepherd's crook, the symbol of sovereignty and responsibility, and the flail that separates the wheat from the chaff.



Osiris

Correspondences

Archetypes	King, priest
Expression	Father of stability and growth
Elements	Earth, water
Nature	Mature, refined, controlling, organized
Associations	Tammuz, Jesus Christ
Symbols	Djed, crook, flail, menat, was (scepter), agricultural tools, hawk, jackal, ape, bull
Colors	Gold, yellow, green, white
Numbers	1, 7, 14
Plants/Foods	Corn, barley, willow, ivy, mallow, bread, beer, wine, all harvest grain, fish, sycamore tree, cypress, thorn, acacia, ivy, papyrus, orris, lily, storax, bay, frankincense, dittany
Places	Desert, field, riverbank
Misc.	The Isis festival celebrated in November commemorates the death and resurrection of Osiris

Hathor

Hathor (from the Greek *athyr*, meaning the dwelling of Horus) was a sky deity originally described as the wife of Horus and daughter of Ra. Because her name meant “the dwelling of Horus,” she was often seen as the mother of Horus as well. This complex condition is explained by her enclosing the sun god each night within her breast so he was protected and could be born again the following day.

Hathor is also described as the great celestial cow who gave birth to the universe, including the sun. In this aspect, she is represented as a cow or cow-headed goddess. Her most popular depictions are those of a woman wearing a lunar crown with cow’s horns or heavy tresses and cow’s ears.

Like the Greek goddess Aphrodite, Hathor was a patroness of women, mistress of merriment, and sovereign of music and dance. Her temples were homes of intoxication and places of enjoyment. Because of her association with music, the sistrum became one of her symbols and was used to drive away evil spirits and confer blessings during her rituals.

Despite the fact that Hathor was a goddess of joy and love, she was equally respected and cherished as a patron of the dead. In fact, she was the protector of the Theban necropolis under her title of “Queen of the West.” It was said that Hathor would wait in the foliage of the sycamore tree at the edge of the desert and welcome the dead with bread and water.

Hathor was worshiped at Dendera, the location of her principal sanctuary. In this temple, people celebrated great festivals, especially the anniversary of her birth on New Year’s Day. On that day, the priestess prepared her toilet and, just before dawn, brought Hathor’s image out into the temple garden so that it was exposed to

the sun's first rays. Great celebration and rejoicing—including much singing and drinking—followed this first ritual of the day.

Hathor was the passionate, consummate lover and nurturing mother; she was the intoxication of life. However, as with all goddesses, she had an opposing aspect that was noticeably expressed through her association with Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess of war, death, and destruction. Certain ancient texts maintain that Sekhmet is the destructive side of Hathor; other texts placed them as separate entities. In either case, the two are related because they appear to have been granted the power of the “eye of Ra.” It is possible the Egyptians were trying to imply that the goddess had both a loving and destructive side to her nature. When loving, she was Hathor; when destructive, she was Sekhmet.

Correspondences

Archetype	Mother, sustainer
Expression	Queen of the West
Elements	Water, fire
Nature	Passionate, loving, fertile, destructive
Associations	Aphrodite, Sekhmet
Symbols	Sistrum, cow, horns, lunar disc, lioness, sycamore tree, papyrus stalks, menat, lynx, sparrow
Colors	Sky blue, turquoise, copper, gold
Number	7
Plants/Foods	Beer, barley, mandrake, rose, sycamore, myrtle, milk, bread, benzoin, clover, papyrus, sandalwood, palm, pomegranate
Places	Sky, heavens, desert
Misc.	The fifteenth day of every month was sacred to Hathor; her major festivals were on November 21 and New Year's Day

Horus

From the beginning of the dynastic civilization, there is mention of Horus (from the Greek *heru*, meaning “He Who is Above”), the falcon-god and “lord of the sky.” He was represented as a falcon or as a falcon-headed man. His most distinguishing characteristics were his eyes; his right eye symbolized the sun and his left eye symbolized the moon. In a fight with Set, Horus lost his left eye—which was eventually recovered and aided in the resurrection of Osiris. In time, this eye became known as the “Wadjet Eye.” It symbolized the power of light and was used as a talisman against evil.

Originally, about twenty-five different gods were named Horus. The most distinguished of these were “Horus the Elder,” son of Ra, brother of Set, and husband of Hathor; and “Horus the Child,” son of Isis and Osiris. Over a period of time, the Egyptians became either unwilling or unable to distinguish between the two. Horus



Horus

the Elder and Horus the Child merged into one being. Horus the Child (son of Isis and Osiris) eventually claimed the heart of the people.

In the myth, which resembles the Old Testament story of Moses, Horus is born in secret and hidden in the marshes or bulrushes. Because Isis had conceived Horus after the death of Osiris, she feared Set would kill him as well. With time, Horus grew to maturity and sought out Set in order to revenge his father's death. The many battles between Set and Horus were considered symbolic of the continual struggle between the powers of light and darkness and the powers of the king and the enemy.

Horus had four sons (Imset, Qebhsenuf, Duamutef, and Hapi) who were guides for the dead. Their pictures and names were painted on each side of a coffin and their likeness was sculpted on the lids of canopic jars.³ They protected the dead from hunger and thirst as they watched over the internal organs. As with the "Wadjet Eye," we find Horus, this time through his offspring, as an agent of protection.

Along with his protective attributes, Horus was also the representation of resurrection and regeneration because he was the posthumous son of Osiris. As the matured seed carried by Isis, he represented the ability to transform. Also contributing to his imagery of regeneration was his personification as the rising sun, a symbol of kingship, which represented the rebirth of the god each day.

Correspondences

Archetypes	Sun god, savior god
Expressions	Kingship, protector
Elements	Fire, air
Nature	Protective, fearless, avenging, authoritative
Association	Apollo
Symbols	Wadjet (Eye of Horus), winged disk, falcon, canopic jars, sun, moon, double crown, feather, lion, snake, crocodile, club, bow and arrow, papyrus, pillar
Colors	Gold, yellow, amber, silver, blue
Numbers	5,10
Plants/Foods	Bread, grain, nettle, absinthe, laurel, lotus, papyrus reed, onions, frankincense, myrrh, milk, pepper, pine
Places	Sky, horizon, tops of trees, tops of temple gates, desert
Misc.	He is honored at the Spring and Fall Equinoxes

Sekhmet

Sekhmet (from the Greek *sakmis*, meaning the powerful) represents the feminine aspect of creative fire and is usually depicted as a bare-breasted woman with the head of a lioness. She is the daughter of Ra and the consort of Ptah of Memphis. Her son is Neferten, the lotus god. Sekhmet was as loved as she was feared because she could be both benevolent and malevolent, depending on the circumstance.

Sekhmet was one of the goddesses adopted by the pharaohs as a symbol of superiority and bravery in battle. She would ride next to the king in his chariot and breathe fire on the enemy, burning them to death. As a goddess of war, one of Sekhmet's titles was "lady of bright red linen," which described her blood-soaked garments and may have also referred to the color of her homeland.

One legend describes Sekhmet's negative nature very well. The sun god Ra was afraid that humans were plotting against him. The other gods urged Ra to call down retribution on humans by sending forth his avenging eye. Ra had two avenging eyes—Hathor and Sekhmet—and he sent Sekhmet to teach humanity a lesson. Sekhmet, however, became blood-thirsty and would not stop killing. Ra ordered seven thousand drums of beer to be colored red and taken to the desert. Sekhmet drank the beer (thinking it was blood), became intoxicated, and forgot what she was doing. As a result, humanity was spared complete destruction.

Sekhmet was also a goddess of plagues; people assumed that what she could bring, she could also take away. In this aspect, she was the "Lady of life." Her priests recited prayers to Sekmet over their patients, asking her to heal them. She became Sekhmet the healer; petitioning her became an integral part of medicine.

One of the fascinating things about Sekhmet is her dual nature. She can be destructive—tearing, rending, and consuming that which is profane. However, she can also be beneficial in her ability to counteract illness and death. In these aspects, she has been equated with both Hathor and Bastet—the positive sides of the feminine force—with Sekhmet being nature's pernicious face.

Correspondences

Archetype	Destroyer
Expression	Warrior goddess
Element	Fire
Nature	Rending, power, transformation
Associations	Hathor, Bastet, Kali
Symbols	Lion, rosette, scepter, linen, vulture, solar disk, uraeus, arrows, claw, knife, red ochre, ank
Color	Red
Number	7
Plants/Foods	Pomegranate, beer, rose, myrtle, cake, red meat, papyrus reed, tobacco, red wine, pepper, dragon's blood, orange, thistle, wormwood, olive

Places
Misc.

Desert, sky
Feast day: January 7



Ptah

Ptah (The Sculptor and Cosmic Architect)

Ptah was known as the “Ancient One” and considered to be the creator of the gods. He existed before Nun⁴ and conceived the idea of creation in his heart. Through prolonged meditation and abundant love, he manifested existence. This was accomplished by splitting his original thought into Nun, the masculine, and Nunet, the feminine counterpart of genius.

Nun and Nunet gave birth to Atum,⁵ who was bestowed with the title of “The Thought of Ptah.” With this title, Atum represented the heart of Ptah, which, to the Egyptians, was thought to be the seat of the mind.

Thoth and other primary deities followed, but the belief in Ptah as the first word or original source placed him, his wife Sekhmet, and their son Neferten, at the head of the Memphis triad.⁶

Besides being a source of origination, Ptah was thought to have created the skills of design and sculpture. In the Old Kingdom, his priests were known as *werkherep hemut*, which translated as “supreme leader of craftsmanship.” It is interesting to note that limestone quarries were located near Ptah’s temples, conveniently producing the materials for artisan priests to carve into statues and sacred objects.

Ptah was unique in his appearance as well as in his province. He was depicted as a bearded man with his head enveloped in a tightly fitting skull cap, leaving only his ears and face in view. He was wrapped totally in linen with only his forearms emerging. He wore a large necklace and held the “was,” scepter of dominion. At the uppermost part, this scepter combined the ankh and the djed topped by the crooked head of a dog. The staff’s lower portion was forked.

In Memphis at Ptah’s great temple, a bull named Hap (or Apis, the more commonly held Greek name) was kept. This animal was considered to be the physical incarnation of the god himself and was chosen for his color and markings.

Because of his identification with the god, the bull was treated with great care and respect. It was indulged with every comfort possible, even to the point of providing it with a harem of cows. When at an old age the bull finally died, he was mummified, as befitted royalty, and placed in a special sacred crypt.

For the most part, Ptah did not have much to do with the funerary cults nor did he play a large part in the underworld. Ptah-Sokar, a composite deity, was involved with the afterlife. However, Ptah did have influence and played a major role in the

“opening of the mouth” ceremony, which was performed on mummified corpses and statues of the deceased.

Correspondences

Archetype	Architect of the universe
Expression	Divine craftsman
Elements	Earth, air
Nature	Creative, constructive, artistic, inventive
Associations	Hephaestus, Vulcan
Symbols	Mummy, heart, potter's wheel, cosmic egg, bull manet, tongue, crafts, ankh, djed, clay, wood, limestone
Colors	Gold, yellow, violet
Number	8
Plants/Foods	Juniper, cinnamon, lotus, wisteria, storax, frankincense, myrrh, lilac, fish, bread, wine, milk, honey
Places	Temples, blacksmith forge, museums

Synopsis

Since the beginning of time, people's egos have led to fashioning their deities in their own likenesses. The ancient Egyptians were similarly inclined, and for this reason they created a pantheon of gods and goddesses who closely resembled humanity in every aspect. They lived, loved, and died as the mighty warrior, tempestuous virgin, and triumphant hero. Their myths and tales present exultant victories, passionate love affairs, and invincible powers. They are what humans could be if they were smarter, stronger, and immortal.

Through the centuries, the ancient Egyptians evolved into a civilized and sophisticated society. As the people developed, so did their culture, gods, and rituals. The Egyptians were an urban people with vast resources, incredible architectural knowledge, and the discipline to create a civilization that lasted more than 3,000 years. Because of their refinement, their deities are more conservative and reserved than those of other pantheons.

When approaching the gods and goddesses of Egypt, keep in mind their history and culture, as this will be where communication begins. Records from tablets, tombs, and scrolls tell us that primary purification and extensive toilet rituals were performed first. Prayers, chants, and songs followed. A great amount of time and energy also went into the presentation of libations and food offerings. The dressing of the deity and its adornment were a priority, as was the proper preparation of all unguents, oils, and perfumes.

Make an effort to duplicate the customs of a culture as closely as possible to recreate an atmosphere conducive to receiving the deity's energy force. Because the Egyptian gods and goddesses were refined, you need to invoke them in the same fashion as they were originally invoked. That is, reserve a special place for the deity's altar and set aside specific times to perform ceremonies for their benefit.

The Egyptians respected and deferred to their gods and goddesses. If you plan to work with these deities, do the same. Keeping things clean, neat, and orderly will go a long way toward setting the mood and proper conditions for inviting the presence of these deities. As with any deity, learn about them, in as much detail as possible, before you attempt to call them forth. Once encouraged, the gods become allies; once offended, they usually withdraw from our awareness.

Commentary: In our system of Co-Creation spirituality, we use methods similar to the Egyptians' methods for temple maintenance and deity intensification. We firmly believe that everything associated with the god or goddess form should be kept clean, including the images or statues themselves. Bathing and purification rituals should be done to enhance the representation of the god or goddess as well as clear the area of any unwanted energies.

Negative thoughts and vibrations float through the air like particles of dust and gather on anything and everything possible. Regular cleansing rituals remove unwanted energies and create a tranquil atmosphere conducive to communication with a deity. We have also noticed that deity statues enjoy being washed, perfumed, and adorned with scarves, drapes, and jewelry.

Remember that once the image or statue has been ritually charged, it becomes a physical receptacle for the divine energy force and will respond accordingly to the attention being paid it.

ENDNOTES

1. Neterw (pronounced net-er-oo) singular, neuter: the Egyptian word for god or divinity.
2. Even though no accurate tradition is available, you can still create one. Knowing what constitutes a religion and spiritual system allows you to create your own traditions using whatever gods and goddesses you choose.
3. Canopic jars were four large jars used to store the wrapped internal organs of the deceased. The jars' lids were carved with one of the faces of the four sons of Horus. The faces were those of the ape, jackal, man, and falcon.
4. Nun is the primal chaos out of which all life began. Ptah personified the primal waters, which contained the potential for all things.
5. Atum is the sun god and creator of the universe.
6. Note that the Egyptian triads (a group of three closely related parts) were composed of a mother, father, and son arrangement; Christianity later imitated this idea in their concept of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus as well as in their symbolic trinity.

Europe: Alive with Myth and Mystery

*All Europe by conflicting Faiths was rent,
And e'en the Orthodox on carnage bent;
The blind avengers of Religion's cause
Forgot each precept of her peaceful laws.*

Nicholas Boileau-Despreaux (1636–1711)

Where Lance and Grail Meet

The journey from Stonehenge to the Parthenon is filled with the magic of dragon caves, fairy mounds, and mist-shrouded moors, speaking of ancient times. The journey includes meetings with courageous gladiators, knights in shining armor, and secret gatherings in the Druid grove.

As Europe contained a variety of cultures and belief systems, it was and still is a land of myth and mystery. The openness to cultures and beliefs was especially true of the pre-Christian Celtic, Germanic, Greek, and Roman peoples. Though separated to some degree by social structure and natural boundaries, their beliefs eventually blurred into each other. Because the Celtic and Germanic systems belonged to the Indo-European language group (which also included the Greeks and Romans), exchange of religious myths became a popular method of cultural interaction.

Early Northern European people shared information by way of the spoken word, especially regarding their spiritual practices. For the most part, the Greeks and Romans—with their dedication to the written word—composed most of the documents concerning the Celtic people. Polubius, Tacitus, and other writers in

contact with the Celts provided most of the information we have today regarding Celtic religious systems. If not for these scholars, the majority of pre-Christian Celtic practices would have been lost forever.

Both mythology and folklore were methods of preserving many religious and secular traditions of Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. One popular custom that helped to ensure the keeping of established myths was the transmutation of deity, which usually happened when one tribe or legion captured or seized another. In transmutation, the local gods and goddesses were brought into the new and imposing culture's system in an effort to control the local inhabitants.

By looking back just prior to Christianity, we find that religion was an intrinsic part of life rather than a politically mandated crusade. Deities were localized and affiliated with the agricultural and cyclic processes. Each god and goddess commanded respect and held power over those who lived within their jurisdiction. Frequently, customs, rites, and practices varied extensively among tribes and villages; these differences in no way inhibited a deity's influence or power.

The contrast in lifestyles between the Celts and Greeks must be considered when considering European deities. Most Northern people (Celts) were herdsmen and transient farmers. Their occupations created a different emphasis in beliefs and practices in comparison to the more urban, trade-oriented Greeks and Romans.

Because of their nomadic and farming lifestyle, the Celts were more appreciative of natural settings for their religious celebrations. Outdoor ceremonies may have seemed primitive to the more sophisticated Greeks, who practiced their devotions in stately constructed temples.

For the most part, the Celts were concerned with war and agriculture whereas the Greeks were more interested in philosophy and art. Their gods and goddesses, for the most part, reflected their primary interests. Even though many differences in lifestyle and spiritual persuasions existed, many deities from dissimilar cultures had similar qualities, characteristics, and attributes. These common traits probably made it easier for the Celts, as well as the Greeks and Romans, to adopt each other's deities.

The Gods of Europe

Brighid (Bright or Exalted One)

Brighid, the daughter of the Daghdha, has been linked with Danu and Anu (or Ana). She is the embodiment of poetry, inspiration, and divination and was considered the personification of the Celtic triple goddess.

Brighid was originally a sun and fire goddess known as Brighid of the Golden Hair. Because of her connection with fire, Brighid was associated with inspiration and the art of smithcraft. To the early Celts, little, if any, difference existed between

the inner psychological and outer scientific worlds. They saw the fires of inspiration, hearth and home, and the forge as aspects of this essential element.

Along with her fire aspect, Brighid was also an important fertility goddess. A Celtic custom of requesting successful childbirth included praying and using votive offerings at Brighid's sacred springs and wells. During the pregnancy and the birthing process, Brighid was called upon to protect both mother and child.

With the coming of Christianity, Brighid became one of the most popular Saints in the Celtic Catholic Church. A special order of nineteen sisters (or nuns) worshipped and cared for her in a monastery at Kildare, Ireland. The nuns kept a perpetual fire burning for the goddess. Each of the nineteen nuns tended the fire for one day; on the twentieth day, Brighid herself would appear and attend to the fire personally. Brighid's fire or eternal flame was kept in a courtyard surrounded by a hedge. No man was permitted to enter the sanctuary lest he burst into flames and die on the spot.

When Brighid was Christianized, she kept much of her original Pagan mystique and power. Some stories said she was raised in a Druid household and fed the milk of magical Otherworld cows while being taught the enchantments of healing and prophecy. Other legends declare her to be Jesus' foster mother, wearing a crown of lighted candles on her head to distract Herod's soldiers away from the Divine Child. She may also have been midwife at the birth of Jesus, anointing him on the forehead with spring water, thus bestowing the virtues of purity and wisdom.

Whatever the myth or legend, Brighid still plays an important role in the lives of many Britons. Her festival is celebrated on February 1, the Pagan commemoration of Imbolc, and the welcoming back of the Virgin aspect of the Goddess. In honor of this auspicious occasion, young maidens gather, dressed in white and carrying corn-dollies made in her image. There are candlelight processions, purifications, and blessings, as well as fertility games and much feasting and merrymaking.

Correspondences

Archetypes	Virgin, Divine Bride
Expressions	Inspiration, healing, fertility
Element	Fire
Nature	Sustainer, creator, artist, healer
Associations	Minerva, Danu, Ana
Symbols	Bell, spindle, flame, well, rainbow, bag of healing herbs, candle, swan, snake, cow, ewe/lamb, cockerel, eternal flame
Colors	Blue, white, yellow, gold
Number	19



Brighid

Plants/Foods	Milk, bread, jasmine, wheat, honey, eggs, rosebud, blackberry, rosemary, hyssop, orange, apple blossom
Places	Wells, mounds of earth, Isle of Avalon
Misc.	Feast day: February 1 (Imbolc)

The Daghdha (The Good God, Mighty One of Knowledge)

The Daghdha (Dagda), the greatest of the Irish gods, was associated with wisdom and considered to be omnipotent—the true father figure. He is usually pictured as potbelly, ugly, and coarse, wearing a short tunic, exposing his buttocks. His imprudent appearance may have been created to mask his real inner powers and abilities.

In his position of primal father deity, the Daghdha brings to life two of the Celts' most valuable magical tools: the cauldron and staff. The Daghdha's cauldron dispensed endless satisfaction through a perpetual supply of food. The club or staff he carried brought life with one end and death with the other, suggesting the polarity of power. Both symbolic tools appear again in medieval texts about the Holy Grail and the legends of King Arthur.

Along with his other attributes, the Daghdha had an enormous appetite for life's physical pleasures. One myth reveals that just before the second battle of Magh Tuiredh, the Daghdha's Fomhoire adversaries encouraged him to eat a great amount of porridge. This was no average bowl of cereal—it consisted of eighty cauldrons full of oats, milk, and fat topped with whole sheep, pigs, and goats. Once finished with this tasty repast, the Daghdha made love to a Fomhoirean woman. She was so impressed with his sexual prowess that she agreed to help him and turned her magical powers against her own people. In another myth, on the eve of Samhain, just before battle, the Daghdha made love to the fierce Morrigan as she stood astride the river Unius.

The Daghdha was both the defender and nourisher of his people. His club could strike a man dead with one end and bring him back to life with another. His cauldron brought physical refreshment as well as spiritual satisfaction. He was the unquestionable king: strong, sexually potent, fierce in battle, and passionate toward his people.

Correspondences

Archetypes	All Father, King
Expressions	Strength, wisdom
Element	Earth
Nature	Passionate, potent, all-knowing, skilled
Association	Sucellos
Symbols	Cauldron, club or staff, torc, pig, goat, harp, cup, tunic, rope or cord, triple spiral

Colors	Brown, yellow, gold, green, russet
Numbers	1, 8
Plants/Foods	Oats, wheat, barley, milk, pig, goat, oak, nuts, patchouly, rye, vervet, quince, primrose, potato, rhubarb
Places	Sidhe-mounds, hollow hills, mountains
Misc.	The eve of November 1, or Samhain, is associated with the Daghdha due to its death and rebirth aspect

Lugh (Shining One)

Lugh is the shining god of light; he is a warrior, sorcerer, and master of all crafts. He belongs to the Ulster Cycle and is related by birth to both the Tuatha De Danann and their enemies, the Fomorians. He was a sun god; the summer festival of Lughnasadh on August 1 is celebrated in his honor.

In myth, Lugh appears at Tara (the royal court of Nauda, king of the Tuatha De Danann). When the guard at the royal gate asked Lugh the name of his craft, Lugh replied that he was a carpenter. The guard told Lugh that the court already had a carpenter. Lugh then said he was a smith. On learning that there was already a smith, Lugh said he was a warrior. Lugh kept naming crafts, including harpist, poet, historian, and sorcerer, and the guard kept saying that the posts were already filled. Finally, Lugh announced that indeed he was master of all these crafts. He demanded to meet with Nauda. When Lugh approached the king, he asked Nauda if he had any one person who, as he, was master of all these skills. The king admitted there was no one with such talent and admitted Lugh to the court.

Once Lugh became a member of the court, he encouraged Nauda to stand up to the Fomorians. In turn, Nauda relinquished his kingship to Lugh who orchestrated the military campaign against the Fomhoireans. In preparation for battle, Lugh hired three craftsman-gods to forge a magic spear, slingshot, boat, and sword. During the ensuing fight, Lugh killed Balor, the king of the Fomhoireans, with his slingshot.

In his aspect of "the Shining One," Lugh represented the power of good or light overcoming the power of evil or darkness. The constant battle between good and evil is a popular theme in Celtic legends, as it helps to illustrate morals, ethics, and proper conduct. Because tribal life was difficult, correct action and just behavior were important.

Correspondences

Archetype	Warrior God
Expression	Craftsman



Lugh

Element	Fire
Nature	Able, artistic, defender of light, honorable
Associations	Mercury, Daghdha
Symbols	Spear, slingshot, raven, boat, sword, caduceus, ram, cock, tortoise, forge, all musical instruments
Colors	Gold, yellow, silver, red, orange
Numbers	1, 4
Plants/Foods	Corn, bean, bittersweet, blackberry, bergamot, sunflower, oranges, apples, ale, marigold, cornbread and barley soup, benzoin, cinnamon
Places	Fields, sidhe, hills, river
Misc.	Feast day: August 1, Lughnasadh; established in the memory of Lugh's foster mother



Cerridwen

Cerridwen (The Initiator)

Cerridwen, associated with Astarte or Demeter, is the Celtic mother goddess of the moon and grain. She is especially known for her fearsome death totem, a white corpse-eating sow. Cerridwen's harvest celebrations express her ability to both give life and take it away.

Cerridwen is also known as the goddess of inspiration and knowledge because of her inexhaustible cauldron¹ in which she brewed a magic draught called *greal*. This draught would give inspiration and knowledge to any who drank it.

Cerridwen's concepts are expressed clearly in the myth about Gwion Bach. In the myth, some liquid from Cerridwen's cauldron spilled onto the young boy's finger and gave him the gift of knowledge. Because the liquid was meant for someone else, Cerridwen became angry and relentlessly pursued Gwion. In his attempt to hide, Gwion changed into different creatures, but so did Cerridwen. Finally, Gwion turned himself into a grain of wheat and hid in a pile of grain. Cerridwen turned herself into a hen and swallowed the grain. Nine months later, she gave birth to a male child. Immediately, Cerridwen set the baby adrift upon the river. He was later discovered and in time became the great bard, Taliesin.

Even though all goddesses manifest three phases of ability, they usually have one phase that is predominately expressed over the other two. In the case of Cerridwen, her mother phase is the one most often invoked. For this reason, Cerridwen's mother phase provides the most effective form of her energy for ritual use.

Correspondences

Archetypes	Crone, Initiator
Expression	Mother of inspiration
Elements	Earth, water
Nature	Inspiration, cunning, protectiveness, wisdom
Associations	Astarte, Demeter, Medusa
Symbols	Cauldron, cup, sow, hound
Colors	Silver, white, green
Numbers	3 and any combinations of 3
Plants/Foods	Corn, barley, helbore, patchouly, belladonna
Places	Woods, water's edge
Misc.	Samhain, winter and harvest festivals, are celebrated in her honor

Cernunnos (The Horned One)

Cernunnos means horned one and this god appears to be the Celtic god of vegetation, fertility, and the underworld. Cernunnos was the pre-Christian stag god, Lord of the Beasts, and master of woodland animals. On the famous Gundestrup Cauldron, he is depicted with ram's horns, holding a serpent and surrounded by animals. To early hunters and warriors, horns were a symbol of strength, power, and virility. Serpents were important because they symbolically represented the concept of regeneration.

Cernunnos is often pictured as a half-man, half-beast with horns. This image alludes to his fecundity as well as presents him as the virile guardian of the portals to the underworld. Cernunnos ushered those seeking transformation into the mysteries.

Little if any mention of Cernunnos exists in myths and legends because he was not a warrior god, but a god of the country and common people. Few peasant gods, including Cernunnos, would have found their way into the songs, ballads, and myths the nobility preserved.

Cernunnos, like most horned gods, was concerned with the earth and human life's parallels to the earth's rhythms and cycles. Of prime importance to his role in the community was the idea of growing and becoming strong to ensure the survival of life and the land. Though these concepts may seem unimportant today, their implications can still be applied and used symbolically.



Cernunnos

Correspondences

Archetypes	Guardian, Regenerator
Expression	Father of life

Element	Earth
Nature	Fertility, observant, generous, sensible
Associations	Herne, Silvanus
Symbols	Torc necklace, horns, cornucopia, stang, stag, ram, serpent, dog
Colors	Red, orange, forest green, brown
Number	6
Plants/Foods	Wild boar, deer, benzoin, bay, stew, mistletoe, wild honey, oak, beer and ale
Places	All woods, forests, groves
Misc.	Feast days: September 9 and the beginning of the New Year



Hecate

Hecate (Queen of Night)

To the Greeks, Hecate was one of the oldest embodiments of the triple moon goddess. She held power over the heavens, earth, and the underworld, where she was in control of birth, life, and death. Representing her triple qualities, she possessed the key, rope, and double-edged dagger. The key unlocked the door to the underworld, opening the way to the mysteries and secrets of knowledge and the afterlife. The rope represented the umbilical cord of rebirth and renewal, the connection between humanity and the Goddess. The double-edged dagger symbolized her power and ability to cut through delusion.

Hecate was the giver of visions, magic, and regeneration.

She could grant the ability of second sight and teach those seeking the deepest secrets of magic. Hecate and her lover Hermes were the guardians at the gates of the underworld, easing the transition from this life to the next.

Because of her role as guardian at the gateway between the worlds, Hecate was associated with crossroads. When one reaches a crossroad, as in death, it is possible to see what lies ahead as well as what has gone before. Crossroads have long been considered a place where the physical world and the otherworld intersect. They were symbols of the transition between this life and the afterlife, and therefore a good place to contact deity. Altars and obelisks were placed at crossroads in honor of Hecate and offerings were left there in order to win her favor.

In Greece, Hecate was one of the feminine trinities. Although she was characterized as having all three aspects, her Crone, or underworld, aspect was most emphasized. Because of her association with the underworld, Hecate was called on in rites of divination, magic, and consultation with the dead.

While Hecate walked outdoors, her worshipers gathered inside to eat "Hecate suppers" in her honor. At these gatherings, people shared magical knowledge and

the secrets of sorcery. When the supper was over, the leftovers were placed at the crossroads as an offering to Hecate and her hounds of death.

Because Hecate was also the goddess of the moon, she was also a goddess of the earth. She ruled the spirits of the dead and possessed the powers of regeneration. As queen of the underworld, she could hold back the spectral hordes from the living if she chose. Consequently, Greek women would call on her for protection before they left their homes. They would also place images of Hecate at their doors to let unwanted spirits know that all who lived in the house were under her protection.

Correspondences

Archetype	Queen of the Underworld
Expression	Death Crone
Elements	Water, earth
Nature	Regenerator, protector, sorceress, psychic
Association	Artemis
Symbols	Moon, besom, crossroads, triangle, bow and arrow, key, cross, sword or dagger, rope, torch, hound, bear, lion, snake, horse
Colors	Black, dark blue, silver, white
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Cypress, alder, poplar, yew, poppy, almond, moonwort, mugwort, myrrh, civet, hazel, jasmine, lily, patchouly, garlic, belladonna, hemlock, mint, palm date, monkshood or wolf's bane, corn
Places	Crossroads
Misc.	Feast day: August 13

Hermes, Mercury (Messenger)

Hermes was the god of communication, commerce, twilight, and the wind. His Greek name suggests movement so people viewed him as a guardian of travelers. They placed his image where country roads branched and at the crossroads in towns. People also believed that he escorted the souls of the dead to the underworld.

Hermes was the son of Zeus and the nymph Maia and was born in a cave while the gods and humans slept. Soon after his birth, he displayed his mischievous sense of humor by stealing his brother Apollo's celestial cattle. Hermes slipped away in the night and found the divine herd. To confuse his brother, Hermes placed enormous sandals on his feet and made the cows walk backward to a secret hiding place. Through divination, however, Apollo discovered the truth and seized Hermes, bringing him before Zeus. Hermes' defense was so skillful and spirited that Zeus ruled there should be a friendly settlement between the brothers.

Apollo reclaimed his cattle but remained annoyed with Hermes and continued to reproach him bitterly. As a peace offering, Hermes made Apollo a lyre out of a

turtle shell, ox hide, and sheep gut. When Apollo heard the music that came from this magical instrument, his anger died. He was so delighted with his gift that he gave Hermes a golden wand in return—a prototype of the caduceus—and entrusted him with his heavenly herd. Thus, Apollo became the god of music and Hermes the protector of flocks.

Because of his expressiveness and eloquence, Zeus also made Hermes the god of the spoken word. Hermes was honored by this highly valued position because it is through speech that exchanges are made, gallantries expressed, and knowledge conveyed. As with everything, however, this position had its negative side: lying, disguised truth, and confusion. For this reason, Hermes also became seen as a divine trickster.

Correspondences

Archetype	Divine Messenger, Divine Trickster
Expression	Benefactor of humanity
Element	Air
Nature	Articulate, quick-witted, brilliant, imaginative
Associations	Mercury, Thoth
Symbols	Caduceus, cow, flute, goat, lyre, crossroads, staff, tortoise, wings, feathers, cup, lamb, purse, sandal
Colors	Yellow, orange, silver
Number	4
Plants/Foods	Cake, honey, lamb, olive, palm, almond, May apple, orange, clover, lavender, lily of the valley, lemon verbena, pecan, mace
Places	Caves, crossroads, mountains
Misc.	Festival days: February 4 and April 24

Demeter (Mother Earth)

Demeter was the daughter of Kronos and Rhea and belonged to the family of eminent Olympians. She was associated with corn, vegetation, fertility, and the fruitful earth. As the goddess of vegetation, she was the founder of agriculture and the civic rite of marriage. Her mysteries, called the “Thesmophoria,” were held each April and her cult center was at Eleusis, south of Athens.

Demeter had several consorts, including Zeus and Poseidon. In the form of a bull, Zeus tricked her and laid with her, making her the mother of Persephone.

Demeter loved her daughter above all else. One day when Persephone was picking flowers with her friends, she noticed a narcissus of striking beauty. As she went to pick it, the earth opened and Hades seized Persephone, dragging her into the depths of the underworld.

Demeter, hearing her daughter's cries for help, rushed to her aid but could not find her. In her dismay, Demeter renounced her divine duties and left the Earth until such time as her daughter was returned. The goddess' exile made the Earth barren. Because Zeus was responsible for order in the world, he demanded that Hades return Persephone. However, because Persephone had already eaten some pomegranate seeds, binding her to the underworld, a compromise had to be reached. It was decided that Persephone would return to the Earth with the first flower of spring and return to the underworld with the first seed of fall.

At Eleusis in Crete, Demeter's temple was raised and the Eleusian Mysteries began. In September and October, the candidates for initiation would purify themselves in the sea. They would form a procession and walk the path from Athens to Eleusis, arriving at the temple by nightfall. Once within the sacred grounds, the secret initiations took place. These initiations were called mysteries because the system was a closely guarded secret.



Demeter

Correspondences

Archetype	Earth Mother
Expression	Patroness of the mysteries
Element	Earth
Nature	Loving, productive, beautiful, fertile
Association	Ceres
Symbols	Basket, bull, scepter, torch, cow, box, well, corn, water jug
Colors	Yellow, orange, gold, green
Numbers	3, 9
Plants/Foods	Corn, barley, honey, wheat, pennyroyal, poppy, all harvest fruit and grain, cornbread, beans, rose, wax plant, beef
Places	Fields, farms
Misc.	September 23 begins the first day of the "Greater Eleusian Mysteries" in honor of Demeter and her daughter

Synopsis

When looking to the gods and goddesses of early Europe, it is important to understand their historical development—even though this may seem irrelevant in today's world. These extraordinary beings were created for a reason and therefore have a purpose. Their myths and legends helped our ancestors understand the phenomena of celestial movement and seasonal change and provided guidance in the transitions from life to death. Whatever the situation, a god or goddess could be petitioned for help and advice. The security of knowing a superior being was in charge made life much less frightening.

As stated earlier, the Celts were an agricultural people and, because of this, the seasonal changes were an important part of their life. Because of their affiliation with the land, most of their gods and goddesses align with the solar festivals such as Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh, and Samhain. It is easy to integrate Celtic deities into modern earth religions because of the deities' like to natural cycles.

The Greeks and Romans, however, were more cultured and led an urban lifestyle. Where the Celts were pragmatic and concerned with fighting and survival, the Greeks and Romans were romantic and interested in philosophy and statecraft. These differences led to disparate viewpoints about deity and the practice of ritual. Thus, dissimilarities in the contrasting characteristics and energy levels exist between the Celtic and Greco-Roman gods and goddesses. These differences do not imply that one pantheon is better than the other, but presents a variety of options.

One of the most important aspects to consider when choosing a deity to work with is their fundamental energy level. This is especially important with the gods and goddesses of Europe as they represent such divergent lifestyles. A person who is refined and artistic and wishes to enhance his or her talents should consider a deity with a similar type of energy. A Greek or Roman deity would be a good choice for this person. However, a Celtic deity would probably be a better choice for a person who is inclined to the robust, earthy, outdoors lifestyle.

When looking for a god form with which to work, consider your feelings about the god's culture. If you are unable to relate to his or her society's fundamental customs, then you will probably be uncomfortable with that society's deities as well.

ENDNOTE

1. This cauldron, called Amen, is considered to be the symbol of life, death and regeneration. The cauldron is symbolic of the womb and its creation process.

Those Who Ever Shine Brightly

*God who creates and is nature, is very difficult to understand,
but his is not arbitrary or malicious.*

Albert Einstein, words carved above the fireplace
in Fine Hall, Princeton, New Jersey

Supplementary Gods and Goddesses

The deities in this chapter display a unique richness of character and, within their specific cultural environment, are commonly recognized as being a dominant force. These deities have been given the same attention to detail as was afforded the gods and goddess previously discussed. However, the introductory section has been shortened because it does not correspond to previously considered areas of tradition.

A deity does not need to come from a traditional pantheon in order to be used effectively in spiritual practice. The affinity you feel for a particular god or goddess should be the criterion for your choice. Many lesser known gods and goddesses work as well, if not better, than the more popular ones promoted by the general Neo-Pagan voice. Choose a deity according to its ability to function within your life rather than relying on the standards set by others.

Additional Choices of Deity



Two Statues of Ishtar

Ishtar and Enki

The gods and goddesses from Mesopotamia are some of the oldest known. Their mysteries and spiritual significance have inspired countless myths, poems, and invocations. Because the Babylonians were an urban people and kept written records, it is possible to access the power and potential of these deities who reigned thousands of years ago. Many of the customs and beliefs of the Babylonians have survived, including the idea that the temple is the house or home of the god; the enactment of the sacred marriage; and the ritual celebration at the time of harvest.

It is only a matter of retracing the steps of our ancestors to find ways of approaching and using their gods or goddesses.

Ishtar (Morning Star)

In Babylonian scripture, Ishtar was called the Light of the World, Hierodule of Heaven, Leader of Hosts, and Opener of the Womb. The Sumerians also knew her as the Lady of Battles and considered her valiant among the goddesses. She was the goddess of the morn and goddess of the evening, the divine personification of the planet Venus, and the dispenser of the never failing waters of life.

Ishtar's image and role as the Hierodule of Heaven comes from the Neolithic idea of the Great Mother as procreation itself. This idea of procreation augments the concept of virginity and the true power of the goddess. To our ancestors, virginity was not a physical condition but rather the ability to maintain a constant state of creativity. Creativity and the ability to transform empower the essence of the feminine principle and our concept of goddess.

Fertility and all aspects of creation were Ishtar's domain. Sacred prostitution was an integral part of her cult and was looked upon with respect. Prostitution, like many things over the span of time, has been misinterpreted. The original meaning of the word *prostitute* was "to stand on behalf of" and was sacred work for a woman. Through sexual intercourse with the priestesses of Ishtar's temple, men experienced the state of bliss associated with the divine union. Prior to Christianity, sex and giving birth were considered channels through which the gods' divine energy poured. To be a temple prostitute was to validate and strengthen, or stand on behalf of, the highest potentials of the goddess herself, those of sacred union and creation.

With her attributes of love and beauty, Ishtar was also a goddess of life and death. In Babylonia as well as in old European cultures, no separate image of a “terrifying” goddess of death and destruction existed. These images were connected because life and death were intertwined and considered to be two aspects of the whole. Ishtar was identified with both the destructive and the nurturing powers of life. She could bring forth a bountiful harvest or destroy it through the power of the storm. Because of her awesome powers over the forces of nature, in time Ishtar became a war goddess favored by victorious kings.

Even today Ishtar’s image can be seen in many works of art, including Assyrian cylinder seals, vases, and friezes. She is easy to recognize because of her symbols, which always appear with her: the eight-pointed star, the crescent moon, and the vessel containing the waters of life. At times, she is also shown holding a staff upon which two serpents intertwine, again reminiscent of her duality. Many times, she is depicted with the lunar horns of a crescent moon on her head, showing her to be a descendent of the ancient goddess who originally was the sky, earth, and underworld.

Correspondences

Archetype	Virgin Queen
Expressions	Divine harlot, principle of justice
Elements	Water, air
Nature	Loving, astuteness, propensity
Associations	Venus, Isis, Virgin Mary
Symbols	Eight-pointed star, crescent moon, caduceus, rainbow, rosette, water jug, double-headed ax, torch, tablets of law (called the Me), cow, lion, sparrow, snake, dove
Colors	Blue, green, sapphire blue
Numbers	8, 14
Plants/Foods	Apple, olive, sycamore, cedar, date palm, violet, corn, barley, orchid, rose, foxglove, dates, grapes, eggs, figs, raisins, beer
Places	Sacred wells, fountains, springs, lakes, rivers
Misc.	March 28 was the beginning of an eight-day festival and celebration in honor of Ishtar

Enki (Lord of the Earth)

In Sumeria, Enki was the organizer of life on earth and ruled destiny. He came from Dilmun, the land of copper, where he slept beside his virgin wife. When she asked for life to be brought into the world, Enki mated with her. Their daughter became the source of all life. His wife suggested that Enki copulate with his granddaughter in order to bring forth all plant life.

Enki was the God of great understanding, a magician and master of all practical knowledge who spent his time making up for the mistakes of the other gods.

At his height of popularity, Enki was the possessor of the “Me,” the tablets containing the elements of social life and civilization. The goddess Inanna wanted the Me for her own city of Uruk because they reflected justice and made the city of the holder superior. She journeyed to Eridu, Enki’s city, and ate a banquet with him. He offered her the Me and she took them back with her. Enki regretted his decision in giving her the tablets, and tried to get them back. Six times, Enki sent fearsome monsters to bring back the Me; each time they failed. In the end, Enki conceded defeat and forgave Inanna because he was an intelligent god, always thoughtful and sensible.

In spite of the story above, Enki succeeded in all of his undertakings. Enki taught early humans to fish and make garments. He was the patron of carpenters, stonecutters, and goldsmiths. He instructed humanity in the arts and taught people about farming, architecture, magic, and the law.

Correspondences

Archetype	Creator God
Expression	Divine Craftsman
Elements	Earth, water
Nature	Thoughtful, sensible, creative, understanding
Associations	Ea, Ptah, Lugh
Symbols	Me, copper, brush, wand, chisel, hammer, knife, melting pot, carving tools, crown, lahama, clay, staff
Colors	Gold, green, russet
Number	1
Plants/Foods	Apples, oranges, barley, wheat, fish, flour, tamarisk branches, cedar, juniper, aromatic resins, eggs, figs, raisins, beer
Places	Wells, underground springs, ocean, all waterways
Misc.	The greatest festival honoring Enki was that of the New Year, which took place during the first eleven days of Nisan, the month of the Spring Equinox

Erzulie and Damballah Wedo

The Voudoun religion comes from an African heritage transported to the New World with the slave trade. Voudoun is a living religion and a system of magic that has evolved, progressed, and matured through the centuries. Voudoun, much like Santería, has incorporated Catholic ideology into its system as well as aligned its deities, known as the Loa, with many Catholic saints. The Voudoun religion’s prime objective is to contact and communicate with the Loa to gain information and wisdom that will help the individual lead a better life. Contact and communication are accomplished through elaborate rites that usually culminate in possession of the celebrant by one of the Loa. Although most people find possession an unusual practice, to Voudoun believers it is common and considered the principal reason for ritual.

Erzulie (Maitresse Erzulie—Haitian Virgin)

Erzulie is the goddess of the independent, fulfilled woman. She is the mistress of love, marriage, beauty, abundance, music, and art. All acts of romantic love and pleasure are her delights. She is seen as being fabulously rich and moves in an atmosphere of luxury and refinement. She likes jewelry and perfume and wants everything meticulously clean, as she is vain about her appearance and surroundings.

In Voudoun, Erzulie is the divinity of dreams, the Goddess of Love, and the muse of beauty. She is the mother of myth and gives meaning to what life holds in secret. She is all that is seductive. Because she can be both vengeful and loving with those who grace her presence, she is also mysterious.

Erzulie is the Haitian/Voudoun Goddess of Love, much like Oshun is in the Yoruba/Santería pantheon. Both goddesses are sacred harlots, like Ishtar, and are similar to Aphrodite or Venus.

Erzulie, like Oshun, is a goddess of fresh water, lakes, rivers, and streams. Water is necessary to life and pleasure and is both refreshing and dangerous. Because of her association with water, Erzulie can control human's movements. Water provides commerce, lush vegetation, and food from its dark depths—all of which are essential to Haitian life.

The goddess also governs those things that make life worth living. Erzulie's petitioners call on her to bring love into their lives, help acquire money, and find husbands for their daughters.

In Haiti, Erzulie is associated with the Catholic Saints the Virgin Mary and Our Lady of Charity. In every Voudoun sanctuary, a room or corner of a room is dedicated to Erzulie. In her area, her special items and objects are kept ready for use during ritual.

Correspondences

Archetype	Virgin Mistress
Expression	Eloquence
Elements	Earth, water
Nature	Loving, passionate, lusty, vain, wealthy
Associations	Virgin Mary, Oshun, Venus, Aphrodite
Symbols	Fan, rattle, mirror, comb, shells, peacock feathers, bells, jewelry, boat, scarf, three wedding bands, gold, peacock, vulture, parrot
Colors	Yellow, coral, pink, red
Number	5
Plants/Foods	Pumpkin, orange, honey, cinnamon, allspice, clove, nutmeg, basil, white wine, creme de menthe, champagne, French pastry, rum, sweet fruit, candy, yellow or pink rose, lily, honeysuckle, white hen and quail

Places	River, riverbank, lake, stream, all waterways
Misc.	Feast Day: September 8; Tuesdays and Thursdays are her days

Damballah Wedo (The Good Serpent of the Sky)

Damballah Wedo is the personification of the DA, the universal current of psychic power. He is the dynamic of pure action, of which his own movement is a graphic representation. He is the great father: benevolent, paternal, and compassionate; his followers come to him for blessings as well as for protection.

Damballah is the positive force that encircles the universe; he has no malevolent sense. He stands for the powerful dead who lived too long ago to be remembered. He existed before the mythic time and before the world fell into trouble. Damballah is at the top of the spiritual hierarchy and is the oldest and most respected of the Voudoun Loa.

All trees are resting places for Damballah. Being both a snake and aquatic deity, he rests among the branches in the marshes, springs, and rivers. He moves between the land and the water, as snakes do, generating life with his coiling movements. Like the snake which can survive in the hottest and most arid terrain, Damballah represents the will to live and remain vital in an inhospitable environment.

Damballah is pictured as a snake arched in the path of the sun. Sometimes, half the arch is composed of his female counterpart Ayida Wedo, the rainbow. Together, Damballah and Ayida represent the ultimate totality of sexual unison. They encompass the cosmos and are pictured as intertwined serpents coiled around the world egg.

As the coiling, sinuous snake, Damballah is seen as the life force that unites the past, present, and future. He is the serpent that gives up his skin in order to recreate himself. Voudoun practitioners see this recreation as an example of how they should be flexible and adapt to whatever the future brings.

Correspondences

Archetype	Cosmic Force
Expression	Power of regeneration
Elements	Water, earth
Nature	Expression, power, superiority, sovereignty
Association	St. Patrick
Symbols	Asson, bell, staff, snake, wand, cosmic egg, rooster, rams, calabash, sun, rattle
Colors	Red, white
Number	4
Plants/Foods	Apples, bananas, eggs, cornmeal, palm, cola, cola nuts, white flour, white cake, milk, powdered sugar, bone marrow, coconut, yams

Places
Misc.

Trees, marshes, creeks, rocks
March 17 and Thursdays are devoted to Damballah

The Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ

Without a doubt, these two deities are the most widely recognized of all. Because Christianity is one of the world's largest and most regularly practiced religions, the spiritual prominence of Mary and Jesus is obvious, as is their value and worth. Unfortunately, for the most part Christianity has turned these engaging deities into paragons of perfection far beyond the reach of mortals. For centuries, the church has maintained that the only ways to reach Jesus and Mary were by way of pulpit and priest. This is unfortunate because many people have benefited from their energy and presence. Whether an individual is Christian or Pagan, these deities offer power and potential when their intention is fully realized.

Virgin Mary (Queen of Heaven, Mother of God)

The Virgin Mary is unique. She has been bestowed with extraordinary powers and set apart from all other human beings because she is the mother of god. However, the Christian church does not consider her to be divine. Mary has been denied the status of goddess because the Church refuses to acknowledge the feminine aspect of deity. This denial is a shame because the Virgin Mary fulfills all the qualifications of a goddess. She is omnipotent, immortal, savior, protector, and promoter of fertility. She serves in the same capacity as goddesses have for thousands of years, and she provides miracles, presentations, and hope for those devoted to her.

The Mary myth relates how Gabriel, an angel, visited Mary in Nazareth, telling her she would conceive and bear a male child whom she would call Jesus. The child, Gabriel told her, would be called the Son of God, given the throne of David, and reign over the House of Jacob; his kingdom would endure forever. Mary was doubtful. She was betrothed to Joseph but not married to him and did not see how she could possibly be with child. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit was upon her and that God would overshadow her doubt. Mary consented. Joseph, though uncertain, placed his faith in God as well. The angel's visitation becomes the foundation of the immaculate conception and Mary's role as coredeemer in some Christian theology.

Mary's high standing within Christianity seems to stem from her vow to abstain from sexual intercourse. By abstaining, she had, in the eyes of the Church, refused to fall into sexual indulgence. Therefore, she remained pristine and whole physically; she was spiritually moral and superior to others of her station. Because of her purity, she became a channel through which the grace of God would flow to the earth.

Mary, as the Mother, has been associated with the concept of fertility. Because she conceived a child in such a miraculous manner, many believe she has the power to



Virgin Mary

bestow this gift on others. In Italy and Spain, newlywed couples travel to Mary shrines in hope of having a fruitful marriage. In gratitude for her blessings, they leave toys, baby clothes, and dolls.

Mary's connection with fertility extended past conception to growth, prosperity, and abundance. Around the eighteenth century, Mary became associated with spring and the month of May. Celebrations and festivals were held to honor her as the May Queen. In some areas, her devotees decorated her statue and carried it through flower-lined streets.

One tradition tells how a Mary shrine was built on the exact location of the Roman temple dedicated to the goddess Ceres. Here, the image of Mary, Santa Maria, is showered with corn, wheat, and other offerings on feast days that coincide with planting and harvesting. Even today in some areas, the first fruits, loaves of bread, and grain are brought into shrines to be blessed by the Virgin.

Whether orthodox theology wants to admit it or not, by all definitions Mary is a goddess. As with all goddesses, her roles have included those of virgin, bride, mother, and redeemer. Before Mary, this magnificent feminine force appeared in other guises, such as Kuan Yin, Isis, and Ishtar. Once accepted as a goddess, Mary's compassion can help bridge the gap between Christian and non-Christian faiths. As a Mother, she truly loves her children no matter what their race, color, or creed.

Correspondences

Archetype	Mother of God
Expression	Divine Virgin
Element	Air
Nature	Purity, spiritual, compassionate, loving
Associations	Isis, Ishtar, Kuan Yin
Symbols	Cross, heart, cup or grail, veil, rosary, dove, crown, cord, girdle, sword, staff, lamp, crescent moon
Colors	Blue, white
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Lily, myrrh, frankincense, myrtle, corn, barley, wheat, milk, honey, bread, fish, jasmine, palm, rice, marigold
Places	Cave, well, temple
Misc.	Lupercalia in February, the month of May, September 8, and July 2 are a few of the feast days celebrated for the Virgin Mary

Jesus Christ (The Son of God)

Jesus Christ is a model for Christian theology and an archetype of the greatest mystical ideal. The groundwork and foundation of the Christian faith were already in motion before the birth of Jesus. It was only a matter of time before the Jewish prophecy of a Messiah was fulfilled. However, ancient Jewish prophecy is not important or of interest here. What is important is the association and unification of concepts and deities into a central figure of worship.

From the mystical point of view, Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph in a stable or barn. When he was thirty years old, Jesus was baptized. During the ceremony, he allowed his mind and body to become a vehicle for the service of the highest god. This higher force worked through the body of Jesus for three years. At Jesus' crucifixion, the force departed. Jesus' life gave humans an example to follow whereby they offer their mind and body so that the Christ or divine spark within can manifest.

The figure of Christ aligns with and becomes a compilation of all previous solar savior deities. He assimilated the properties of Mithras, who was born on December 25 in a grotto and was seen to bestow everlasting life upon his followers. An inscription from one Mithraic sanctuary reads, "Us too you have saved by shedding of blood which grants eternity." It is interesting that initiation into the Mithraic mysteries was seen as a rebirth into the light.

Christ, as Apollo, was the personification of harmony. The urging to avoid extremes and excess was inscribed on the temple at Delphi, as was the commandment to "know thyself." Apollo was also known as a great healer and the god of light. The early Christians saw Jesus as the Logos, so the Greeks portrayed Apollo and Hermes as their Logos. It is essential to realize that Christianity was basically a Greek creation and, therefore, would naturally adopt some of the latter mythos into its teachings.

Even though Jesus appeared in a physical existence, his essential nature as Christ¹ was developed to exemplify the spiritual rather than the temporal. Because Christianity was a child of Pagan practice and Jewish law, naturally their savior god would incorporate those qualities so long revered. Jesus thus became the dying god, who descended to the realm of the dead to be resurrected and ascended into the light.

Jesus, as a man, rejected the material possessions of a corporeal world for the ultimate spiritual experience. He did this for the emancipation of his own divine spark and to serve as an example to his followers and all humanity. The fact that this man may be all myth and legend matters not; it is the intention, meaning, and purpose behind the story that becomes the standard for spiritual evolution. To find the



Jesus Christ

Christ within is to discover that invisible seed or divine spark that is a part of the totality of God and perfect it for reunion with its original source. The process is personal and has nothing to do with Christian dogma, political convention, or popular Pagan opinion.

Correspondences

Archetypes	Divine Savior, King of Kings, Light of the World
Expressions	Messiah, Good Shepherd, Messenger
Elements	Air, fire
Nature	Brilliant, charismatic, constant, honorable, radical
Associations	Sol Invictus, Mithra, Helios, Apollo, Dionysus
Symbols	Cross, Chi-Rho, sun, crown of thorns, lamb, cup or chalice, crooked staff, ciborium, monstrance, fish, star, cock, sacred heart
Colors	Red, purple, yellow, gold
Number	3
Plants/Foods	Balsam, olive tree and oil, palm, frankincense, bread, fish, wine, lily, all grains, grape, chrysanthemum, orange, chicory
Places	Caves, grottos, desert, flower gardens, church
Misc.	Festivals: Christmas, December 25; Palm Sunday; Good Friday; Easter, held on the first Sunday after the full moon following the Vernal Equinox; Ascension Day, forty days after Easter

Synopsis

Religion is about the worship of and communion with deity. It is the process of veneration and appreciation for the continuous multi-leveled arrangement of energies that flow through our universe. These energies transcend and eclipse human emotions, perception, and reasoning as they manifest through an endless continuation of vigilant gods and goddesses.

There are as many forms of deity as there are human beings on this earth. Each responds differently when called upon by the mere mortals they oversee. The gods and goddesses do not sit in judgment or condemn human vulnerability, nor do they love, hate, or get angry. These are human emotions, not divine attributes. However, the gods do respond to human supplication and need when properly approached.

The first step for those seeking true spiritual revelation is a firm faith and belief in the power and potential of deity. This can only be accomplished through a personal relationship with the gods themselves, so choice of deity becomes an important factor.

In selecting a god or goddess, you can approach the process in various ways. Take a good look at your racial and ancestral heritage. Looking into your heritage provides insight into your cultural conditioning. Use your personal interests or previous religious training to help you decide. Some people find it helpful to study ancient myths and legends, as these can inspire and encourage the searching soul.

Always remember the main purpose behind choosing a god or goddess: the desire to relate to divinity on an individual basis. Whether you choose to work with Isis, Chango, Kuan Yin, or Jesus, the choice is yours, and yours alone. Bringing the power and potential of a god and goddess into your life is an awesome experience; one that will provide joy and contentment for a long time. Some people's gods may be dead, but ours are not; they are only waiting for us to bid them welcome once again.

ENDNOTE

1. The Greek word for Christ, *Kristos*, means anointed; in Hebrew the word means messiah. The word *Christ* does not refer to any specific person; it is a title; the Logos of Infinities.

The Cauldron of Inspiration

*Where Symbol and
Spirit Unite*



Tools and Symbols of the Sacred

The symbol expresses or crystallizes some aspect or direct experience of life and truth, and thus leads beyond itself.

J. C. Cooper, *Traditional Symbols*

Whoever has the symbol has thereby the beginning of the spiritual idea; symbol and reality together furnish the whole.

Odo Casel, *Mysterium*, 1926

The Value of Symbols and Sacred Objects

Symbols are the fabric from which we form a fundamental understanding of life and our relationship to the universe. They are an intrinsic part of communication and experience, essential to all religious traditions. Whether symbols are created through associative or aesthetic reasoning, they convey in a nonverbal manner the presence of deity, higher wisdom, and spiritual awareness.

Religious art is the most dramatic and influential method of expressing a symbol's essence. Paintings, wood carvings, sculptures, and etchings illustrate divine beliefs and concepts. These artistically presented symbols address issues, intentions, and considerations through a silent presentation of ideology. Without effort, an individual's consciousness is automatically elevated to a realm of higher perception and understanding.

Religiously, as well as mundanely, symbols create a connection between the conscious and unconscious mind. They reveal and veil certain realities and truths,

according to each individual's level of understanding. Because of their ability to both unite and separate higher levels of consciousness, symbols have become the language of all sacred mystery and religious traditions.

Symbols have a life and energy of their own, and the medium in which they are expressed reveals their nature. A good example is feeling the passion of Christ that a vivid painting portrays; becoming quiet and meditative when in the presence of an elegant image of Kuan Yin; or feeling a sense of family and warm reflection when viewing a colorful holiday display. An individual's reaction to the energies and inherent meaning of the symbolic objects or articles displayed causes these emotions.

When common objects are converted into religious tools, they become sacred and represent spiritual thoughts and actions that imply higher spiritual values and sentiments. By coming in contact with a sacred object, attention is automatically directed from mundane thoughts to spiritual ones. This change in focus allows the individual to feel and explore other realms of awareness.

Objects become sacred tools when they portray spiritual intentions, ideas, and, in some cases, deity itself. Most importantly, sacred tools serve as channels of communication between the devotee and his or her personal deity. Once communication between an individual and a deity has begun, higher levels of consciousness are reached and personal potential increases.

The primary function of any religion is to connect, in an intimate sense, the individual with deity. This connection usually begins with the process of association between the external material world and the symbolic spiritual world. Once contact has been accomplished, even the vaguest sacred symbolism will unite the devotee with his or her god form. This unity establishes the line of communication that will, in time, reveal the higher spiritual concepts sought by the believer.

All religions and spiritual paths have symbology as their primary language. The mysterious and elusive quality of pure thought and the ultimate creative essence cannot be expressed verbally; these must be felt and recognized within. Once some stimuli has activated inner awareness, the individual's emotions are transformed into spiritual energy. This energy forms the translucent beam of light that both sends and receives messages from the ethereal planes. Symbols and tools become like the telephone—objects that make communication at a distance accessible and possible.

The Symbols of the Sacred

Co-Creation Spirituality advocates the use of traditional Wiccan/Pagan and some Christian symbolism within the context of ritual. However, to enhance the personal aspects of our system, we have added two new tools, the *Vessel of Creation* and the *Rod of Authority*, to our individual altars. These additions are personalized and designed to bring the individual into direct contact with the god and or goddess with whom he or she is working.

As Co-Creationists, we believe that daily personal meditation and worship is essential to spiritual development. We therefore, as individuals, keep and maintain our own sacred space, tools, and altars. By regularly affirming our personal communication with deity, we progress beyond the limits of structured communal worship. As a result, our members are religiously mature and radiate spiritual composure—which adds momentum to our group celebrations.

For both communal and personal worship, the following objects and tools represent, in some way, higher, spiritual ideals, concepts, and divinity. The tools described in this chapter are indispensable in our religion. As with all aspects of spirituality, including sacred objects and tools, no specific requirements exist. The significance, strength, and value of any object comes from personal interpretation. Decide for yourself what is appropriate to use. No two people will place the same value on the same object; and what may seem foolish to you, will become an important part of someone else's spiritual journey.

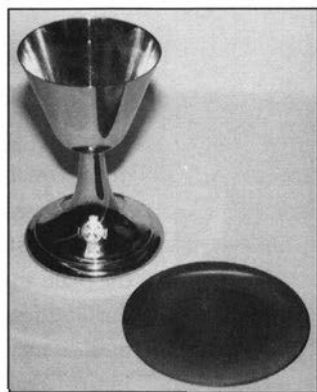
The Chalice or Grail

The Chalice is receptive and feminine in nature. It is restrictive and controlling because it contains the hidden mystery of life. By design it is emblematic of the womb, the Mother Goddess, and the ability to regenerate. These symbols probably account for its presence in so many ancient Egyptian and Babylonian temples and even Christian churches, as it was through the process of spiritual rebirth that an individual gained wisdom, inspiration, and enlightenment.

In most religions, the Chalice represents mystery, hope, and promise. It is open to observation, while only the surface of what it contains can be seen. One must delve deeply within to discover its secrets. The emotional factor of the unknown will create a powerful energy flow.

Because the Chalice will be used for the Rite of Union and to hold sacred wine for blessing, spare no expense in acquiring one. The only restrictions include the following: the Chalice must be opaque, as it contains the mystery of life, and it must be feminine in shape and design. The color, style, and texture should reflect your image of the Goddess.

The Chalice we use for our Sabbat celebrations (see photo) was purchased from a church supply store. It is eight inches high and gold-plated; it also has a matching paten for the Eucharist blessing. For our less formal rituals, such as Friday night church, we use a plain pewter chalice. The choice is up to the individual or group and depends on what you can afford. I feel that money should not be a factor when



Chalice and Paten

obtaining major working tools. Many ways to save money exist, if necessary, but altar tools are not the place to cut costs.

Paten

The Paten is a small, flat, circular silver or gold-plated dish, symbolic of the dish used during Jesus' Last Supper, on which he placed the bread of the Eucharist. You can use this small plate for spiritual offerings as well, but we use it strictly to hold the host or bread prior to blessing in the Rite of Redemption. The Paten is usually placed on top of the Chalice, covering the mystery within. When purchased in most church supply stores, the Chalice and the Paten usually come as a set, although the pieces can often be purchased separately. No matter what your tradition, these tools make a wonderful addition to the altar.



Athame

The Athame and Sword

The Athame and Sword are symbols of masculine strength, power, and potential. Countless myths have been developed about the young hero, wielding a magical weapon, coming to the rescue of lady, land, and ideal. Probably the best-known sword is Excalibur, the mighty sword of King Arthur given to him by the Lady of the Lake. As long as Arthur was in possession of the sword, he was invincible.

In most Wiccan/Pagan circles, the Athame and Sword represent the male and the God (whereas the Chalice represents the female and the Goddess). When the Athame or Sword, and Chalice are conjoined, their energy and force unite for the blessing of all those in attendance. In Co-Creation Spirituality, this unity is called the "Rite of Union" and is the most sacred point within the mass or ritual.

Because the Athame or Sword is masculine in nature, this symbolic weapon best serves those aspects of ritual involving power and protection. And a weapon it is when in the hands of the trained priest or priestess wielding it. Through the Athame or Sword, the priest or priestess focuses his or her personal power in order to banish all negative energies and create a sacred space for deity.

Traditionally, the Athame is a double-edged, black-handled knife about nine inches in length. Not everyone agrees upon this appearance, however. As previously mentioned, tools are symbols and their design and use will vary from one person to another. Remember that the tool that uplifts you is what you should be using.

My Athame has a natural wood handle and is about seven inches in length. The Athame used in our public church services (see photo) is about ten inches in length and solid brass. With the Athame, the shape and size are not important, but rather the

feelings and ability of the person using it. In time, all ritual tools take on an energy and force of their own, which complement and enhance the practitioner's potential.

The significance of the Athame and Sword is in their function as symbolic weapons capable of directing personal power. They have the inherent ability to help focus energy in a desired direction for a specific purpose. They help regulate as well as conduct the flow of internal expression toward a desired destination.

The Vessel of Creation

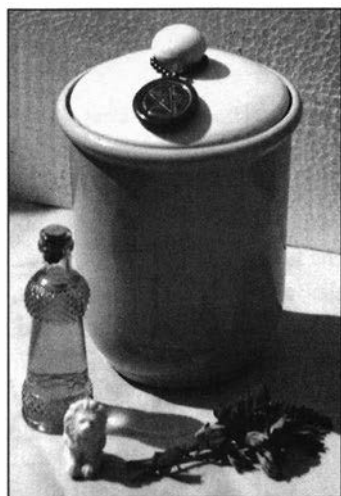
The ability to create or give birth belongs to the realm of the Goddess and the feminine aspect of nature. Through her power of restriction, the capacity to contain, the formation of thought becomes reality. From conception to delivery, the confines of the womb embrace, nurture, and protect the spark of life. Within this feminine vessel of creation, the mystery of life begins and develops.

In today's society—with its technology and scientific resolutions—the power of giving life is a mystery still. Even though it can be reproduced through laboratory processes, the components of its primary arrangement, those of the masculine and feminine elements, are needed. Once these elements have come together, they are still in need of containment in order to reproduce themselves. Whether in the physical womb or the mystical vessel, the system of rendering remains the same. Something must confine the energy until it is ready to manifest.

The idea of a vessel to contain the life-giving properties of the feminine aspect is not a new one. The Grail legends relate how the power of life can come by restricting feminine power in sacred cauldrons and holy wells. The ability to contain, energize, and bring forth a new presence, be it tangible or intangible, is the quest of humanity. We all want to manifest our desires in some fashion or another. This need is a requirement of survival.

The Vessel of Creation is a symbolic tool which helps an individual to transform thoughts into physical reality. Through the essential elements placed within the vessel, the Goddess' natural energy is attracted and drawn into the vessel itself. Once properly consecrated and charged, the vessel becomes a living representation of the Goddess and the feminine forces of nature. Learning how to work with this special tool will bring its power and potential to you.

The Vessel of Creation (see photo), besides being a representation of the Goddess force, also serves as an oracle of communication. Stones and tokens, which are symbolically etched and numbered, are kept in the Vessel. These special items relate to the



The Vessel of Creation

goddess you are working with and attract her energy to them. Through constant work and effort with these special objects, a link is formed between you and the goddess. In time, this link becomes a line of communications.

Throughout history, many religious systems have used special methods and tokens as a means of communicating with their gods. It only makes sense that if you are honoring, praying, and working with a specific god force you should be able to communicate with it. This force should be able to answer as well. It is difficult to build a rapport with another individual, let alone a god force, if there is only one way of communication.

How to Make the Vessel of Creation

First, choose a goddess with whom you will be working and learn everything you can about her. What major symbols, colors, herbs, flowers, plants, trees, and stones does your goddess prefer? Next, choose a container to serve as the vessel. Import stores are the best places to look for a vessel. These stores have a wide variety of jars, vases, bottles, and other suitable objects, which are reasonably priced and new. This is not the time to use a relic from an old aunt's attic, no matter how quaint it is. The container you choose must be new and free of vibrational buildup.

Carefully choose your container and the items that will be placed inside. Remember, this vessel is a representation and reflection of the goddess herself; each and every detail is of vital importance. To attract and maintain the energy level of the goddess within the vessel, everything associated with it must be in agreement.

Essential Requirements

The Vessel. Vases with large openings, ginger jars, and ceramic canisters work well. The vessel will need a lid, so choose something that comes with a covering or can easily be fitted with one. The container must be opaque and large enough to hold all the necessary items.

The Vessel Oracle Items

Along with the necessary empowering items, the Vessel also contains an oracle. This oracle consists of stones, symbols, and a reading cloth that allows you to speak directly with the goddess.

The Speaking Stones. To make the speaking stones, you will need nine fairly flat stones in the primary color of the goddess you are working with. (An example would be green for Ishtar or black for Hecate.) These stones will make up the major part of the oracle that will allow you to communicate directly with your goddess. Choose stones that are similar in shape and size and will fit into the vessel.

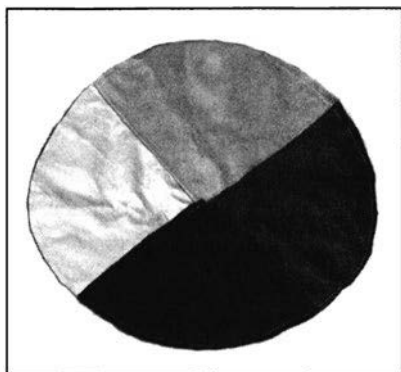
The Key Stones. These are four round, flat stones of a different color also associated with your goddess. If you are not using black or white as the color for your speaking stones,

use one or the other for the key stones. Whatever the color, these stones should be round, smooth, and flat so that one side can be painted.

The Totem. This is the last item needed to complete the oracle and should be the animal, bird, fish, or reptile that is connected to your goddess. It may be a miniature representation or it can be painted on a small disk of wood or stone. (For example, you could use a small hand-carved lion for Ishtar because that animal is her totem animal.)

The Oracle Reading Cloth. This is a circular piece of plain material with the four elements (Air, Fire, Water, Earth) marked on one side. Use the Reading Cloth to read the oracle and wrap the speaking stones.

To make the cloth, cut a thirteen-inch diameter circle from a piece of cloth. On one side, mark off four equal sections and color these accordingly. You will have a section for air (blue), fire (red), water (green), and earth (yellow). Use paint or sew colored cloth to the sections. Your finished product should look like the photo.



Oracle Reading Cloth

Wrap your speaking stones, key symbols, and totem in the oracle cloth and place them inside the Vessel. (Chapter 14 provides more information on the speaking stones.)

Vessel of Creation Fundamentals

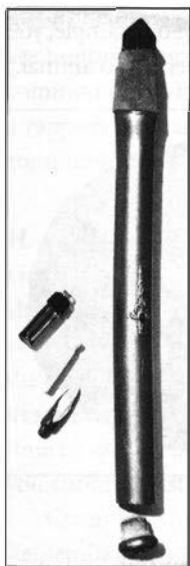
Other symbolic objects are placed in the vessel along with the oracle. They are used to attract and maintain the energy of the goddess' potential inside the Vessel.

The Natural Powers. These are herbs and plants that correspond to your goddess and naturally attract her energy and power. Select several plants to represent her different aspects; for example, flowers for the maiden; herbs for the mother; and woods to align with the crone. Make three separate bundles, tie with appropriate colored cord, and place inside the Vessel.

Sacred Fluid. The sacred fluid is symbolic of the feminine life force and is essential to attracting and maintaining the goddess' essence within the Vessel. The Sacred Fluid is made from pure spring water and your goddess' favorite herb.

You will need to buy a small (new) bottle, with a tight fitting cap, that will fit inside the Vessel. Thoroughly clean the bottle and fill it with spring water. Add a sprig of your goddess' favorite herb. Keep the bottle outdoors for three nights so it can absorb the energy from the moon.

Once your Vessel has been properly consecrated, the energized water will become activated. You can use it for anointing, mixing in other beverages, or for creating sacred space.



*The Rod of
Authority*

The Rod of Authority

Manifestation of desire is the intent of the masculine force of nature. Through the Rod of Authority, this basic fundamental concept is realized. With its phallic shape and hollow shaft, it provides the passageway for the seeds of potential to flow. All that is needed is a passive receptacle, such as the Vessel of Creation, to nourish and support it to maturity.

Looking at the rod in its most basic form, we can realize its importance. The rod is the basis of all measurement. It is essential to movement, as in transportation, because it forms the spokes and axle of the wheel. Rodlike antenna for radio and television communication allow global interaction. Rod-shaped pens, pencils, arrows, spears, and pipes make life easier and more accommodating now or in the past. These rod functions are of a masculine nature and indispensable to our daily activities.

One of the first things that comes to mind when looking at the Rod is its resemblance to the male reproductive organ, which can generate new life. Even though the Rod is a symbolic representation of this, it is still effective, proficient, and capable of creation. Whether the creation process is propagation of the race, bringing forth a desire, or heightening spirituality, it is no less an accomplishment. The Rod, with its hollow shaft, serves to deliver the seeds of creation from origination to manifestation.

The Rod has a twofold purpose. The first is to represent the masculine force of deity. The second is to provide a suitable receptacle to house this force. Once this force has been contained, it can be used for personal direction. Containing this force becomes obvious when the Rod is used in conjunction with the Vessel of Creation to manifest desire. In most cases, the phenomenon of divine union provides inner awareness, physical euphoria, and spiritual promise.

Additional attributes of the Rod include concepts of discipline and authority. Through discipline we learn to maintain and control the magnetism of ethereal potential. Authority is the result of discipline and establishes the individual's right to call on and work with the higher spiritual forces of the universe.

How to Make the Rod of Authority

Choose a god to work with and learn as much about the god as possible, including the plants, colors, objects, and symbols that best represent his nature.

Once you are in sympathy with your god, it will be easy to choose a suitable rod. The rod will need to be strong and hollow. Brass, copper, and silver tubing work well, as does heavy cane bamboo. If you choose a solid wood, drill through it or have someone do it for you. The rod must be completely hollow.

For my Rod (see photo), I chose a heavy cane bamboo, the kind found in most garden and import shops. Because I am working with Tammuz, a dying and resurrecting vegetation god, bamboo was a perfect choice. It is masculine in nature, phallic in shape, and dies every winter to return the following summer. The fact that it is naturally hollow was an added bonus.

Think carefully about what your god represents. If he is a solar deity, a brass or gold tube would be ideal. If he is of lunar energy, silver would work well. If he suggests death and rebirth, use bamboo or an appropriate corresponding wood.

Essential Requirements

The Rod. The hollow rod should be at least ten inches long and one inch in diameter with a shaft opening of three-fourths of an inch.

Once you have drilled and finished the rod portion, affix a suitable point to create the head of the rod. This point may be a crystal, stone, or wooden knob. The choice is yours, but it should reflect your god's personality and nature.

For my Rod, I chose a rutilated smoky quartz crystal. It is projective because of its rutilations and receptive because of its color. Because it is a crystal, it is masculine-, fire-, and solar-oriented.

The last item you will need is an end piece, which may be in the form of a cap or plug. You must be able to remove the end piece when needed, and it must cover the end opening.

Rod of Authority Fundamentals

The following symbolic objects also are placed in the Rod's hollow shaft. Align these items with your deity so as to attract and maintain his energy and force. These items represent, symbolically, the principles of creation.

The Natural Powers. These are herbs and plants that correspond to your god. Choose two and tie them with a small piece of appropriately colored string. I used wheat and bay tied with a thin, yellow thread.

The Sacred Fluid. The sacred fluid is symbolic of the masculine life force and is represented by scented oil. It is kept in a small vial placed inside the Rod. Make the Sacred Fluid from essential oils that are associated with your god; color it appropriately and place a sprig of his favorite herb or resin in the bottle. Once the oil is activated through the consecration of the Rod, it will be used for anointing the body and sacred objects during specific rituals.

The Active Force. For this you will need a pinch of salt, a small bit of earth, a stone or crystal sacred to your god, and a glass vial (small enough to fit inside the Rod). Pulverize the stone or crystal, mix it with the earth and salt, and put the mixture into the glass vial. Place the vial in a protected spot where it will receive direct sunlight for six days. When the Rod is consecrated, this mixture will be activated and used for purification, as an ingredient in incense, or for creating sacred space.

The Active Symbol. This is a small item special to your god's nature. It is put into the Rod and represents your god's unique abilities, qualities, and powers. My active symbol is a small handcrafted ear of corn, which represents fertility, abundance, rebirth, and vegetation.

Place the active symbol, oil, salt mixture, and herbs inside the rod and place the cap over the end. Be sure the cap is secure but can be removed as you will be working with the contents of the rod periodically.



The Cauldron

The Cauldron

The Cauldron is one of the oldest symbols of the Goddess. It represents her power of transformation and symbolizes the Great Mother Goddess and her womb of the earth. It comes to us from our prehistoric relatives and has managed to survive intact.

Nourishment, sustenance, and transformation are some of the Cauldron's inherent qualities. Much like the Grail, the cauldron is a symbol of life and death, birth and renewal. Cauldrons have also served as containers for magical potions and mystical spells, such as the Cauldron of Cerridwen with its powers of inexhaustibility, regeneration, and inspiration.

The Cauldron has many uses, both as a physical tool and as a symbol or representation of the Goddess. When the Staff (see below) accompanies it, the Cauldron represents the totality of life through the divine union of the god and goddess. Together, the Staff and Cauldron create their own altar where offerings to deity may be placed.

With a lit candle inside it, the Cauldron represents the animating force of life and serves as the focal point in seasonal rituals or rites of renewal. In the chapel at Our Lady of Enchantment, we have a large, black, cast-iron Cauldron (see photo). We keep a seven-day candle burning inside for the Goddess. For city dwellers who do not have fireplaces or backyard firepits, the Cauldron can be used as a place to burn petitions and herbal offerings.

The Staff

The Staff, like the Rod, represents masculine authority, dominion, and dignity. The Staff also symbolizes a disciple's journey toward his or her spiritual goal. This concept is openly displayed in Christian art. Most commonly, Christ, seen as the Good Shepherd, holds a staff and herds his flock of devotees toward God's intention.

The Staff is associated with magic power and knowledge, along with the quality of transformation. This transformation quality was exemplified in the Old Testament when Moses threw his staff at the Pharaoh's feet, and it turned into a serpent. Joseph of Arimathaea plunged his staff into the ground, and it grew into a tree. In Greece, Hermes' staff, in the form of a caduceus, heralded divine messages from the gods. The Egyptian Osiris used a staff in his position as judge of the dead.

The Staff is unique because it is symbolic and suggestive of performance by its stature and design alone. To convey its message, the staff does not have to be used, it only has to be present. It remains a symbol of skill in many traditional religions and mystical orders. Depending on its shape, size, and design, it distinguishes the neophyte from the adept.

The Staff should be made from a wood that is sacred to or held in high regard by your god. Its length should be the same as your height. The ground end should contain a piece of metal or stone that is associated with your god; the top should be phallic in shape. Color, markings, and decoration should be in keeping with your tradition and deity preference.

The Aspergillum and Censer

The aspergillum is used for purification, blessing, and dispelling of negativity. It is a small perforated globe that contains consecrated (holy) water. The aspergillum may also be made from sprigs of hyssop (which is traditional) or from your deity's favorite herb, plant, or tree. If made from a herb or tree branch, be sure there is enough greenery to retain water so the water may be sprinkled in a ritual manner. In our rituals, we use the aspergillum for blessing at the beginning of the benediction to all our rituals.

The censer is the vessel in which incense is burned in offering, prayer, and sacrifice to deity. It is usually made of brass, silver, or gold and has a chain or handle for carrying. The censer is used in traditions where incense carries the devotees' petitions to the gods or where it blesses and protects.

You will find a censer in church supply centers, New Age shops, and import stores. If possible, especially if you are starting out, purchase new tools and ritual items. It is much easier to cleanse a new object than something that has had years of negative vibrational buildup. Take the time, spend the money, and buy good tools the first time.



The Censer and Aspergillum

God and Goddess Statues

To emphasize your religious intentions, an image of your deity commands respect and consideration. A statue of the god and goddess on the altar emphasizes their presence and sovereignty—reasons why, throughout history, humanity has repeatedly fashioned images of gods. Humans want to physically behold their gods' glory.

A statue of your deity helps intensify invocations, personal petitions, and ritual. When you regularly perform acts of devotion before the statue, the raised energy is absorbed and compounded. Over time, the statue literally illuminates the area or room where it is kept. This illumination or energy accentuates the presence of the god or goddess and heightens the ritual experience.

When statues of gods and goddesses are displayed, they fascinate, enchant, and compel attention. These feelings are especially true when the image has been expertly sculptured with attention to detail. I have seen statues in museums that actually looked as if they were breathing.

Statues are wonderful symbols of deity as they physically represent archetypal energies. They come to us from the past and bring new meaning and purpose to the present. When images of the divine, along with their sacred tools, are incorporated into ritual, they elicit a change in consciousness. This transition from the secular to the spiritual is the objective of all religious philosophies. Visual aids and tools make the process easier.

There are many ways to work with statues of deity to develop their ability to absorb energy. By placing stones, herbs, and totems inside the statue itself, you increase the attraction of a specific energy. Draping the image with corresponding colored scarves and jewelry enhances its physical presence. The ritual washing and perfuming, along with the offering of candles, incense, and foods, seem to bring the image to life. These physical actions show love and respect to the god or goddess the statue represents.

We realize that the statue is not the god or goddess, but a representation of their being. However, like the Vessel of Creation, the image of the deity can become a container for their energy. Once this happens, devotion during worship or invocation will bring forth their presence.

The Rite of Consecration

The following simple ceremony allows you to remove negative thoughts and vibrations that might be attached to your tools. In the process, you will energize your tools with your positive feelings.

You will need your altar covered with a white cloth, two white candles, sandalwood incense and censer with a lighted charcoal in it, a small bowl of salt, a small bowl of water, and your tools.

1. Light the altar candles (right first, then left) as you say the following:

Let now the Lord and Lady of Life and Light be with me, guide me, and bless me this night.

2. Sprinkle some incense on the lighted coals. Pick up a tool, hold it in offering, and sprinkle salt and water over it in blessing as you say:

Let all negative thoughts and vibrations be driven from this tool. Let all impurities and unholy thoughts be cast forth. Let only my desires remain within from this moment on. So shall it be done in the name of the Lord and Lady.

Repeat this step for each tool.

3. Begin with your Athame (followed by each of the tools), hold it high in salute, then consecrate it with each of the four elements: pass it through the flame of the candle; the smoke of the incense; sprinkle some salt on it; sprinkle some water on it. For each tool, say the following (inserting the name of your god and goddess):

*By the power of the Lady _____
And by the power of the Lord _____
Do I bless and consecrate thee
Unto the path of righteousness
For all that brings life and light
Now and forever, so mote it be!*

4. Once you have blessed all the tools, take a few moments and, in your own words, thank the god and goddess. Ask them for their blessings on all you do.

Synopsis

Symbols, statues, and tools are visual aids that enhance and accentuate the different aspects of your spiritual work. Whether you are meditating, praying, or performing a special ritual, these objects create atmosphere, aid in concentration, and focus energy. Religious statues and symbols make contact with deity and changes of consciousness easy to accomplish; this is why they have been used throughout the centuries.

For personal reflection, the most significant expressions of deity are the Vessel of Creation and the Rod of Authority. With proper use, these tools become more than just symbols; they empower you with the ability to communicate directly with your god or goddess. They are the repositories of the dynamic energy you channel from divinity and, therefore, provide the substance of your spiritual intention. With them, you can travel to the heavenly spheres and retrieve the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding available only to those of vision.

For those who have an aversion to idols, the Vessel of Creation and Rod of Authority will provide the necessary god and goddess symbolism needed for any ritual. Candles

are another way to represent these two forces, using a black one for the goddess and a white one for the god. I have also seen people use a shell for the goddess and a stone for the god.

The only real requirement is that whatever you choose to represent the deity should be consistent. If you constantly change the object, divine energy has no substantial place to reside. The idea is to establish a permanent home for the god and goddess so they are always with you.

ENDNOTE

1. The oracles of the ancients were used for different purposes. The oracles were a tool for divination, personal counseling, and a contact point between humans and divinity. Prior to Christianity, the oracles were the providence of women and the priestesses who guarded them.

The Oracle as a Voice of Truth and Wisdom

To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, all in one.

John Ruskin (1819–1900)

A Conversation with Deity

The lure of the unknown and the lore of hidden things have long intrigued humanity. Along with skills such as fashioning flint spearheads and making clay vessels, primitive humans developed more subtle crafts, such as forecasting weather by the way the wind blew or predicting death from the patterns of birds. Many of the techniques, such as meteorology, used by scientists today evolved from these simple beginnings.

At some point, everyone has wondered what the future holds for them. Speculating about the future seems to be a characteristic of human nature, as we are the only creatures who modify our behavior on the basis of potential outcome. Because of our need to speculate, divination has become a principal means of arriving at choice without the uncertainty of chance.

The meaning of the word explains much about why we are fascinated with divination. *Divination* literally means gift from the divine. Divination is information received from god; the ability to receive such information is acquired by one's own initiative and link with deity.

Psychoanalyst Carl Jung believed that divination was an effective tool for the maintenance of mental health. He developed this theory by showing that apparently unrelated events could trigger unconscious experiences and images leading to expanded awareness. He also recognized that symbols could be used to form a type of visual language for understanding and communicating with other levels of consciousness. This ability to increase comprehension, realize advanced concepts, and acquire information from higher sources is reason enough to learn some form of divination.

One of the most important aspects of divination or religious prophecy is that it helps eliminate the fears that motivate people. Most people act and react to things that are of little consequence because they fear what others will think. They also harbor phobias about death, illness, and all sorts of trivia. Most of these anxieties stem from trying to live according to society's standards, rather than in harmony with divine wisdom.

When oracles¹ are properly consulted regarding spiritual needs, they provide the guidelines for living a balanced and productive life. Oracles divine which influences are favorable and which are apt to cause trouble. In a short time, they can help eliminate all sorts of personal fears through their positive predictive qualities. Individuals gain confidence because they know they have access to resources that will aid them in problem solving.

The idea of having an oracle directly linked to deity was one of the things I found attractive about the Ifa and Santeria religions. Their religious tradition included a system of communication between humans and gods for the retrieval of divine information. At some point during every Santerian ritual, divination is performed to question the gods in relation to the ceremony as well as to ask for spiritual guidance. Because divination was, and still is, essential to their religion, direct contact with deity has always been a part of their belief system. In my opinion, the ability to communicate with the gods or goddesses one worships is an essential part of any religion.

When developing Co-Creation Spirituality, it seemed reasonable to incorporate a system of divination into the religion's basic framework. In this way, contact with a deity would become an intrinsic part of the system, creating a continual line of communication between the worshipers and their gods. As worshipers used these lines of communication, the connection with a deity would become strong and secure, providing the practitioners with sources of spiritual information.

Just as Co-Creation Spirituality is a fresh approach to traditional religious theory, so is the oracle within the Vessel of Creation a modern approach to established prophecy. All that was needed to create this new procedure was a logical order of symbolism that could be built into the system from the start—a system that would harmonize directly with a deity and include a set of definitions to allow for interpretation. The oracle evolved as a set number of Speaking Stones that are read in relation to the four elements.

The concept of incorporating a system of divination into the Co-Creation process worked, as did the oracle itself. Once the oracle was activated, it functioned like a magnet, attracting the forces it represented into itself. The reason for its success was attributed to the numerical precision of the stones, the elemental disposition of their placement, and the symbolic alignment of the oracle with a deity.

Since divination, by nature, is a feminine and intuitive function, the oracle was predetermined to align with the sovereignty of a goddess. To protect and preserve the magnetism of the oracle, it was designed to fit inside the goddess' sacred Vessel of Creation. By making the oracle part of this feminine religious object, it assimilates the goddess'

potential and energy. The oracle becomes a connection between the believer and his or her goddess.

The following instructions explain how to make your own oracle and set of Speaking Stones. The necessary items are easily obtained and the process of making the oracle is simple. Once you have decided upon your goddess and obtained her Vessel, the rest will fall into place.

The Oracle

To make your own set of Speaking Stones you will need nine reasonably flat stones of equal size. These stones should be in the primary color attributed to the goddess with whom you are working. For example, I am working with Ishtar and green is her principal color. I chose the stone aventurin. Other examples are black onyx for Hecate and blue lace agate for Isis.

Take the time to hold the nine stones and feel their energy. Make sure no imperfections such as cracks or chips exist. When you are comfortable with your choice of stones, number them from one to nine. Etch or paint a number on one side of each stone; leave the other side plain.

Next, mark your Key Stones (see Chapter 13) in the same manner as you did the Speaking Stones. Paint or engrave a circle on one side of the round flat stones to designate its face or key side.

When your set of stones is completed, wrap them in the Oracle Reading Cloth (again, see Chapter 13) and place it in the Vessel of Creation. The Vessel of Creation is now complete and your oracle is ready to use. Because the Vessel is a spiritual tool, bless and consecrate it as you would any other sacred object. The Benediction (Blessing) in Chapter 18 was intended for this purpose; however, you may use any blessing or consecration ritual you feel is appropriate.

Using the Oracle

In ancient Greece, before the priestess of Apollo attempted to receive wisdom from the Oracle of Delphi, she fasted, bathed in cleansing waters, and performed special prayers and rites. The fasting and cleaning with water were done to purify the body, and the prayers opened the way for the priestess to receive divine inspiration and wisdom.

Today, with all our technology, social pressures, and general rushing around, proper preparation for spiritual working is especially necessary. If one truly wishes to commune with the higher forces of the universe, the mind and body must be calm. When individuals are relaxed, they become sympathetic to the subtle vibrations that



The Oracle

emanate from the deity during divination. A simple bath and meditation² will enhance personal sensitivity and susceptibility to divine revelation.

The Interpretation of the Oracle

The following definitions apply to the nine numbered stones. Toss the Speaking Stones onto the Reading Cloth. Add those numbers facing up until a single digit number is attained. This single digit number is considered the primary statement the oracle is rendering.

For example, if a 6, 2, and 4 are face up, add these numbers together and you get the number 12. Add the digits 1 and 2 together to form the single digit 3. The number 3 would be the definition you would consult.

The Meaning of the Numbers on the Stones

1. The qualities of the number one vibration are creativity, new beginnings, freedom, self-motivation, and faith in oneself. Now is the time to become more self-motivated, set your sights on your goal, and begin to work toward it.
2. The qualities of the number two vibration are contrast, balance, duality, diversity, and the quiet side of judgment. Look for contrast; see what is needed and what can be eliminated from your actions. Look at both sides of issues and make judgments accordingly.
3. The qualities of the number three vibration are harmony, arbitration, self-expression, and favorable conditions. Three is also the number of resolve, as it takes two to create an argument and one to arbitrate the situation. Through truly seeing and listening, you will come to a place of peace within. Try to maintain this level of inner harmony.
4. The qualities of the number four vibration are unity, endurance, steadiness, effort, and reward for work well done. Four is the first building block of stability. As you progress toward your goal, set a firm foundation. Take your time and do the job well; what is earned is valued.
5. The qualities of the number five vibration are independence, self-indulgence, excess, and the inability to make correct decisions. Five represents the selfish, I-deserve-more side of the personality. Independence is good if kept in perspective.
6. The qualities of the number six vibration are strength, wisdom, courage, accomplishment, and the ability to face challenge. Here is the vibration of the ability to meet life at face value. You have been through a lot and because of this earned personal power that is an accomplishment in itself. Achievement and success are on the horizon.
7. The qualities of the number seven vibration are knowledge, study, talent, imagination, and mystery. Seven is the mystery number and represents the hidden side

of nature. However, through study comes the knowledge that will help you seek out and unlock hidden doors.

8. The qualities of the number eight vibration are success, prosperity through expansion, materialism, and determination. The number eight is another form of stability, but in completion rather than origin. A foundation well laid will always produce success and prosperity.
9. The qualities of the number nine vibration are completion, fulfillment, spirituality, and deep understanding of the nature of things. With the material world in control, the time has come to seek spiritual fulfillment. Learn to work with and understand the real you and the nature of the world you live in. Money and material goods only buy distractions, not true happiness and self-respect.

Interpretation of the Stones in Conjunction with the Elements

After the primary statement has been determined, observe where the stones landed on the Reading Cloth. Their placement will constitute the second part of the reading, which provides insight into possible problem areas within your nature or present situation. As the stones fall, they will land within the scope of one or more of the elements on your Reading Cloth. By combining the meaning of the stone or stones with that of the element, you will be able to pinpoint trouble areas.

For example, you may be exerting too much fire and not enough water, or there may be a need for more air and less earth at this time. By finding out what is needed and what is not, you can balance your energies with those of the natural world around you.

To determine the meaning of the stones in combination with the elements in which they landed, add up the number stones, as you did before, and reduce them into a one digit number. The difference here is you only add them according to the element in which they are positioned.

For example: If you have a 3, 9, and 1 in the element of Air, add these together and you get number 13. Add the 1 and 3 together to form the single digit 4. The number 4 in Air would be the definition you would consult.

If only one stone is in the element, use that number. Element sections with no stones or stones with their blank side up are not read as they are silent and do not affect your life at this time.

The definitions of the Speaking Stones and the four elements follow.

The Element of Air is intellect, the ability to think and be creative; it deals with the realm of the spirit. Stones that land in this element express the fact that there is a need for more thinking and less physical activity. It could also mean there is too much "spacing out" and there is a need to ground at this time. The following meanings apply.

- 1 in Air: Time to be more creative and have faith in yourself. With effort and thought, you can do it. Clear thinking is crucial at this time of new beginnings.

- 2 in Air: Balance is needed; there should be equal time spent on spiritual as well as mundane activities. Action should follow thought or there will be no manifestation of desire.
- 3 in Air: Harmony prevails. Whatever you are doing at this time is in accordance with your ability and should be accepted as such.
- 4 in Air: Endurance is needed at this time. Also, a joyful attitude will bring reward. Remain steadfast and positive. Do not try so hard that you stagnate, but continue with calm reserve.
- 5 in Air: Excessive thinking and rationalization of the issues will bring failure. At this time, too much confusion to make a sound judgment exists. Stand back and give yourself room to think.
- 6 in Air: The challenge before you will take strength and courage. Use wisdom rather than emotion. Carefully weigh your options.
- 7 in Air: More knowledge of the subject is needed at this time. Use your imagination—it is the key to unlocking the mystery before you.
- 8 in Air: Through determination, you will be successful. Do not allow others to talk you out of what you know is right and what you know will work. Listen with discernment.
- 9 in Air: Completion and fulfillment of spiritual desires flow through you at this time. Look within and realize how your intentions affect your objective.

The Element of Fire is what motivates us on the material plane. It is energy, personal power, and aggression. It deals with survival in a primitive sense. Stones that land in this element are telling us to look at how we are reacting to the situation at hand. Are we using too much force? Being too aggressive? Are we allowing others to dominate us? The following meanings apply.

- 1 in Fire: Now is the time to put creative ideas into action. Take a firm stand and do not allow others to manipulate your opinions. Stand firm in your convictions.
- 2 in Fire: Balance is needed. This is not the time to start an argument or attempt to push others into action. Think before you act and temper your actions with wisdom.
- 3 in Fire: Conditions are favorable at this time. You are in control of your emotions and in harmony with the elements. Share your warmth, energy, and feelings of security with others.
- 4 in Fire: Endurance has paid off and you are in a position of power. However, do not allow this to go to your head. Maintain your self-control and acknowledge a higher authority; reward will be yours.

- 5 in Fire: Self-indulgence and too much independence are negative and destructive. It is not wise to make important decisions when you are confused. Stop and think before you react.
- 6 in Fire: Whatever the task, you have the strength and power to overcome the obstacles put before you. If you control your temper, courage and determination will be your allies at this time.
- 7 in Fire: Temper the fires within by learning more about your objective. There are powers greater than yours and you must acknowledge this fact. Knowledge brings peace and freedom.
- 8 in Fire: Determination is an asset if it is tempered with wisdom at this time. Achievement of a goal is a wonderful thing as long as you do not have to compromise your values or spiritual development.
- 9 in Fire: Completion is close at hand. Keep your emotions and actions in control and never forget what it took to achieve your objective. Use your fire to spark other projects and ignite the spirit within.

The Element of Water expresses emotion and what you feel deep within. Emotions determine how you react to your environment and those around you. Temper your emotions with wisdom and thought rather than allowing the fire of survival to control them. Emotions are energy and can be your best friend or your worst nightmare. The following meanings apply.

- 1 in Water: Give birth to the seeds of your imagination. Allow others to share in your experience and, through this sharing, develop new and greater relationships.
- 2 in Water: Balance between your emotions and what you know is right is needed now. Caution should be used in relationships that are shaky at this time.
- 3 in Water: There is harmony between your mind and your emotions at this time. Avoid emotional behavior, and relationships built during this period of stability will flourish.
- 4 in Water: The effort you put toward controlling your emotions will pay off. There is a need to show more respect for friends, family, and coworkers at this time. Respect is a quality that is earned.
- 5 in Water: Your independence is showing to excess. Emotions are running high; decisions made during crisis and based on emotions never prove fruitful.
- 6 in Water: Strength and wisdom surround you; do not be afraid to allow others to help at this time. As you share your need, they will share their energy. Learn to ask when you need help.

- 7 in Water: The time has come to explore the hidden side of your personality. Go deep within and find out what is making you react this way. Make an effort to harmonize your thoughts, emotions, and actions.
- 8 in Water: Expansion always produces a reaction. As you progress, be sure to do so honorably. Temper your determination with wisdom and regard for others.
- 9 in Water: Completion and fulfillment are at hand. As long as you maintain control of your emotions, any partnerships or relationships entered into at this time will flourish.

The Element of Earth protects, provides for us, and nourishes us in times of need. The earth also represents responsibility and the capacity for personal achievement. The earth can bring you abundance if you are willing to heed her messages and learn her ways. Stones that land in Earth express the need for more physical effort. Simply put, if you want to be successful and accomplish your goals, now is the time to stop talking and start doing.

- 1 in Earth: The time has come to concentrate on the material world. Get your ideas out of your head and into physical form. Create something tangible at this time; do not rely on others to do it for you.
- 2 in Earth: Things are not always as they appear. Be careful, plan, and double-check everything you do. Lack of proper judgment at this time could result in failure. Do not rush into something that has not been properly established.
- 3 in Earth: Now is a good time to express yourself and give form to ideas. This is also a good time to form partnerships in business or purchase things needed for the manifestation of desire.
- 4 in Earth: Build and create on the physical plane. Unite with others of like mind to help make your dreams come true. Now is the time to work hard, in a physical sense, toward your goal.
- 5 in Earth: Excess at this time will result in failure in your projects. If you indulge and give in to your impulses, there will be loss both in a monetary as well as physical sense. Curb your independence and seek guidance from others with more experience.
- 6 in Earth: Meet the challenge head on; you have the strength and the courage to make things happen at this time. However, only you, through your own effort, can produce the results you want. If you want it done right, do it yourself.
- 7 in Earth: Put down the hammer and pick up the book. Be sure you know how to do what it is you are trying to do before you begin. There is no substitute for knowledge; study and use your imagination and the project will flourish.

- 8 in Earth: Now that you have succeeded in your goal, assume responsibility for it. See things through to the end and hold on to what you have gained. Success and prosperity are yours.
- 9 in Earth: Completion. Feel the exhilaration and celebrate a job well done. Thank those who have helped and give recognition where it is deserved. Enjoy what you have accomplished but do not feel this is the end. Now is the time for reward and beginning again.

Definitions for the Four Key Stones

The four flat stones with a painted circle on one side are used for yes and no answers only. These are used apart from the Speaking Stones but in conjunction with your oracle reading as a whole. If you have asked a question about a situation and want a simple yes or no answer after your interpretation of the oracle itself, then cast your Key Stones.

To cast the Key Stones, put aside the other stones and turn your Reading Cloth over. Hold the four key stones in your hand and formulate your question so it could be answered yes or no. Toss the stones onto the cloth and interpret them as follows:

Four Circles Up

The situation is fixed. The answer is positively yes.

Three Circles Up

Things look good, but may change; the answer is favorable and will tend to stay so.

Two Circles Up

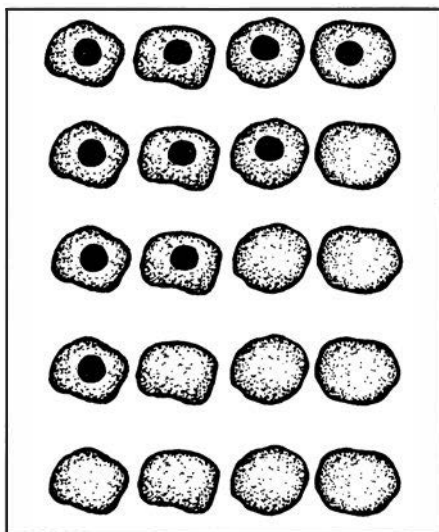
Maybe yes, Maybe no; ask again.

One Circle Up

Things do not look good at this time. This is not a good time to make any move. Conditions are not favorable at this time.

Four Blank Sides Up

The answer is definitely no; all conditions are unfavorable at this time.



Use of the Totem in the Oracle

The totem you choose should personify the archetypal force of the goddess whom the vessel represents. In this way, it can be used to delineate or target related energy patterns that may hinder or enhance the reading.

For my totem, I chose a small replica of a full-grown lion, which is sacred to Ishtar. In antiquity, the lion was associated with fertility and wisdom because of its intractable power. Symbolically, the lion represents light, strength, and courage—qualities displayed by the goddess herself.

It is easy to use the totem in conjunction with the oracle. Just before you do a reading, spread out the Reading Cloth and ask, "What vibrations surround me at this time?" Toss the totem onto the Reading Cloth and note which element it lands on. The placement will reveal which element is dominant and should be given extra consideration.

For example, if my totem, which represents courage and power, were to land on fire, the goddess might be trying to tell me to use less force or have more courage, depending on what the oracle itself had to say.

Synopsis

To some people, the world is a complex and disconcerting place. One of the reasons for this confusion is due to being out of touch with the rhythms of life and the higher spiritual self. Another reason for the trepidation is our technology, which propagates the illusion of being in control when we are truly at the mercy of the unexpected.

However, for those who are willing to extend themselves beyond the bounds of mediocrity, divination provides the tools that will help them navigate through the storms of uncertainty.

A perfect example was a reading I did prior to making some dramatic changes in our ritual format. I wanted to know if it was the right time and a good idea to make the changes. My concern was justifiable because, to the inexperienced or ignorant, the similarity between the ritual additions and various parts of the Christian Mass might be construed as identical. In reality, however, they were only modernizations and modifications of ancient Mithraic and Orphic Rites. The answer I received came from a point of authority and was not predisposed to personal interpretation.³ This lack of predisposition is a principal reason why the oracle is such a useful tool; divination is difficult when only specific commentary is rendered. I will share my query and response as an example of how the oracle works.

First, I asked my question: Is it wise to make changes in the rituals at this time? I held the Speaking Stones and concentrated on the question. After a moment, I tossed them onto the Reading Cloth; 7, 2, and 1 were face up. After adding them together, I reduced them to a single digit of 1 ($7 + 2 + 1 = 10$; $1 + 0 = 1$).

The number 1 relates to creativity and new beginnings. It also stresses setting goals and working toward them. The answer to my question was both positive and motivating; it seemed that now was a good time to add new material to the rituals.

The next step was to read those stones in conjunction with the elements for more insight into the situation. The 7 was in Air (this suggested I should be sure I had all my facts straight and that with right imagination these new rituals would unlock new mysteries); 2 was in Fire (it warned me not to be pushy about the new material but rather to temper my enthusiasm with wisdom); and 1 was in Water (it reaffirmed my decision by telling me that I should give birth to the seeds of my imagination and share the results with others).

Finally, I turned the Reading Cloth over. I asked, "Will the new material work?" and tossed the Key Stones. All four marked stones were facing up, meaning yes.

We all suffer moments of doubt and wonder if others will accept what we are about to do. Many times, this self-doubt keeps us from doing what we should and what will enhance our lives. By having a tool such as the oracle, we can eliminate many of the fears we face and begin doing instead of just wishing.

I am glad I did the reading and added the new ritual material. The final results were positive and generated better rituals for our church services. Everyone loves the additions and cannot imagine ritual without them.

ENDNOTES

1. Oracle (Greek) is any person or thing that serves as a n agent of divine communication.
2. Meditation is any soothing and relaxing exercise. One type of meditation is mentioned in Chapter 15.
3. Personal interpretation is common with other less rigid definitions. For example, when reading Tarot cards, each card has many different sets of symbols and can be interpreted in several different ways. With short set definitions, as in the oracle, the ability to read in personal desire is limited.

Harmony and the Elements of Nature

Nature, as a whole and in all its elements, enunciates something that may be regarded as an indirect self-communication of God to all those ready to receive it.

Martin Buber, *At the Turning*

Elemental Theory

The world we live in is a combination of many forces, working together to maintain life. These forces are comprised of both physical (chemical) and metaphysical (spiritual) elements, which are fundamental to the creation process and essential for supporting life as we know it. We need to understand these principal forces if we are to understand ourselves, the universe, and the dynamic energy that controls it.

The principal forces are the four elements of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. These elements are responsible for the structure of this world and other basic phenomena. In general, most Wiccan, Pagan, and metaphysical philosophies consider these elements to be symbolic representations of potential energy that radiates from a deity as well as from various archetypal sources.

Our ancestors, who were responsible for creating and developing the early magical-religion systems, considered these natural constituents to be a power unto themselves as well as an emanation from deity. Early people sensed that alignment with these natural forces would render most gods and goddesses vulnerable to human's needs and desires. As a result, humanity devised different ways to use the surroundings in the honor and worship of deity.

Humanity first enlisted nature's powers through hunting rituals. These rituals employed a horned god (whose nature was in harmony with the animals) for assistance

during the hunt. By acting out the hunt in front of a drawing or image of the god, early people thought the god would take notice and protect the men from danger as well as provide them with a successful hunt.

Another way of awakening the gods to humans' needs was through the powers of early fertility rites. Through the sexual act performed during ritual, the atmosphere was stimulated with human energy. This energy would in turn motivate the gods to quicken the propagation of the herd or increase the harvest yield.

Generally, most people will agree on the existence of the four primordial elements, even though today we know many more make up the world of matter. Philosophically and symbolically, the four elements—Air, Fire, Water, and Earth—remain the primary focus of power and energy in most New Age and magical religious systems. These elements are believed to be universal principles, which when understood, controlled, and arranged in a certain way, help the individual devise a more perfect reality.

Co-Creation Spirituality, like many traditions, endorses the importance and employment of the basic primary energies of life; we also know it is necessary to learn about them. These energies or elements affect the way we think, feel, and behave; they are indispensable to the creative processes. The understanding of nature, environment, and self is a prerequisite to the understanding of spirit and deity.

The elements are essential building blocks of nature and create a framework in which to define energy, emotion, and expression. The use of these forces is paramount in creating a spiritual system in which you can function and work to your greatest potential.

Learning about the elements and the areas of your life they control are important steps in your spiritual development. Once you begin to harmonize with these magical forces of nature, you become aware of their knowledge and wisdom. The insight you gain from interacting with the elements will help balance your thinking and emotions. This balancing is important because spiritual focus is difficult if you are overwhelmed with passion, inflamed with anger, or given to flights of fancy.

Almost everything we come in contact with is associated with the elements. The elements correspond to the seasons; different times of the day and night; and even plants, stones, and places. Astrologically, the elements provide the data to understand personality types and modes of expression. Without a doubt, the elements are one of nature's greatest contributions. They are a wondrous storehouse of knowledge waiting to be explored.

Understanding the Principles of Nature

The Element of Air

Air is a subtle material realm between the physical and spiritual plane. Air speaks to the intellect and brings forth the true essence of the individual through the creative imagination. The element of Air represents new beginnings, the thought process, and creativity.

Air has always been associated with breath, which is synonymous with the spirit or soul of all living creatures. The idea of Air or breath giving life to the soul or spirit dates back to the time of matriarchal rule. After giving birth, the mother would gently breathe¹ into her child's mouth, initiating the breathing process. In Greece, the female Air soul was Pneuma (meaning breath), or the Muse who always brought inspiration, giving poets and seers the power of understanding.

Breathing is paramount to life itself. Breath enters our bodies at birth and withdraws at death. Many have believed that the soul or spirit leaves the body at death on the person's breath. For this reason, in the past, mirrors were held close to the mouth of a dying person in hopes of capturing his or her soul in the mirror. This belief was echoed in folklore that spoke of mirrors as soul traps and the realm of the dead as the Hall of Mirrors.

Air is the bridge between spiritual inspiration and the conscious projection of ideas. Fresh, clean Air is exhilarating; it is movement; it inspires creativity. Air is feminine and innovation; it is the ability to conceive of new ways of doing things. Air is the tie that binds us together through conversation, intellectual sharing, and the endless seeking of knowledge.

Air and Personality Qualities

Aquarius, Gemini, and Libra are the three astrological Air signs.

The principal concern of Air people is communication. People with a predominance of Air think, communicate, analyze, and theorize. They love freedom and truth and have a strong sense of justice and fair play. Air people can change circumstances with amazing speed; like cats, they usually land on their feet.

Air people's devotion to abstract ideas and the hard time they have making commitments can make them seem elusive as well as exasperating at times.

Air people are thinkers. They rely on rationality rather than intuition or emotion to explore a situation. Their philosophical approach to matters allows them to endure hardships that others could not. They can tolerate almost any circumstance as long as there is a rational explanation for it.

Those of the Air element have great leadership capabilities and make good judges and crusaders for social issues. They have a reputation for being fair; they expect everyone to follow the same standards as they do. They cannot understand why everyone does not think and act as they do.

Air becomes a negative influence when it tries to rationalize mistakes that should be seen as learning experiences. Air people who cannot cope with reality have a tendency to live in a fairy tale world of their own creation.

Spiritual Considerations for Air

Spiritually, Air comes from the East on the wings of the Archangel Raphael, whose name means Healer of God. One of this magnificent creature's abilities is to heal both the physical body and the spirit. Raphael is usually depicted with a bow and arrow and a crystal vial of healing balm.

Air Correspondences

Colors	Blue, silver, white, gray
Symbols	Circle, bird, bell, sylph, flute, chimes, clouds
Tools	Wand, rod, staff
Plants	Almond, broom, clover, eyebright, lavender, pine
Stones	Amethyst, sapphire, citrine, azurite
Places	Sky, mountain tops, treetops, bluffs, airplanes
Zodiac	Aquarius, Gemini, Libra
Archangel	Raphael
Times	Spring, dawn
Direction	East
Process	Thinking, reading, speaking, praying, singing

Air Meditation

Air is an important element and one that needs to be experienced. Working with Air can lift your spirits and bring forth creative ideas. The best way to align with Air is by working with it in meditation. The meditation I have used for years, and which I have found to work exceedingly well, is outlined below. Work with this meditation on a regular basis; it will help you connect with the element on a personal level.

Choose a symbol or object from the list of Air correspondences and make yourself comfortable and relaxed. Hold the object and focus your attention on it. Use your breath to control your thoughts. Breathe in to a count of five; then exhale to a count of five. Do this breathing several times until your concentration is fixed upon the object.

Feel the object become light, so light it could float. Because you are holding it, you too are so light you can float.

Feel yourself floating upward toward the blue sky; you drift like a feather in the wind. Feel the sun and fresh Air upon your face as you float higher and higher; upward into the clear blue sky. As you soar above the ground, feel yourself being totally free and able to do anything you wish.

While you are in this state, look around. What do you see? How do you feel? What thoughts present themselves? Keep floating, feeling free and able to do as you wish.

During this time, original ideas will come to you. Remember these ideas, as they represent your higher consciousness and its creative ability. These are the thoughts and ideas you should work on. These thoughts and ideas are the things that you, the real you, want to do, create, and complete.

Take your new thoughts and ideas with you as you begin to descend. Slowly float downward until your feet touch the earth, and you begin to feel the weight of your body. You are now totally in touch with reality and have the knowledge of your Air journey to help guide you toward your desired goal.

The Element of Fire

Fire is transformation; it is the life-giving generative powers of the sun. Fire is emblematic of the masculine deity in many cultures and is the element of fervent intensity, aspiration, and personal power. Fire is the force that motivates and drives all living organisms. Fire, along with Air, creates energy, gets us going, and provides stamina. It has been said that what the mind can imagine (Air), the will (Fire) can create. Fire is bright, brilliant, and flamboyant. Unfortunately, it is neither stable nor logical. Fire leaps intuitively to grasp the moment with little regard for what is around it. Fire is reckless, seeking, and passionate; it knows only itself. Fire is unique because in order for it to create, it must first consume or destroy. For example, in a forest fire, the Fire burns, consumes, and destroys the trees and underbrush. In time, however, new plants will grow. Fire is the active element within us. Fire pushes toward the new by getting rid of the old.

To use Fire constructively, you must first contain it. When you contain Fire, you can direct its energy toward a desired purpose, such as heat or light. You can also direct it with the personal forces it dominates, such as passion, anger, and aggression. When you control these emotions and channel their energy in a positive way, they bring about beneficial reconstruction. When these feelings go unchecked, they bring destruction and create chaos—just like Fire.

Fire and Personality Qualities

The astrological signs for Fire are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius.

The best way to describe a Fire person is to say that he or she is the essence of passion. *Passion* here does not mean sexual desire, but rather all-powerful emotions. Most Fire people have intense appetites for living life to the fullest. They experience love, hate, anger, enthusiasm, desire, pain, and death with extreme intensity.

To Fire people, everything is intense; when nothing is happening, they will create something—even if what they create causes trouble for them. They seek passion and are willing to suffer for it in order to avoid boredom.

The mind of the Fire person is quick and active; most people find them attractive if not a little dangerous at times. They seem to attract people just as the Fire in the hearth attracts people on a cold day. With an emphasis on adventure and a vivid experience, the Fire person often hurts others in the process. They are so blinded by their own desires they respond without consideration for those around them.

Fire people are quick to fly into a rage when angry and just as quick to forget about it. These emotions cause problems because Fire people cannot understand why others are still hurt and brooding once the anger has passed. Those with much Fire tend to get involved quickly but may lack the staying power of the other elements. Fire lives for the moment with passion and brilliance.

Spiritual Considerations for Fire

Michael, the supreme commander of the armies of Light, spiritually brings us Fire. This illuminating agent of Divine Light, whose name means Perfect of God, is the guardian of the southern quarter. He is visualized as a Roman soldier, dressed in red and gold and ready to battle evil.

Fire Correspondences

Colors	Red, red-orange (as in flames), amber
Symbols	Triangle, lightning, flame, salamander
Tools	Sword, dagger, fire pot, double-headed ax
Plants	Basil, blood root, dragon's blood, ginger, orange, tobacco
Stones	Ruby, garnet, diamond, bloodstone, flint, topaz, sunstone
Places	Volcanoes, ovens, fireplaces, deserts
Zodiac	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
Archangel	Michael
Times	Summer, noon
Direction	South
Process	Passion, anger, quick, active, energy, power

Fire Meditation

Fire is one of the elements everyone needs to learn to control in his or her life. Fire can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how you project the Fire aspect of your personality. If you have too much Fire, you can tone it down and get control of it. On the other hand, if you have too little Fire, work toward rekindling the spark within.

The following meditation will help to get you acquainted with your Fire element so you can learn to work with it in a productive manner.

Choose a symbol or object from the list of Fire correspondences and **make** yourself comfortable and relaxed. Hold the object and focus your attention on it. Use your breath to control your thoughts. Breathe in to a count of five; then exhale to a count of five. Do this breathing several times until your concentration is fixed upon the object.

As you hold onto the object, feel yourself growing hot; feel the heat and energy of the Fire element flowing through your body. Feel yourself totally engulfed in flames, yet not harmed in any way. You are all-powerful; you have the energy and ability to accomplish anything you wish. You are strong, forceful, and filled with energy. Point your fingers and see flames shoot from their tips. See these flames turn into energy and power; power that allows you to move things without touching them. See the pure energy of life being projected from the tips of your fingers.

See yourself doing things. Make things happen through your personal power and energy. You are as the flame—hot and powerful—and you can do what you set out to do. You burn with passion and power and will accomplish your goals. Allow this impression of your ability to achieve to be burned into your consciousness.

Slowly feel the warmth begin to cool. Slowly come back to reality while retaining that sense of personal power; that knowledge of your ability to manifest your desires.

The Element of Water

Water is passive and receptive. It has long been seen as the source of all potentialities in existence, and has long been associated with the Great Mother, the universal womb, birth, and fertility. Water is emblematic of the universe's life-giving and life-destroying abilities. Water is used to cleanse or purify physically as well as psychically.

Where Air is the intellect and Fire the energy or drive, Water is the emotional response to situations. Fluid, responsive, and giving, Water is sensitivity and emotion. Water is like the Great Mother and, when heated by the Fire god's passion, life is brought forth. When cooled by the midnight air, silence and death are eminent. Many religions use immersion in Water to symbolize the return to a primordial state of purity. In essence, the baptism or dunking of an individual in Water signifies death and rebirth of both body and spirit.

The element of Water is both detached and willful as it flows freely. However, there are times when Water will allow itself to be contained. Water is a gentle element, and it inspires intuition and the desire to worship. The element of Water is truly linked to and part of the goddess within all of us. Water is remembering the past and foreseeing the future. As Water brings life, it can also bring destruction; the key is in governing its energy.

Water and Personality Qualities

The astrological signs for Water are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces.

Water people are sensitive—they sense the feelings of others; they are in tune with and aware of their surroundings on an emotional level. The Water person seems to sense the vibration of the universe and the mythic meaning behind reality.

Water people seem to live in a spiritual world where everything can become sacred if so desired. They become involved with other people and are prone to nurture, tend,

help, and heal with little effort. They can be tremendously protective and loving of the world around them; sometimes they find it hard to draw a line between those things they should care about and those they should leave alone.

The major problem of the Water person is their sensitivity. As with anything, if the Water person's sensitivity is not balanced by other energies, he or she becomes hypersensitive to the world. Some Water people break under the stress of feeling too much. Sometimes, if they cannot control their sensitivity, they seek escape through drugs, alcohol, or other addictions. This lack of control also leads to holding grudges. Water can flow with love, bringing green pastures in its wake; or it can gouge and erode the landscape through flooding until nothing is left.

A strong spiritual system can make the difference in the Water person's outlook and in his or her dealings with others on firm ground. A good system provides support and allows for creativity; it also acts as a channel for his or her emotions.

Spiritual Considerations for Water

Gabriel is the Archangel of the West and the spiritual aspect of Water. He is destined to sound the last trumpet. Gabriel, like Water, is fertility in all its forms. His role is that of initiator of physical life, and he is pictured holding the Grail as he emerges from the sea of immortality.

Water Correspondences

Colors	Green, turquoise
Symbols	Crescent, shells, boats, ship wheel, anchor, cup
Tools	Vessel, grail, chalice, cauldron
Plants	Aloe, cucumber, dulse, gardenia, lily, lotus, willow
Stones	Aquamarine, chrysocolla, moonstone, mother-of-pearl
Places	Ocean, rivers, lakes, ponds, waterfalls, beaches
Zodiac	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces
Archangel	Gabriel
Times	Autumn, sunset
Direction	West
Process	Love, nurture, sensitivity, psychic ability, healing

Water Meditation

Water is an important element and should not be overlooked because of its passivity. We all have feelings and emotions, and we need to keep them in perspective. Our emotions are of no use if they create hypersensitivity. On the other hand, they are of no use if we keep them in check to the point that they manifest in some sort of addiction. The key, as with all elements, is to create a balance within. The following meditation will help to balance your Water element.

Choose a symbol or object from the list of Water correspondences and make yourself comfortable and relaxed. Hold the object and focus your attention on it. Use your breath to control your thoughts. Breathe in to a count of five; then exhale to a count of five. Do this breathing several times until your concentration is fixed upon the object.

As you hold or look at your Water symbol, begin to feel cool, clear, fresh Water surrounding you. You are floating on top of the waves. It is restful and quiet; you can see the clear blue sky overhead. Slowly allow the Water to cover you; sink beneath the surface of the Water until you are completely immersed. Do not be afraid; like a fish, you are completely at home. Swim around under the surface of the Water. See the other fish, plants, and underwater growth. Feel the calmness and quiet. You are aware of everything around you, yet nothing can harm you or disturb your sense of peace. The Water absorbs your problems and negative thoughts; you feel a deep emotional security. You know that no matter what happens to you, the Water restores your vitality. It provides you with the rest you need to regenerate and reorganize your thoughts.

This is a time of total quiet, when you can reach deep inside and feel your total being. It is a time to learn how your emotions react; a time to get in touch with the real you. When in the Water, you are safe from the outside world; you can take the time to just be.

Slowly float to the surface. See the sky above as you emerge from the Water; feel the warmth of the sun and the cool breeze as it refreshes you. Remember how you felt while you were underwater. Take with you this feeling of total psychic and emotional cleanliness and freshness. Know that when you begin to get emotional about something, you can wash this feeling away with the Water element. This knowledge will allow you to see things as they really are because they will not be clouded by negative emotions.

The Element of Earth

Earth has the vibrational frequency that forms a solid quality; Earth is passive in nature and negative in polarity. The Earth symbolically represents both the womb and the grave; that which brings life forth and that which takes it away or reclaims it. However, unlike Water, the Earth is stationary and does not actively create. The Earth is seen mystically as the final outcome. It provides the other three elements with a place to physically manifest a desire. Earth is our base of operation where we exhibit the final product of our imagination.

Earth is related to the flesh and all physical matter. It holds, nourishes, and affirms. Earth sees, touches, smells, senses, and feels; it is both sensual and practical. It can be stubborn as well as generous and has instinct rather than feelings for the cycles and seasons of time. Earth is slow, steady, and ever-changing while remaining the same.

Earth and Personality Qualities

Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are the three Earth signs; their essential quality is that of strength.

Most Earth people are practical and like organization. They are slow, steady, and solid in their efforts. Earth people have a strong sense of responsibility and see themselves as builders and defenders.

The Earth signs are concerned with reality and the constants of home, family, and work. Earth people are sensual and like things they can touch, feel, smell, and see and things they can buy or sell. They rarely get into fads or trends and tend to be conservative in their approach to life. Earth people are kind but also cautious. It can take years to win their trust and friendship, but once you have it, they are loyal forever. They seem to hold on to what they have with fierce determination.

Because Earth people are concerned with strength, they also are attracted to power. Those of the Earth need to be aware of their desires and not become entangled in power for power's sake. Power games, possessiveness, and manipulation are the negative side of the Earth personality, along with the tendency to assert authority and ownership. Like Water, Earth can forgive with little effort or hold a grudge for years, constantly exacting revenge.

Spiritual Considerations for Earth

Auriel is the Archangel for the element of Earth. He brings the awareness of the gods as manifested in the beauty of creation. In short, as we behold the wonders of nature, we are driven to consider the even greater splendor of the forces that originated it. This archangel operates at levels beyond physical sight and teaches a sense of cosmic rightness. Auriel bears a glowing lantern in his left hand and a pair of scales in his right.

Earth Correspondences

Colors	Yellow, brown, russet
Symbols	Square, cornucopia, spindle, scythe, salt
Tools	Shield, pentacle, flail, horn
Plants	Alfalfa, cotton, oats, patchouly, vetiver, wheat
Stones	Moss agate, jasper, malachite, peridot, tourmaline
Places	Caves, forests, fields, gardens, canyons
Zodiac	Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo
Archangel	Auriel
Times	Midnight, winter
Direction	North
Process	Responsible, practical, organized, steady, grounded

Earth Meditation

Earth represents the manifestation of desire. When the Earth element is under control, the individual can balance physical desires with mental and spiritual needs. Earth needs nourishment from the other elements in order to survive. However, if it were not for Earth, no place for the other elements would exist. People must organize their life in a responsible and practical way so they have time for their mundane as well as spiritual activities. For those who tend to be irresponsible and indecisive, meditating on Earth will help ground these tendencies. The reserved and stoic will find that working with the Earth element can be an adventure into unknown and enchanted territories. The following meditation will help you to balance your Earth element.

Choose a symbol or object from the list of Earth correspondences and make yourself comfortable and relaxed. Hold the object and focus your attention on it. Use your breath to control your thoughts. Breathe in to a count of five; then exhale to a count of five. Do this breathing several times until your concentration is fixed upon the object.

Hold and look at your Earth symbol. Visualize a cave set deep within the Earth. Enter the cave, allowing your eyes to adjust to the dark. Proceed deeper and deeper into the cave; downward, spiraling downward, ever deeper into the cave. Hear the trickle of the underwater stream that travels through the cave. Look at the cave walls. What do you see? How do you feel as you go deeper and deeper into the cave? What impressions about yourself do you get in connection with being in the cave?

Look up and see a tiny slit far above; see a shaft of light coming through to light the way, revealing the hidden depths of the cave. Look and see the crystals, different-shaped rocks, and the pale green moss that carpets the floor; everything has such beauty and elegance—the kind of beauty only Mother Nature creates.

Breathe deeply; feel the heavy, Earth-scented air enter your body, giving you strength and vitality that you did not have before. Feel the cave floor beneath you. Pick up a handful of the dark moist Earth; look at it, feel it, smell it; absorb its richness. Feel your connection to the Earth and know you are part of it. Allow the Earth's life-giving qualities to penetrate you, giving you strength and reassurance in your own abilities.

Be still; reflect on the cave and the protection it provides. Slowly begin your journey back. Before leaving, say a prayer to the Earth Mother. Thank her for this time of solitude and companionship. Take the security of the Earth energy with you.

Synopsis

No matter who you are or where you live, the elements in some way affect your life. The elements are everywhere; you cannot avoid their influence. However, there are ways to work with them so they balance within the mind and body. Reaching balance and a point of mental and physical equilibrium is necessary if you are going to create an effective spiritual system.

The simplest and most effective way of achieving balance in your life is by recognizing your dominant and passive elemental qualities. Have your astrological natal chart calculated and interpreted. The chart will also provide information on important personality qualities along with areas in which you will excel. The natal chart is a valuable mirror of your true self and can provide you with advice in all areas of your life.

Almost everything, including the elements, has two sides or aspects to its nature: the physical side and the spiritual side. Physically, the elements can balance the human body so it functions properly. From the spiritual standpoint, the elements can develop composure and bring harmony into our lives through acts of ritual worship. By inviting the higher octaves, or symbolic spiritual representations, of these natural forces to join with us in our rites, we are able to share their light and energy.

ENDNOTE

1. This act of gently breathing into the newborn's mouth was eventually replaced with the patriarchal slap on the buttocks to remove evil and sin.

A Place for Prayer and Worship

The groves were God's first temples.

William Bryant, "A Forest Hymn"

People are coming to church not simply to partake of the sacred but to partake of sacred community.

Milton J. Rosenberg, *Pastoral Psychology*

The Domain of Deity

To our ancestors, who considered mythology an explanation of the workings of nature, all the world was a sanctuary. The gods were the creators and their homes on the earth symbolically revealed their power and presence. What were believed to be the gods' special homes on Earth became early sacred sites. Usually, these sites were areas where vortexes of natural energy existed, such as waterfalls, mountain tops, or underground caverns.

Sacred space has always been important when worshipping deity. Before urbanization, the land itself provided a host of natural sites. Springs and wells were favored locations for shrines to a goddess and were considered places for increasing fertility or curing illness. Trees were venerated as passageways for nature spirits that traveled between heaven and earth. Hills, plateaus, and mountains housed the mighty thunder gods who ruled above all.

As circumstance and necessity dictated, housing and fenced-in shelters became a requirement for survival. Constructed enclosures were essential for protection from dangerous animals, bad weather, and unfriendly humans. The family dwelling soon

became a refuge as well as a sanctuary, providing a secure environment where physical and spiritual needs were met.

Before long, humans began to build houses for their gods as well as themselves. From the pyramids of Egypt to the monuments of Avebury, permanently constructed places of worship were an essential part of early culture and society. Because religion was an integral part of daily life, the temples were the focus of most activities, as they fulfilled both the social and spiritual needs of the community.

To the ancient people, the temple was the dwelling place of the god or goddess, represented therein by an invisible oracle, natural symbol, or lifelike statue. The size and quality of the monument was in direct proportion to the power and authority of its resident deity. Temples to state gods and goddesses employed hundreds of people to maintain their vast estates. Because of their size, many early temples became the main source of livelihood for the city or town in which they were located.

One of the most interesting qualities of these early religious centers was their physical placement. For the most part, temples and sacred monuments were aligned with the planetary correspondent or natural element of their resident deity. For example, a temple dedicated to a solar god would be arranged to reconcile with the rising sun; a temple to the moon goddess would be oriented toward lunar energy. If the deity enlisted the power of a natural phenomenon such as water, the temple or shrine would be located on or near a spring or well. This incorporation of the associated element or astrological correspondent into the physical structure was believed to attract and enhance the deity's energy.

Sacred space is just as important and necessary today as it was in our ancestor's time. Now, like then, sacred space provides a sanctuary or haven where communication with a deity is possible. Besides affording a place for peaceful reflection, the quality of sacred space makes a statement about the individual's or group's devotion to deity. Conviction, dedication, and commitment are needed to create and maintain the shrines, temples, and cathedrals that grace our land. If nothing else, mainstream religion has more than proved its high regard for deity through its splendid architecture. This is definitely something to be admired rather than rebuked.

Creating a Place for Prayer and Worship

Sacred space is an area or room set aside for the reverence and worship of deity and should be treated with great respect. Once created, the personal shrine will radiate the glory and sovereignty of the god or goddess whose house it has become. In time, just like the great cathedrals, the area of worship will become filled with energy. When this happens, you only need to come within range of the area to feel the power, hope, and intent projected by its resident god or goddess.

The personal shrine or temple should be considered a living organism, a physical model of the universe whose psychic energy it represents. It should set the standard

for inner and outer organization and show an understanding of the cosmology of the natural world. Everything contained within the temple or shrine should have meaning and purpose and, above all, be subject to the exaltation of deity. Whether it is a solitary working space or an actual temple, the area must hold the power and potential to evoke the elusive quality of the spirit, which is manifested when contact with a deity is made.

The whole purpose of creating sacred space is to provide a permanent home for the energy of the god and goddess who are being summoned. Imagine inviting your family or friends over for dinner if you had no house or apartment. You would not be able to provide them with an address, let alone fix them anything to eat. Of course, they could meet you on the bench in the park, but how often do you think they would be willing to do this? The point is that an established place of worship is necessary if you plan to invite the god and goddess to your celebrations.

Although people might disagree on the setting of a permanent sacred space, for the purpose of this book and the practice of Co-Creation Spirituality, it is necessary to establish a permanent area for worship. This setting aside of a sacred space is the starting point of any spiritual quest. It is the first act or acknowledgment of your reverence for deity and is the beginning of the spiritual transformation process.

The sacred space you create provides a place for the deity's energy to focus. You can channel this higher source of power into a comprehensible form of the deity's true nature. This connection with deity causes a transfer of divine energy that penetrates individual consciousness, bringing ecstasy and spiritual wisdom. Simply put, when you invoke the essence of deity, your level of consciousness is elevated and allows you to embrace deity—which is the object of all prayer and worship.

Remember that your sacred space or temple is a physical representation of your inner devotion and therefore reflects your spiritual condition and vision. For example, Catholic churches and shrines are magnificent places for worship. Everything—from the church's front door to the back of the altar—glorifies deity. The attention to detail, appropriate symbolism, and cleanliness are above reproach. I have never been in a dirty, disorganized, or unkempt Catholic church. Unfortunately I cannot say the same about some of the Wiccan spaces I have viewed. These spaces resembled the basements of a slum dwellings, not spiritual sanctuaries. Cleanliness is next to godliness, no matter what your background.¹

Designing a Temple

You can approach the creation of sacred space in two ways. The first is for those who have a spare room; the second is for those who want to adapt a space in a room already designated for another purpose. In either case, there is always room for the god and goddess if the devotee is dedicated and creative.

When converting a spare room into a ritual area, cleaning is the first order of work. Remove all furniture, wall hangings, and personal objects. Paint the room a neutral

color, such as ivory, light gray, or beige. If there is carpet, clean or replace it. Hardwood and tile floors need less care and are easier to keep clean than carpet.

Once you have cleaned and painted the area, you can convert it from an ordinary room into a spiritual sanctuary. When creating a sanctuary, consider everything, even the window treatments. Remember that you are creating an emotional atmosphere of comfort, beauty, and harmony so that all who enter will be at ease. The atmosphere in the room itself should be a blessing.

The Sacred Circle

In most sacred spaces, you will find a circle on the floor.² When actively consecrated, this physical border becomes a boundary between the human world and the realm of the Mighty Ones.

Symbolically, the circle represents celestial unity, cyclic movement, and completion. The circle is feminine in nature and serves to contain, as does the womb, all life and energy raised within it. The circle is an important feature of various religious traditions because it can be created anywhere and provides a symbolic ring of protection where a deity can be invoked.

To mark out a circle on the floor, you will need a cord or rope (cut to half the length of the total diameter), chalk, masking tape, and paint. Tie the chalk to one end of the cord. Tape the other end to the center of the room or area to be marked. Pull the cord taut and trace the circle on the floor with the chalk. Paint or tape over the chalk mark to provide a permanent circular boundary in the room.

The Altar

The most important part of any sacred space is the altar setting. The altar will be the focus of all your rituals, prayers, and works; it should be attractive in appearance and large enough to hold your sacred tools. The altar shape is not as important as the overall size and condition of the piece you choose.

A simple square, oblong, or round table are altar options. An important criterion should be size. The altar must fit comfortably into the designated space and allow for movement around it; it should be able to accommodate all the items necessary for ritual.

Remember that the altar's purpose is to be a sacred shrine for the god and goddess. After ritual, the altar does not convert back into a television stand, dining room table, or workbench. The idea of the god and goddess' consecrated tabernacle doubling as a mundane piece of furniture is ludicrous. Can you imagine the Catholic priests, after a High Mass or special religious service, stripping down the altar and putting sandwiches and beer on it? Or worse, putting their feet up on it as they kick back to watch the game? Using the altar for any other purpose besides worship is disrespectful.

To the spiritual devotee, the altar is where all obeisance is directed and focused during ritual. The priests of old understood the laws of the universe and knew how to

best use the energy of those who came to pray and worship. As a result, they created imposing altars in churches and cathedrals. These priests captivated their audience with the beauty and majesty of lavish, ornate props. Once they had the congregation's attention, they organized and directed the raising of power through the Mass for the glorification of their gods. It is not hard to see how the churches of old were able to become such a prominent force—thousands of people, for hundreds of years, gave them energy.

All altars should be considered sacred, as they reflect the potential and power of the god and goddess. In an esoteric sense, the altar is a repository for divine energy. The altar then becomes an extension of the devotee's mind, allowing for the acquisition of spiritual wisdom during worship. Thus the altar becomes the point of union between human and god, as it represents an objective-physical arrangement that joins the spiritual and material realms.

When setting up your altar, put on it the objects needed for the work at hand. There is nothing more distracting than a table filled with this and that and some of everything. More is not necessarily better. In most cases, more creates confusion. The point of having an altar is to provide a place for deity; it is not a display counter for religious and magical paraphernalia.

Sacred Space Examples

In spiritual decorating, good examples are invaluable. Below, members of Our Lady of Enchantment share their pictures and ideas. As we are a formal spiritual organization and believe in the sacredness of deity, all our members have created personal altars for their favorite gods and goddesses. Also included at the end of this section is a tour of the chapel and various altars of Our Lady of Enchantment.

Our Sacred Space (Bob and Ellen)

We are lucky because we have a spare room in our house and were able to create a ritual room, set aside for only that purpose. Our main altar is in the north. On it is a statue of Persephone.

Although our circle is not marked off on the floor, we have a braided cord that we lay down as part of our circle casting. In this room, each of us have set up our own workspaces. The room has a large closet where we store our herbs, oils, candles, bottles, and other materials. We do our Full Moon celebrations and important works together at our main altar; personal works or meditations are done at our individual altars.



Bob and Ellen's Sacred Space

We love having this sacred space available. By setting it aside for one purpose, we keep outside energies to a minimum. However, on the down side, we must keep people who do not know about our religious involvement away from this area. While it may be easy to explain a statue or candle, it is harder to explain an entire room.



Lady Autumn's Personal Meditation Space

Personal Meditation Space (Lady Autumn)

From the time I was a teenager, I have been fascinated with the deities of the Hindu pantheon, so it seemed natural to build an altar to them. These deities are both exotic and mysterious. Hinduism is one of the few major religions of the world that is still polytheistic.

This altar is located on top of a bookcase in my study (see photo). Left to right on the lower shelf are: Parvati, Goddess of the Mountain; Ganesh, Elephant-headed

God of all good enterprise; Krishna, eighth incarnation of Vishnu; Lakshmi, Goddess of good fortunes and fertility; Shiva Nataraja, dancing the creation of the universe; and Nandi, Shiva's faithful bull companion. On the top left shelf is Kali, the destroyer; on the top right shelf is Shiva in his aspect of God of the Yogis.

I do not actively work with the Hindu deities, but this altar serves as a focal point for my worship of them. Mostly I sit before this altar and meditate. On a daily basis, I burn incense and candles to the gods and goddesses. On a weekly basis, I make offerings of flowers, fruit, and the like. Next to each statue I have placed some of the objects associated with the particular deity. For example, in front of Shiva Nataraja is a lingam representing his phallus, one of his most prominent symbols.

The deities of the Hindu pantheon offer a variety of energies to meditate upon. My altar offers me a sanctuary for contemplation and reflection.

In Honor of the Greek Deities (Aristaeus)

I like to work with the Greek deities, so I have set up an altar for them. I arranged it in a U-shape, with three pairs of deities on each part of the altar (see photo). Hermes and Athena are to my left (for youth and beginnings), Dionysus and Demeter are in front (for fertility and manifestation), and Zeus and Hecate are to my right (for authority and wisdom). I have specific tools for each one, reflecting the aspects they represent for me. For example, for Athena I have a wand, since she is a goddess of wisdom and intellect and is associated with the element of Air. I keep these personal tools next to each deity's statue.



Altar in Honor of the Greek Deities

When I do personal work or meditate on a particular aspect of deity, I focus on the god or goddess that best matches my intentions. I burn appropriate candles and incense and hold and concentrate on their objects. If possible, I work the personal tool into the ritual for a closer link to the deity. Having all six gods and goddesses in my altar area helps me to keep in mind the many aspects of the Lord and the Lady.

The Anubis Altar (Lord Cassius)

The ancient Egyptian god Anubis is a deity of medicine and is the Opener of the Ways between our world and the spiritual realms. Anubis as a deity is more focused toward direct spiritual contact than ritual. Because of this, his altar requires less open space and working tools than most other spiritual spaces.

Due to limited apartment space, I keep altars set up in my bedroom. My Anubis altar is set in a corner, between two altars to Roman deities. The central focus of this altar is the large statue of Anubis, which has been consecrated and instilled with a great deal of energy. Also on the altar is a smaller figure of Anubis, depicting him in an alternate human aspect. In honor of Anubis, I keep a candle burning nearly all the time. A small incense burner and an ankh (symbolizing life and the power of deity) are on the altar as well.

Working with Anubis is much more like meditation than ritual. To reach his energy, one simply enters into the mental state that is compatible with his particular flow of influence and force. Entering this mental state requires an alert but detached focus; a calm and mentally composed state. I often do a short invocation and focus on contacting the energies over which Anubis presides. When Anubis is contacted, I feel a sense of presence and inner mental communication flows freely after that. With this altar, the deity statue has been of greatest importance, as it provides an excellent point for focus and contact.

The Chapel and Main Altar at Our Lady of Enchantment

The first thing people want to see when they come to Our Lady of Enchantment is our chapel—which seems to be some sort of an enigma in the world of Wicca and



The Anubis Altar

Neo-Paganism. I find this vexation over a chapel very strange, because the point of religion is the reverence for deity. What better way to show love and appreciation for a god and goddess than by dedicating a space to them for prayer and worship?

To enter our chapel, you pass through a flower-garland arched door, reminiscent of the small archways in Victorian churches. Just inside the archway (ready to meet and greet all who enter) is a life-sized statue of Kuan Yin whose raised brick platform holds offerings and signs of the season. A small step to the right puts you in the chapel and inside our fifteen-foot diameter circle, which has been permanently painted onto the hardwood flooring. (The floor has been sealed and coated to protect it from salt, water, and candle drippings.)

As in most sacred spaces, the main altar is the chapel's focal point. The altar is an oblong, waist-high reproduction of a Roman table. It is finished in white with gold leafing and looks as nice without an altar cloth as it does with one. The clean lines and style of the table make it perfect for an altar because there is nothing about it that distracts from its purpose.

On the altar, which is framed by arched windows, stands a four-foot high statue of the Goddess. Also present on the altar are the sacred tools used for our rituals and ceremonies. On the left are the Chalice and Pyx;³ in the center are the athame, salt, and water bowls; to the right are the aspergillum, bells, and hanging censer.



The Main Altar



Chapel Door

Under the main altar is a smaller table used during our Sabbats as the altar of offering. During ritual, we place seasonal representations, candles, and symbolic objects on this altar. With this extra altar, we can use the main altar only for invocations and Eucharist blessings. This dual altar set-up works well; it keeps the main altar clear and allows the priesthood and attendants to keep out of each other's way.

Located just inside the entrance to the chapel is our



Buddha

Buddha. He is life-sized and over a hundred years old; he comes from a temple in Taiwan.

Although we do not do any specific rituals to him, his presence is calming and lends dignity to the atmosphere. To the right of the Buddha, on a corner shelf, stands a three-and-a-half-foot high statue dedicated to Vesta. An ever-burning cauldron resides under the statue. On June 9 of every year, the light in the cauldron is extinguished. At the end of an elaborate ritual, the Priestess rekindles it.

A Personal Altar

It is wonderful to have a chapel dedicated to the god and goddess where group rituals and worship can be enacted. However, there is still nothing like having your own personal space. Even though I live on the chapel premises, I find it comforting to have my own places of devotion.

I have several altars, each dedicated to a different goddess. The first is my Vesta altar, located in the south of my bedroom. On it stands a reproduction of Vesta, whose image was recreated from an ancient Roman coin. Also on the altar are an amphora jar, container of salt, and container of flour, as these items are sacred to Vesta.

Next to Vesta is an altar dedicated to Hecate. On this altar are Hecate's symbols of the lion, hound, Three Graces, a key, chalice, and onyx scrying ball. I use this altar to call upon Hecate for strength, power, and wisdom.

The third altar is consecrated to Ishtar, represented by three statues, which represent the goddess' three aspects (see photo). On the left is the Maiden; her vessel is open and held in offering. The second larger statue is the Mother; her vessel is held as if she were pouring something, as in pouring the waters of life. The smallest one to the right is older-looking and represents the Crone aspect. If



Personal Altar



Vesta



Altar to Ishtar



Altar to Hecate

you look closely, you can see that her vessel is held tight with her hand clasped over the top, as if she were keeping a close watch over the secrets held within.

Also kept on this altar is the Vessel of Creation, the Rod of Authority, and my personal chalice, pentacle, and athame.

Designation of the Quadrants

Chapter 15 explained the function and purpose of the four elements. As individuals, we rely on these dynamic forces to maintain physical existence and keep our spiritual lives in balance. Because of their influence, the elements have become an inextricable part of many Wiccan/Pagan and New Age religious rites. In keeping with tradition, Co-Creation Spirituality also recognizes and employs the symbolic attributes of these elements within the context of ritual.



Eastern Quadrant in Chapel

As with deity, it is proper and fitting to have predetermined stations for these energies to reside in. The representations you choose to delineate these archetypal forces will depend on their medium of expression and design of your sacred space.

Once you have marked the circle floor, use a compass to locate the directions east, south, west, and north. Place a token at each point to indicate the positions. If your sacred space is in its own room, marking the designation of the elements or quadrants will not be a problem. In our chapel,

small shelves hung at eye level mark each quadrant station. Appropriate colored banners depicting the symbolic significance of the force it represents hang over each shelf. A corresponding colored candle, elemental tool, and an image conveying the archetypal nature of the force itself are placed on the shelf.

For those using a space that serves a dual role, there are various inconspicuous ways to designate the element's position. Hang four wall sconces with appropriately colored globes or use four pictures, each depicting one of the four seasons. Brightly colored Mexican or Native American wall hangings, icons of saints or archangels, and even prints of ancient gods and goddesses provide the necessary symbology. As with all your spiritual endeavors, be creative and use your imagination when creating sacred space.

Synopsis

Maintaining sacred space is an honor, a privilege, and the obligation of all sincere religious practitioners. Whether you create a chapel, such as ours, or use a corner of a room, an area set aside for deity is a priority. The sacred space alone categorically declares the devotee's genuineness, intent, determination, and dedication to his or her spiritual path.

For some people, creating such a space will be a hardship; nevertheless, with a little ingenuity, a space can be made. If an individual has room for a television, stereo, and VCR, he or she has room for an altar.

The time has come for those who say they practice the Old Religions of Paganism to put their money where their mouth is and show the world that they value their gods as much as mainstream Christianity does. Hundreds of thousands of dollars pass through the hands of the Wiccan/Pagan movement every year and yet, to date, only a handful of centers or Pagan sanctuaries are available, and most of these are privately funded.

For example, one New England group boasts a membership of well over 3,000 people, all of whom pay dues of \$20 annually and support several group-sponsored festivals throughout the year. These festivals attract over 500 people each time, with every attendant paying an average of \$135, not including meals. As these events are held in campgrounds, take advantage of off-season rates, and are composed of an all-volunteer staff and free speakers, a profit is definitely being made. And yet, after some fifteen years this organization still does not have a place to call its own.

For the many people dissatisfied with mainstream religion and yearning for meaning and greater significance in their life, where are their alternatives? If a small order such as Our Lady of Enchantment can set up and maintain a center with a chapel, library, gift shop, office, and room for classes, no reason exists why Wiccans and Neo-Pagans cannot obtain and maintain a permanent place of worship. These places of worship do not have to be great cathedrals or hundreds of wooded acres filled with stone monuments; all they need to be is established places for meeting and worship.

The Co-Creation system supports the idea of small, close-knit groups gathering for ritual and worship at regular intervals. By putting aside a corner of your living room or converting your spare room into a spiritual sanctuary, you invite a continual flow of energy. As this energy expands, it attracts and entices similar forces to it, which in turn help it to grow and increase. In time, these personal sacred spaces become vortexes of divine energy and work like giant magnets, attracting those of similar spiritual persuasion.

All major religious movements have become established spiritual communities by slowly growing and gathering members. They designate and dedicate space for their gods in return for the deity's help and support. The more energy is focused toward the religious objective, the larger it becomes. If followers of Wicca want their spiritual path to become recognized and accepted as a viable religion, then they must provide a stable environment for the nourishing of those seeking its wisdom.

ENDNOTES

1. Some readers may be screaming at my so-called Christian thinking. This is not true, however. I am simply reclaiming what is mine to have—that which was borrowed by the new religion of Christianity from the ancients who created it.
2. In Co-Creation Spirituality, we hold all our rituals inside the boundary of a circle; a common practice among most Wiccan/Pagan and New Age groups. A circle lends equality and cohesion to the group activities.
3. The term Pyx is an old Greek word meaning box; the Pyx contains the hosts or common bread used for blessing during rituals and ceremonies.

The Cauldron of Transformation

*A New Vision
of Expression*



The Office and Obligation of the Priesthood

No matter what method, the Priesthood arises, for its practitioners, as a choice beyond choices, a natural inevitability that cannot be denied.

Nema, "Comment on the Priesthood," *Mezlim* #2, 1993

The minister's task is to lead men from what they want to what they need.

Ralph Sockman, *The Highway of God*, 1941

The Significance of Priesthood

All organizations, large or small, religious or secular, need leaders who are capable, controlled, and concerned about the welfare of their constituents. Whether in the church or corporate structure, knowledgeable officials who understand the business at hand are a necessity. Frequently, the creative genius of one individual is responsible for the organization's origin. His or her charisma maintains and controls the ties that bind. If the individual was skilled in the profession, he or she is remembered long after leaving.

Hierarchy and authority are part of our universal structure. They are consistent with function and become oppressive only when abused. Each individual has the same essential worth as any other, but not everyone is equal in the capacity to perform. Nurses and doctors, as individuals, have the same personal worth. In the operating room, however, the value of their functions differs dramatically. The same is true in the church. The laity have as much right to pray to god as the priests; they do not have, however, the authority to counsel, teach, or lead others in the sacred rites.

Within the scope of most religions is a hierarchy of priests who administer to the needs of the congregation. These ambassadors of theological wisdom are special people. Through dedication, initiation, and training, they can advise, teach, and lead others in spiritual matters. As emissaries of the divine, their lives should be examples of spiritual responsibility and a focus of discipline not usually practiced by the average individual. They, and they alone, have the right and authority to guide others upon the path and offer the sacraments of their religion.

A priest's principal function is that of spiritual counselor, healer of souls, speaker of truth, and warrior against evil. The priest should be interested in his or her parishioners, listen to their needs, and provide them with guidance where necessary. The priest is a caretaker of souls who is duty bound to live according to divine law and share his or her experience and revelation of the higher mysteries with all who seek.

The priest is not a messiah, savior, or redeemer of sins. He or she is a mediator and an intercessor between divine intelligence and human spiritual inspiration. The priest stimulates and promotes within the disciple spiritual health and awareness, but does not criticize or condemn the frailness of human nature.

Every priesthood, be it Christian or Pagan, carries much responsibility. Once initiated, the priest is endowed with the sacred trust of directing his or her congregation toward the wisdom of the Holy Mysteries. This sharing of enlightenment aids in the evolution of the soul and spirit of humanity.

Because the priest is a summoner of the divine, he or she is held accountable for the preservation of the Holy Spirit when manifested through ritual. This transubstantiation of immaculate energy into the corporeal existence for the exaltation of human consciousness is the act of a sacred trust. Through the ecstasy and rapture of individual perception, the spirit is rekindled and elevated for a momentary reunion with its original potential. For this reason, the invoker of higher wisdom needs to have more than just a superficial understanding of petitioning for and investiture of the sacrament.

None should overlook or diminish the importance of the priesthood in relation to the proper functioning of any religious system. Though each of us, privately, has the right and responsibility to call on deity and worship as we see fit, this in no way invalidates or incapacitates the power or position of the priesthood. Everyone has the ability to heal their bodies, but that ability does not make each individual a doctor. Everyone has the ability to refute allegations of injustice, but that does not make the average person an accomplished attorney. Because someone can recite a ritual or pantomime an invocation, this does not necessarily make them a priest or priestess.

Co-Creation Spirituality and Ecclesiastical Obligation

The priest's position within any system is that of guardian and guide, protector and provider, teacher and counselor. When examined from the secular viewpoint, each position is a vocation or craft unto itself. However, to the prelate of divine wisdom, these offices of obligation merge into one comprehensive declaration of faith. The competency with which the priest handles each of these aspects directly confirms the depth of his or her conviction.

If an individual desires to become a priest or priestess of Wicca or one of the many Neo-Pagan traditions, he or she should find out where to receive proper training. Someone with little or no comparative religious education cannot teach theology. The individual without counseling skills cannot guide others safely through a mental or spiritual crisis. The individual who has not been formally instructed and initiated into the mysteries cannot reveal these unspoken truths to others in their ceremonies.

Unfortunately, for the most part, Wicca, Neo-Paganism, and the New Age movement do not have formal theological training. Although most of these non-Christian missionaries have not set standards, these standards do exist. The universe, whether we like it or not, is wrought with regulations. One of these states that for every action there is a reaction. The reaction from trained theologians to the concept of a do-it-yourself priesthood is one of repudiation and rejection. How can we enter the race when we are not recognized as runners?

For the most part, the sincere student will ferret out a reputable teacher or credible group, which is not as difficult as it may seem. Armed with a few simple guidelines, anyone can procure training in the new religions of Paganism. The key to help unlock the door of the spiritual mysteries is a simple common sense evaluator—something everyone should use when approaching any type of a new religious or philosophical group or organization.

Common Sense Teacher/Group Evaluator

The following common sense guide lists six points to look for when evaluating a teacher or group.

1. Ask for a printed copy of the teacher's/group's basic beliefs, practices, and requirements. If no copy is forthcoming, sincerely question the skills and abilities of the teacher and group. Anyone who has valid information will provide you with printed copies of their doctrine. No hard copy—no deal.
2. Ask the teacher where and by whom he or she was trained and evaluate his or her response. In her answer, did she provide names, dates, and places? Or did he provide

some wild tale of how he was the seventh son of a seventh son and his grandmother (who is dead now) took him aside and initiated him in his early teens? No names or dates of training? Look elsewhere.

3. Observe the living conditions of the prospective teacher. Can the teacher support him or herself and their family? Is the teacher clean, drug-free, and responsible? If the person cannot help him or herself, how can the person help you? No exceptions; if the place is a mess, leave.
4. What does the teacher want in exchange for teaching you? Some sort of exchange should take place, whether it is that old demon cash or help around the house. Everything of value has a price; there are no free rides. People who are afraid to ask for compensation for their time and work may have some hidden agenda, which usually manifests as head count or power tripping. If the teacher does not state his or her price up front, be wary of what might be expected in the future. No price—no commitment from you.
5. Ask the teacher for references or interview other members of the group. The best way to judge the efficacy of any organization is by its membership. Are the other members responsible, mature adults? Are they friendly, outgoing, and responsive to new people, or are they arrogant and secretive? Do they speak of spiritual and uplifting things or hang around and gossip? Did they welcome you in friendship? Consider how you feel about the group before you return.
6. Be observant. What is the main focus or interest of the teacher and group? Do they spend more time discussing what should be on the feast list than they do on spiritual matters and proper ritual procedure? Worse yet, do they have the feast first and then hustle through the ritual if there is time? If the teacher or group is more interested in the chips and dip than in the raising of spiritual consciousness, stay home.

The priesthood of any religion occupies a position of authority and responsibility that should be viewed as a sacred trust. True priesthood requires years of training from recognized ecclesiastics, mental and physical discipline, and dedication to the promotion of the Holy Spirit. Even in the Wiccan and Neo-Pagan traditions, preparation for the priesthood should include more than memorizing magical jargon and Pagan platitudes. Dressing up once a month in flowing robes and lighting incense and candles does not make one a member of the priesthood. It definitely should mean more than saving whales, protesting nuclear power, or supporting the polyamorous lifestyle. These may be valid agendas to some but they hardly qualify as spiritual activities, let alone preparation for priesthood.

One does not read a couple of medical books and then hang out a shingle declaring oneself a doctor. One does not attend a legal seminar and then start practicing law. Yet many have done this very thing with the Wiccan/Pagan priesthood. The zealous

wanna-be reads a couple of books, dubs **himself** or herself Grand High Poobah-Druid Priest/ess, and attempts to teach and lead others in spiritual exploration.

This action is ludicrous and abusive. It censures the ability of the true priesthood to function on both the spiritual as well as material planes. It advertises to the world the lack of training and discipline in the Wiccan/Pagan movement. It also discredits true Wiccan doctrine and invalidates Pagan practices by exhibiting the inability to control that which is of our own making.

What it boils down to is quality verses quantity. Standards need to be set, if not by the priesthood and the religion, then by those seeking admittance into it. When those who are sincerely interested in the spiritual value of the Pagan religions challenge the system, demand competent teachers, and refuse to settle for foolish titles, the Pagan priesthood will reclaim its rightful position in the spiritual community.

Questions and Answers

I asked clergy members of Our Lady of Enchantment several questions about their feelings regarding the priesthood. It is always helpful to have the thoughts and impressions of others regarding controversial topics—and the pros and cons of Pagan priesthood is about as controversial as one can get. The questions I put to those who agreed to participate and their answers are presented below.

Aristaeus, what do you feel it means to be a priest or priestess in a religion that emphasizes individual ability?

Priesthood in such a situation requires a great amount of practical knowledge and ability—much more than superficial book learning or simple group leadership. The priest or priestess must be able to show others how to lead themselves. Where there is a great focus on individual spirituality, the priesthood has to open the way for personal discovery and illumination. Building talent always requires more ability than leading sheep.

Cassius, what standards do you feel the Wiccan/Pagan priesthood should live up to?

The Wiccan/Pagan priesthood *must* live up to both the standards of practicality and the basic social standards of modern society. Without practical training, goals, and organization, no religion can survive. If a religion doesn't hold ethical standards similar to the society around it, people will fear, distrust, and hate it. It is impossible to thrive if you are not effective or if you rub the general populace the wrong way.

Balaam, do you think there should be guidelines and qualifications that the Wiccan/Pagan priesthood must meet?

Of course there must be guidelines and qualifications! If just anybody, no matter how incompetent, can stand up and say, "I am a priest," then the overall quality of the religion goes down the toilet. People who don't know can't teach; people without ability

can't do or lead. It just doesn't make any sense for such people to hold positions of responsibility—and, on top of it, be public advocates.

Do you feel that everyone who takes an interest in or gets involved in Wicca and Neo-Paganism should become a priest or priestess?

Cassius: Absolutely not! There are many ways to be active in religion and do meaningful things in the spiritual field. Priesthood is only one of many—and by far the most difficult. Look at how many effective Christians there are. They are all involved and getting things done. Yet, are they all priests? No, of course not! At least they have had the sense to put egos aside and focus more on the religion than on individual position.

Aristaeus: No. Many people don't have the time or inclination to be members of the priesthood. There is nothing wrong with this as they have their own paths to explore.

Lady Autumn: No, because everyone is not cut out for the priesthood. It is a big responsibility, and many people in training for the priesthood don't realize this. As soon as they find out that they have to do some work, or are responsible for the temple setup and, indirectly, how well the ritual goes, they quit or look for an easier place to be. They look for someplace that doesn't require an effort, where they can pretend to be something they aren't.

Balaam: No. Not everyone is able to be a teacher or leader. Many are able to learn but very few are really able to teach. Just because someone can perform a ritual does not mean he or she is able to comprehend and teach the deeper meanings of the mysteries.

Autumn, do you feel those who devote their full time to the priesthood of the Neo-Pagan faiths should be compensated for their efforts and works?

In the sense of a market economy, yes. There is a big difference between a person of ability earning money and somebody getting a salary. The current standards of the Pagan priesthood are so low, the last thing they need is to be put on the dole. If a leader is truly competent, then he or she has something real and physical to offer. That has worth, and there is nothing wrong with people paying for things that have value.

Having been involved with the Pagan movement, what is your opinion of the vast majority of its leaders who claim to be members of the priesthood? What one thing would you say to them if you were given the opportunity? (As Balaam and Cassius have been more involved, and for a longer period of time, with the Pagan movement, their answers are below.)

Balaam: I'd say the vast majority of the leaders whom I feel are less than competent are self-serving rather than enhancing—at the expense of depriving true searchers of the goal they seek. These leaders are concerned with surrounding themselves with others to feed their ego and they exchange nothing in return. "Water seeks its own level," and it is also true that there are a lot of so-called seekers out there who want nothing more than to be commanded rather than taught, because learning involves work.

Given the opportunity, I would say to them, "If you want to claim religion and want the freedom from persecution for doing this, then you really have to practice religion in the true sense of the word. It appears that you want to use Paganism and the Old Religion as an umbrella to do what you want. When this happens, you do more to destroy the gains that are being made by others, and you do this better than those who deliberately set out to do so, who you consider the enemy. I have seen the enemy and it is thee."

Cassius: Having been involved with the Pagan movement for over ten years, I must say that most of its leaders are unqualified from nearly every standpoint. The average Pagan leader just doesn't have the ability, true leadership vision, or even a competent understanding of his or her own religion to be teaching, let alone leading others. The vast majority of Pagan leaders are just useless talk, and that is a real shame. If they were more interested in the religion than they are in the style of their robe, something just might get done.

The one thing I would like to say to them is: "So, you say you're a Pagan Priest? Friend, when you tell me that, prove it. Show me what you have done, what you have built, and how you have advanced the cause of your religion. That, and only that, is the measure of your worth."

Synopsis

Ecclesiastical obligations are not taken lightly at Our Lady of Enchantment. Because we are a legally recognized religious organization, all who wish to be initiated and ordained into our system must meet certain standards. By maintaining a quality leadership program, we preserve the dignity and stability of our tradition. We ensure that only those qualified to do so speak on our behalf. Our structure and adherence to the basic Co-Creation principles has helped us as individuals, as well as a religious order, to grow and progress.

Proper education and training in the priesthood are not that difficult if the individual is truly interested and willing to do some work. For this reason, Our Lady of Enchantment has a two-step program designed to help educate those who wish to become members of the priesthood.

The program is simple and straightforward. First, the student takes our "Earth, Religion, and Power" course and then the "Metaphysics One" course. Attending these courses qualifies the student for ministerial credentials and helps him or her to establish a ministry. By creating his or her own ministry, the student gains some of the social skills necessary to maintain a group.

Second, the student applies for our "Priesthood Training Program," which is a set of lessons, activity cards, and guidance lectures in group work. The lessons provide the necessary theological education while the activity cards and lectures provide

instruction in group dynamics and counseling. By making this program available through the mail, as well as at our center in New Hampshire, there is no reason why anyone who wishes to be a priest or priestess should go untrained. For a free information package on all our programs and activities, write to:

Our Lady of Enchantment
P. O. Box 1366
Nashua, NH 03061

ENDNOTE

1. Most groups have a social hour and feast after their Sabbats and special ceremonies. Note that the feast takes place after the Sabbat or ceremony, not before or during.

The Observance of Essential Requirements

Ritual may be manmade in the sense that human hands fashioned it. But what inspired those hands to do their work is the Divine influence.

Ben Zion Boksar, *Perspectives on a Troubled Decade*, 1950

The Reason for Ritual and Worship

Religion and worship reaches its climax during that moment in ritual when the devotee is brought into alignment with deity. This lining up with the power and potential of the God and Goddess transforms, through a transubstantiation of energy, the individual's consciousness. Once this happens, the devotee becomes aware, deep within his or her soul, of the splendor and glory of the Holy Spirit. Only through a consummate act of genuine devotion is this type of revelation or spiritual rapture possible.

However, before any type of prayer, worship, or ritual can be accomplished, there needs to be a strong connection made with deity. The devotee must be thoroughly convinced of the existence of his or her gods and of their inherent power and wisdom. Without this absolute confidence in the omnipotence of deity, worship becomes empty.

Once a commitment to deity has been made, the individual often experiences an overwhelming desire for interaction with his or her god form. This preoccupation with involvement is part of the human need to connect or unite with one's passion. Simply put, it is like being in love—the need to express deep emotions takes precedence over all other feelings and desires. This love affair with God has inspired humanity to create great religions.

The primary purpose behind an intimate relationship with a deity is the elevation of consciousness that takes place when the human and divine quintessence are united

in ritual worship. When the adoration of deity is combined with a properly executed and intense act of religious observance, the individual experiences spiritual ecstasy. This momentary shift in awareness consummates the personal identification and fusion of human spirit with divine potential, allowing the devotee to comprehend the exalted magnitude of deity. In other words, during special rites of worship it is possible for the participants to experience apotheosis, or exaltation of consciousness, within their personal nature.

Because of the possible ramifications (both positive and negative) of extreme elevated states of consciousness, proper procedures must be followed for ritual worship. Simply put, if the ritual is worth doing, then it is worth doing right. There is no excuse for shallow, sloppy, second-rate rituals. Every religious tradition has its own conception of deity, and rituals vary from one group to another. However, this individuality should not diminish the leaders or the group from striving for excellence rather than mediocrity.

If coming together for a ritual is only an excuse to party, a serious problem exists with the leadership and the quality of the group. On the other hand, if you meet to earnestly worship the God and Goddess, then the extra time needed to do things properly will be a welcome incentive rather than an irritation or inconvenience.

Most of the problems with poorly conducted rituals stem from a lack of understanding about the procedure itself. If individuals have no conception of a ritual's fundamental structure, then their final product will be inferior. No matter what type of a project you undertake, if you do not know where to begin, how are you going to construct anything of value, let alone achieve success?

Preliminary Rites and Preparation

Ritual worship should be both solemn and imposing in language and intent. It should lead the devotee step by step to a climax where he or she is made one with the deity, resulting in an intense feeling of profound, heartfelt euphoria. This spiritual ecstasy is only possible when every action of a ceremony is properly coordinated and expressed for the glorification of divinity.

For a ritual to be properly constructed, it must have four separate yet related segments that merge together effortlessly. These segments are the preparation and consecration of the area and members, which include the opening benediction; the prayer and supplication, which defines the purpose of the ritual and includes the invocation of deity; the atonement and Eucharist, which emphasizes the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption; and the closing and dismissal of the Quadrants and congregation.

The commentary for each part includes both a definition of the process and the corresponding rites where applicable. It is recommended that everything except the

principal liturgy be memorized. Memorized words become second nature, so participants can then experience the moment and emphasize its symbology rather than be distracted by shuffling paper and reading from printed copy.

Preparation and Consecration

The first segment of ritual is the preparation and consecration of the area and the participants. This opening portion is important because it sets the mood and tone of the ritual itself.

Preparation

Composing the Ritual Checklist. This is done by sitting down and reading through the ritual to see what is needed and who will be doing the speaking parts. By reading over the ritual in advance and making notes of items needed and important segments, you reaffirm the purpose and intent of the ritual.

Altar and Quadrant Preparation. Two members will act as ATTENDANTS during the ceremony. One ATTENDANT sets up the altar; the other places the Quadrants in their respective positions. After all is in place, one of the ATTENDANTS lights the altar candles and recites:

(Right candle)

Our Lord is the Sun, he brings forth the light.

He has dominion over all, he is power and might.

(Left candle)

Our Lady is the Moon, she brings forth the night.

She controls the soul of man, she is wisdom and insight.

The ATTENDANT who placed the Quadrants lights them (beginning with the east) and recites:

I light the East, the home of moonlight and consciousness, the realm of the spirit.

I light the South, the home of fire and inspiration, the realm of awareness.

I light the West, the home of the waves of completeness, the realm of our watery beginnings.

I light the North, the home of all that is green and fruitful, the realm of abundance.

By lighting the altar and Quadrant candles prior to ritual, a statement of intention is made and the transformation process begins as the atmosphere becomes receptive to higher spiritual vibrations.

Consecration

Entrance. All the participants follow the lead PRIEST and PRIESTESS into the chapel or ritual area; those with assigned parts move to the appropriate positions.



Priest Anoints Each Member with the Oil

The Benediction (Blessing)

This is the actual beginning of the ritual and sets the criterion for the proper state of mind as a preliminary to the actual mass itself. The benediction begins the ceremony with the blessing of the priesthood and congregation as follows (holy oil and aspergillum required).

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS face the altar and genuflect; the PRIEST rings the bells three times.

The PRIESTESS faces the altar, picks up the aspergillum, and holds it high in front of her as she asks the following blessing:

*Our Lord and Father, Divine Solar Radiance,
Ever-Dying King, Guardian of the Threshold,
We invoke thee as Sol Invictus, the Unconquered Sun,
Lord of the Land, Glory of the Heavens
And all that brings light and life.
Let all who seek enlightenment find strength
In the fluid of your passion.*

The PRIESTESS asperges the congregation in blessing.

The PRIEST faces the altar and holds the vial of oil high in front of him as he asks the following blessing:

*O Blessed Virgin, Sacred Mother,
To whom the glory of the sun belongs.
Universal Goddess, we invoke thee as Sophia,
Holy Wisdom, first among the gods.
Bless us through your most Holy Spirit
That we shall ever walk with love, compassion,
And understanding now and forever.*

The PRIEST anoints each member with the oil.

The Litany of the God and Goddess

This begins the process of energy transformation and sets the stage for the mass as the participants are prepared to welcome and accept the God and Goddess into their hearts.

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS face the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT comes forward and tones the bells at the appropriate time.

(Bells)

PRIEST

*May the power of the Lord conquer confusion,
May the power of the Lord protect us from evil,
May the power of the Lord lead us in righteousness,
May the power of the Lord bring us light and life.*

ALL

May the power of the Lord bring us light and life.

(Bells)

PRIESTESS

*May the love of the Lady lift up our hearts,
May the love of the Lady grant us more virtue,
May the love of the Lady teach us great wisdom,
May the love of the Lady bring us beauty and grace.*

ALL

May the love of the Lady bring us beauty and grace.

(Bells)

PRIEST and PRIESTESS

*May the Lord and the Lady who reign from above
Always come forth with great passion and love.
Bring us to stand for God and for right
Ever to lead us from darkness to light.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

Note: Substitute the names of the deities you are working with in place of Cerridwen and Cernunnos during the ritual.

Consecration of the Elements and Creation of Sacred Space

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS face the altar. The PRIESTESS takes up the Athame and holds it in offering to the Goddess. She dips the Athame into the bowl of water, saying:

Creature of water, cast out from thyself all impurities and uncleanness of this world.

The PRIESTESS dips the Athame into the dish of salt and scoops out three small portions, placing each into the bowl of water, saying:

*Creature of earth, let only good enter to aid us in our prayer and work.
So shall it be.*

The PRIESTESS holds the Athame in offering to the Goddess and draws down the fire from heaven into the Athame, which she directs down onto the circle outline, creating a sphere of protective energy, saying:

I conjure and create thee, O circle of power, which shall be a boundary between the world of men and the realm of the Mighty Ones, which shall preserve and protect all energy raised within. Blessed are the Lord and Lady who guard the gateway to everlasting life. So be it!



"Hear me, O Mighty One ..."

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardians

This is the final segment of the Preparation and Consecration. The PRIEST takes up the Athame and proceeds to the East where he begins his acknowledgment. After each summoning, the PRIEST picks up the associated element, holds it in offering, and proceeds to the next Quadrant.

(East)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Whirlwinds,
Guardian of the Eastern Portal.*

Let your essence be as one with ours,

As witness and shield at this gateway between the worlds.

So mote it be!

(South)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Solar Orb,
Guardian of the Southern Portal.
Let your light be as one with ours,
As witness and shield at this gateway between the worlds.
So mote it be!*

(West)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Mysterious Depths,
Guardian of the Western Portal.
Let your fluid be as one with ours,
As witness and shield at this gateway between the worlds.
So mote it be!*

(North)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of Forest and Field,
Guardian of the Northern Portal.
Let your fruitfulness be as one with ours,
As witness and shield at this gateway between the worlds.
So mote it be!*

Prayer and Supplication

This portion of the rite expresses the theme or reason behind the performance of the mass. At this time, the God or Goddess is invoked as a prelude to the apex of the ritual, the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption. Here, the main body of the liturgy will change as does the purpose of the rite. Seasonal celebrations will focus on time-honored earth themes such as planning, planting, harvesting, and remembering. Other rituals, such as the Feast of the Blessed Virgin and the Good Friday Eucharist Remembrance, will focus directly on the majesty of the God and Goddess.

Once the theme of the ritual has been expressed, the PRIEST or PRIESTESS approaches the altar in solemn reverence and genuflects. With great passion, he or she invokes the power and presence of deity. The invocations we use have been memorized and worked until they have become second nature. Through this familiarity, the PRIEST or PRIESTESS who invokes is able to separate the physical enactment from the spiritual penetration taking place, allowing for total involvement with the deity. It also intensifies the spiritual experience and energy within the bounds of the circle.

The Invocation of the Goddess

*Thou who whispers gentle yet strong
Thou for whom my soul doth long,
By most men you are seldom seen
Yet you ever reign as virgin, mother, queen,
Through the veil you pass with pride*

*As I beckon thee now to be at my side,
Cerridwen!*

*Thou who knows, thou who conceals
Thou who gives birth, thou who feels,
For you are the Goddess and mother to all
Pray thee now come as I call,
Now through the mist I hear your voice
And invoke thee most gracious Goddess by choice,
Cerridwen!*

*Thou who suffers as all men die
Doth with her victim in love lie,
For you are the Goddess and crone of despair
To our ending with you we must share.
I feel thy passion and feel thy presence;
I desire to be one with thy vital essence,
Cerridwen!*

*I pray thee, dancer of eternal bliss,
Bestow upon me thy wondrous kiss.
Let now thy light, love, and power
Descend, become one with me this hour;
For you are the creatress of heaven and earth
To my soul and spirit you have given birth,
Cerridwen!*

All members in unison praise the Goddess by chanting:

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invocation to the God

*Father of death, Father of night.
Father of birth, Father of light.
Cernunnos, Cernunnos, Cernunnos.
Come by flame, Come by fire.
Come now, whom we desire.
Cernunnos, Cernunnos, Cernunnos.*

*O Horned One, O ancient one.
God of the sun, bringer of light.*

*The powers of Darkness put to flight.
O Horned One, O ancient one,
Who comes from beyond the gates of death and birth.
Come who gives life to all on earth.*

*Come, I invoke thee,
For you are Pan, Apollo, Cernunnos,
Lord of Hades, Lord of Death.
You are them all, yet you are he,
Come, come, my Lord, as I beckon thee.*

*Come, come, my Lord of wild delights.
Come, join with us in these secret-mystic rites.
Come, come, my Lord of fire and flame,
As I call out your sacred and holy name
Cernunnos, Cernunnos, Cernunnos.*

All members in unison praise the God by chanting:

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

Atonement and Eucharist Through the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The atonement is the final proclamation prior to the actual Eucharist Rite of Union and Rite of Redemption. This is done in anticipation of the actual embracing of the God and Goddess through their most sacred rites. During seasonal ceremonies, there will be an extended portion of liturgy that varies according to the focus of the ritual. When this has been completed, the following method of sacred observance begins.

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells three times. He or she steps to the side of the altar. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect.

The ATTENDANT recites the following declaration:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;*

*Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady,
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady,
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady,
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady,
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be Cerridwen and Cernunnos!*

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS face each other. The PRIEST kneels before the PRIESTESS and they begin the Rite of Union.¹

The PRIESTESS holds the container of red wine in her right hand and the container of white wine in her left. She raises both to eye level and silently summons the Lord and Lady into the wine. She lowers the containers over the Chalice and pours both at the same time as she says with great emotion:

I pour the red and the white, that they shall mix as life and death, joy and sorrow, peace and humility, and impart their essence and wisdom unto all.

The PRIEST remains kneeling as he holds the Chalice filled with the wine, saying with great emotion:

For I am the father, lover, and brother unto all, the bringer of life, the giver of death, before whom all time is ashamed. Let my spirit breathe upon you and awaken the fires of inspiration within your soul.



The PRIESTESS returns the containers of wine on the altar, picks up the Athame, and slowly lowers it into the Chalice as the PRIEST (who is still kneeling) rises with the Chalice to meet the blade of the Athame so it touches the wine within. They say, each in turn:

"And they are conjoined to become one ..."

PRIESTESS

For as this Athame represents the male and the God...

PRIEST

So this Chalice represents the female and the Goddess.

PRIEST and PRIESTESS (in unison)

And they are conjoined, to become one, in truth, power, and wisdom. So mote it be.

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS each take a sip of wine and place the Chalice on the altar. The PRIESTESS picks up the Paten and faces the PRIEST and again with great reverence says:

*Behold the sovereignty of our divine king,
Beloved son and lover,
Radiant and everlasting light,
Guardian of the souls of man who rises triumphant from the tomb!*

PRIEST

*We honor thee, O sacrificed God,
Who, through the mother, grants eternity.
By shedding your blood upon the land,
All are transformed through your passion as they pass through the gates of judgment.*

The PRIEST picks up one of the hosts and holds it over the Paten; in unison, the PRIEST and PRIESTESS say with great reverence:

Let now the mystery be revealed of the light of the Lord within, who in the shadow of the Goddess shall ever reign supreme!

The PRIEST snaps the host in half. He offers half to the PRIESTESS, and he partakes of the other. Both the Chalice with the blessed wine and the Paten with the hosts are passed to the congregation. As each member receives the Chalice and the Paten, they say:

Blessed are the faithful, for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.

Closing and Dismissal

The closing and dismissal end the principle portion of the mass and begin the return process for the priesthood and congregation. As with the previous sections, certain parts of this division vary according to the focus of the ritual. Those parts that remain the same are the dismissing of the Quadrants, closing benediction, and the banishing of the sacred space. Again, these parts of the ritual should be memorized and given the same emotional expression as they were in their original state of creation. The following text provides the exact method used.

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. The ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIEST takes up the Athame and proceeds to the North where he begins the dismissal of the Quadrants. As he dismisses the Guardian, he also extinguishes the corresponding candle unless otherwise directed.

(North)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of Forest and Field,
Guardian of the Northern Portal.*

*We thank thee for thy blessings and protection at this gateway
Between the worlds and bid thee hail and farewell.
So mote it be!*

(West)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Mysterious Depths,
Guardian of the Western Portal.*

*We thank thee for thy blessings and protection at this gateway
Between the worlds and bid thee hail and farewell.
So mote it be!*

(South)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Solar Orb,
Guardian of the Southern Portal.*

*We thank thee for thy blessings and protection at this gateway
Between the worlds and bid thee hail and farewell.
So mote it be!*

(East)

*Hear me, O Mighty One, Ruler of the Whirlwinds,
Guardian of the Eastern Portal.*

*We thank thee for thy blessings and protection at this gateway
Between the worlds and bid thee hail and farewell.
So mote it be!*

The Closing Benediction

This final blessing on the congregation before they leave the sacred space helps ground the energy and protect all those who participated in the ceremony as they re-enter the physical realm.

The PRIESTESS faces the altar and recites the closing benediction:

*We ask our Lord and Father, the Divine Solar Radiance,
Ever-Dying King and Guardian of the Threshold,
To give us strength, power, and wisdom.
We ask of our Lady, Blessed Virgin and Sacred Mother,
She who has been known by many names,*

*To bless us through her Holy Spirit
And grant to each of us compassion, understanding, and love,
Now and forever. So shall it be!*

The PRIESTESS takes up the Athame and banishes the energy of the circle in a counterclockwise motion, beginning in the North. Pointing the Athame at the physical boundary, she draws the energy up and back into the Athame as she speaks the following:

*I banish thee, O circle of power, that has been a boundary between the world of men
and the realm of the Mighty Ones.
Let all energy and power be returned as we depart in peace and love.
So mote it be!*

Synopsis

Trying to accurately describe the exhilaration and ecstasy generated in a properly conducted ritual is much like trying to describe the true essence of intense, penetrating love. If you have experienced it, you know how it feels; if you haven't—you don't know. Nevertheless, you are left speechless by the experience. Some things cannot be put into words; this is why training and initiation into the mysteries was and still is so important. Until you have been led to the wellspring of the God and Goddess, passed through the gates of regeneration, and felt their presence deep within your soul, you have no point of reference. Without this experience, you remain naive.

This is not to say that untrained people cannot contact deity and have visions or unintentional encounters with the God and Goddess. With the right attitude, emotion, and determination, everyone has the ability to touch the hand of the God or Goddess. However, a chance encounter is not a controlled act of ritual worship whereby the Lord and Lady are regularly brought into a created sacred space. For this type of endeavor, the individual needs knowledge, training, and experience—which can only come through spiritual transformation.

This book is designed to whet the appetite of the sincere seeker so there will be further research, study, and investigation of spiritual concepts. Anyone who can read this book can pantomime the invocations, Rite of Union, and Rite of Redemption. However, only those who have been properly trained, initiated, and ordained in the mysteries of the God and Goddess have the authority and qualifications to actualize the transubstantiation of divine potential into corporeal reality. As with all vocations, one needs time, effort, and training to become proficient at religion—ability is not a free commodity.

ENDNOTE

1. The Rite of Union was designed as a spiritual bringing together of the masculine God energy and the feminine Goddess energy in order to express the essential perspicacity of the Great Mystery. It was never intended to be used as a prelude to or form of actual physical sexual intercourse. At this time during the mass, we are extending our consciousness beyond the realm of physical perception to approach divinity—we are not grounding our vitality through corporeal contact.

Sacraments, Sacred Rites, and Prayers

Worship arises as spontaneously in the heart of the religious devotee as love arises in the heart of the youth who has found in the maiden, beauty, inspiration, and understanding.

Charles C. Jasey, *Journal of Religion*, XV, October 1935

Prayer should be understood, not as a mere mechanical recitation of formulas, but as a mystical elevation, an absorption of consciousness in the contemplation of a principle both permeating and transcending our world.

Alexis Carrell, *Man, The Unknown*, 1935

The Art of Prayer and Worship

Prayer and acts of ritual worship express our love and devotion for deity. Prayer is the process we use to communicate directly with deity and ritual allows us to share this devotion with others. By verbally expressing our thoughts through prayer, we substantiate their existence; by physically acting out our emotions in ritual, we declare our allegiance to deity.

All prayers and acts of ritual worship are channels through which the devotee is able to reunite himself or herself with the light or aura of the Holy Spirit. This channeling is created through a transubstantiation of energy in which the participant's consciousness is made aware of the true significance of the god and goddess being worshiped. The realization, or acknowledgment, of that which is greater provides the

devotee with the opportunity to embrace his or her gods on a personal level. This reunion with divine potential is the main objective of all religious ceremonies.

The rituals and sacraments that follow form the principal body of the prayer and supplication segment of each ceremony and therefore constitute the formal portion of the liturgical calendar at Our Lady of Enchantment as recorded in our *Temple Book of Prayer and Scripture*.¹ We use the first two rituals at our Friday Night Church Service. These rituals are followed by our monthly Lunar and Solar rituals and finally by those rites that make up our Ten Holy Days of Obligation.

Our Lady of Enchantment is a legally recognized Church with a large congregation and membership; all our rites and ceremonies are designed primarily for group participation. We also try to divide the rituals' speaking equally, so many participants have the chance to express themselves.

The passages are marked PRIEST or PRIESTESS for those leading the ritual and performing the sacraments; and ATTENDANT for the Attendants who assist the priest and priestess during the ritual. All of the parts, except for the Invocations to the God and Goddess, the Rite of Union, and the Rite of Redemption, are interchangeable. These acts of high ritual worship are sacred to the gods and therefore must be consummated by the appropriate and properly initiated members of the priesthood.

For most of our ceremonies, we use two sets of altar candles. Those placed on the altar itself are lighted prior to the ceremony; those that stand beside the altar are table height and are lighted during the ceremony. A bookstand is used to hold the *Temple Book of Prayer and Scripture* for the conducting priesthood's reference. The bookstand leaves the leaders' hands free so they can gesture when appropriate. Finally, we only perform the sacred Rite of Union and Rite of Redemption during our Holy Days of Obligation. During our Friday Night Church Services and Lunar and Solar Rites, we use a modified Common Wine Blessing to express the symbiosis that occurs during the Rite of Union. The full text of the Common Wine Blessing is included where used. I recommend that you read the footnotes, as they provide some important insights into the meanings and workings of the rites themselves.

If you follow a solitary path, you will need to make some modifications if you wish to practice our ceremonies. However, the process of adapting properly constructed rituals to your own needs can be both physically rewarding and spiritually uplifting. As long as you take care and show attention with regard to deity and composition, our ceremonies should serve as proper guidelines.

Friday Night Church

Ritual of the Prayer Chest

This ritual provides the opportunity for each member to personally petition the God and Goddess on their behalf. Members write their desires on small pieces of paper placed in the prayer chest and blessed during the ceremony. After the ritual, the contents of the prayer chest are emptied into the censer and burned, allowing the smoke to take the prayers and wishes to the gods.

Basic Requirements

The altar is covered with a white cloth; on it are placed the candles, Athame, Chalice filled with a mixture of red and white wine, salt and water bowls, censer,² bells, aspergillum, oil for anointing, and a small box with a lid to be used as the prayer chest.

Before the ritual begins, participants write out their wish on a piece of paper, which they take into ritual with them.

The Ritual of the Prayer Chest

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All members enter the Chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Opening Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle.

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Blessed be this torch of truth and illumination
For it shall deliver us from ignorance.*

(Left)

*Blessed be this torch of reason and wisdom
For it shall bring us toward understanding.*

The Consecration

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS consecrate the elements and cast the circle³ (Chapter 18).

Principle Ritual Liturgy

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar and genuflects. He or she picks up the prayer chest and proceeds around the circle, collecting the petitions in the chest. The ATTENDANT returns to the altar and holds the prayer chest in offering to the Goddess, saying:

*Blessed shall be all who accept the sacred spirit
For they shall be blessed and endureth forever.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she picks up the prayer chest. The ATTENDANT proceeds to offer the chest at each of the Quadrants, saying with great passion:

(East)

*Redeemer of Great Mystery
Whose Secrets are in the Air
Let thy weary traveler
In your secrets share!*

(South)

*Redeemer of Great Mystery
Whose Powers shine through the night
Let our journey now begin
As we come into your Light!*

(West)

*Redeemer of Great Mystery
Whose Force comes from the sea
Let us rapture in your Glory
That shall one day make us free!*

(North)

*Redeemer of Great Mystery
Whose Wisdom comes from earth
As now our journey ends
Through death we gain rebirth!*

The PRIEST genuflects, picks up the prayer chest, and holds it in offering as he speaks with great emotion:

*Eternal Father, our prayers now hear
Great Sire of Gods whom all revere.*

*Endow us with your powers strong
For that is what we crave and long.
That in your sacred Name we stand
And only ask you lend a hand.
To help us proudly in your way
As we sing your praises every day.
And to our sacred rite benevolent attend
And grant us happy life and blessed end.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The PRIESTESS genuflects and faces the congregation, saying:

*We gather in celebration and praise
In honor of our Lord and Lady.
For they bring forth understanding
Of the secret nature of all things.
It is before their sacred altar
That all are refreshed and renewed.
In our Lord we find strength and fortitude
In our Lady we find inspiration and wisdom.
When their power and potential meet
They create and bring forth light and life.
We beseech them this night to forgive our errors
To accept our sacrifice of devotion
And bring forth their blessings upon these petitions.*

The Invocation

The PRIESTESS rings the bells, picks up the prayer chest, and hands it to the PRIEST. The PRIEST genuflects, faces the altar, and holds the chest high in offering as he invokes the God (Chapter 18).

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The PRIEST hands the prayer chest to the PRIESTESS, who holds it in offering, saying:

*Blessed is the Sacred Virgin
For She brings forth light
Blessed is the Holy Mother
For She brings forth life
Blessed is the Wise One
For She brings forth Love!*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The congregation holds hands and chants to raise energy, which is directed into the prayer chest. (The hand holding and chanting are optional; if you wish, you may offer a special prayer, meditation, or appropriate reading instead.)

Common Wine Blessing

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, ring the bells, and genuflect. The PRIESTESS picks up the Chalice and holds it in front of her as the PRIEST picks up the Athame, and holds it over the Chalice. Each recites as follows:

PRIESTESS

*Behold the Maiden's Cup of Desire
The Vessel of Creation
Behold the Grail of Great Mystery
The Cauldron of Regeneration.*

PRIEST

*Behold the Sword of Flaming Passion
The Lance of Strength and Power
Behold the Rod of High Authority
The Bringer of Fruit and Flower.*

The PRIEST plunges the Athame into the Chalice as both say:

PRIEST and PRIESTESS

*Together yet separate
And always as one
Are the Lord and the Lady
So their will may be done!*

The PRIEST passes the wine to the other members, saying as they reciprocate:

Blessed are the faithful, for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the Quadrants, beginning with the North, saying:

(North)

*Let the North, the home of all that is green
And fruitful, bring forth our desires.*

(West)

*Let the West, the home of our watery beginnings,
Bring comfort and peace.*

(South)

*Let the South, the home of fire and inspiration,
Lend us power and strength.*

(East)

*Let the East, the home of moonlight and consciousness,
Always empower our spirits.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Blessed be this torch of reason and wisdom
For it shall bring us toward understanding.*

(Right)

*Blessed be this torch of truth and illumination
For it shall deliver us from ignorance.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST rings the bells and recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The Ritual of Candle Blessing

The intent of this ritual is to bring the blessings of the God and Goddess into our homes on a regular basis. Each person attending the ceremony should bring a candle that corresponds in color to his or her God or Goddess. During the ritual, the PRIESTESS and PRIEST transfer the power of the Goddess, which has been invoked, into these candles. The participants can take the candles home and burn them as desired.

Basic Requirements

The altar is covered with a yellow or white cloth; on it are placed the candles, Athame, Chalice filled with a mixture of red and white wine, salt and water bowls, censer, bells, aspergillum, oil for anointing, and a large yellow or gold pillar candle.

The Ritual of Candle Blessing

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All members enter the Chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

I light the night which they have made

May darkness flee this temple.

(Left)

I light the path which they have set

May we continue in their wisdom. So be it!

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and picks up the yellow candle. He or she lights it and holds it in offering, saying:

He who seeks shall learn

He who asks shall receive

He who knows shall teach

He who has faith in the spirit

Shall always remain in the light

So shall it be!

The PRIEST approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He takes the candle from the ATTENDANT and proceeds to offer it at each one of the Quadrants, beginning in the east, saying:

(East)

*Raphael, Keeper of the East
Lord of the Morning Light,
Inspiration of the elusive Wind,
Bless us with your Sacred Sight.*

(South)

*Michael, Guardian of the South,
Lord of Burning Fire,
Awareness of the Midday Sun,
Bring forth our Desire.*

(West)

*Gabriel, Ruler of the West,
Lord of the Twilight Hour,
Bringer of Emotional Control,
Provide us with Psychic Power.*

(North)

*Uriel, Preserver of the North,
Lord of the Inner Earth,
Granter of Physical Pleasure,
To our dreams give birth.*

The Invocation

The PRIEST hands the candle to the PRIESTESS. She rings the bells, genuflects, and invokes the Goddess (Chapter 18).

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The PRIESTESS hands the candle to the PRIEST. He follows her around the circle as she anoints each member's candle, saying: *May the power of the Lady be with you.*

ALL

May the power of the Lady be with you.

Common Wine Blessing

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, ring the bells, and genuflect. The PRIESTESS picks up the Chalice and holds it in front of her as the PRIEST picks up the Athame, and holds it over the Chalice. Each recites as follows:

PRIESTESS

*Behold the Maiden's Cup of Desire
The Vessel of Creation
Behold the Grail of Great Mystery
The Cauldron of Regeneration.*

PRIEST

*Behold the Sword of Flaming Passion
The Lance of Strength and Power
Behold the Rod of High Authority
The Bringer of Fruit and Flower.*

The PRIEST plunges the Athame into the Chalice as both say:

PRIEST and PRIESTESS

*Together yet separate
And always as one
Are the Lord and the Lady
So their will may be done!*

The PRIEST passes the wine to the other members, saying as they reciprocate:

Blessed are the faithful, for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the Quadrants, beginning with the North, saying:

(North)

*Let now the North, the home of all that is green
And fruitful, manifest our desires.*

(West)

*Let now the West, the home of our watery beginnings,
Stabilize our emotions.*

(South)

*Let now the South, the home of mental awareness,
Grant us strength and power.*

(East)

*Let now the East, the home of moonlight and consciousness,
Endow us with great wisdom.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the altar candles, saying:

(Left)

Let now the wisdom of the Lady be our light.

(Right)

Let now the power of the Lord be our strength.

Closing Benediction

The PRIESTESS ring the bells, recites the Closing Benediction, and banishes the power of the circle (Chapter 18).

Lunar and Solar Services

The Full Moon Ceremony

In almost every Wiccan/Pagan tradition, it is a common practice to meet and celebrate the energy of the Goddess on her most sacred time of the full pregnant moon. At this time, most practitioners of the Pagan Way set aside time to worship the Goddess, work magic, and share among themselves the secrets of their craft. Essentially, the celebration of the full moon is restricted to those members who have been initiated into the priesthood and form the leadership nucleus of each religious group. At Our Lady of Enchantment, we have long subscribed to this arrangement of limiting participation in our lunar rites to only the ordained priesthood. We have found it is much easier to create and maintain a strong spiritual focus when everyone participating in the ritual is thoroughly trained and in tune with each other. This type of group dynamic is not always possible with a congregation of mixed⁴ members.

For the most part, our full moon celebrations follow as closely as possible the previously discussed ritual format. The major differences are the elimination of the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption, which have been replaced with blessings that stress the Lunar or Goddess aspect being emphasized.

Basic Requirements

For this ceremony, the altar is covered with a white cloth.⁵ On it are placed the two main altar candles, the Chalice filled with white wine, the Athame, salt and water bowl, a censer, and the bells. In addition, you will need a bowl filled with spring water into which has been placed a floating candle. Fresh white, pink, or light yellow flowers make a nice touch and add to the femininity of the ceremony.

When the altar and circle preparations have been completed, the appointed members light the Quadrant and altar candles (Chapter 18).

The Liturgy of the Lunar Rite

All members of the priesthood gather in the chapel or ritual area.

The Opening

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar and lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Gentle Mother, meek and mild.
Look upon your seeking child,
With this candle I now light
Please bring us joy on this night.*

(Left)

*I approach you, Lady of gentle grace
To bless and protect this sacred space,
With this torch of truth and praise
Gently guide us through all our days.
So mote it be!*

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Opening Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18). The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

With the preparation of sacred space completed, an ATTENDANT approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He or she picks up the bowl with the floating candle and offers it to the Goddess at each one of the Quadrants, staring with the East, proclaiming:

(East)

*There is but one spirit and it dwells within
For it is the truth from where we begin.*

(South)

*There is but one spark and it burns us like fire
It comes from a passion brought forth from desire.*

(West)

*There is but one feeling and it is our emotion
It swells deep within, crashes forth like the ocean.*

(North)

*There is but one reason and it comes from rebirth
To live, love, and die with wisdom on earth.*

The ATTENDANT returns, faces the altar, and genuflects. He or she holds the cup or bowl in offering to the Goddess and leads the group in the following proclamation:

ALL

*There is but one spirit and it dwells within
For it is the truth from where we begin.
There is but one spark and it burns us like fire
It comes from a passion brought forth from desire.
There is but one feeling and it is our emotion
It swells deep within and crashes forth like the ocean
There is but one reason and it comes from rebirth
To live, love, and die with wisdom on earth.*

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the water candle and holds it in offering to the Goddess, saying:

*Lady of desire, reflection of light
You are motion, direction, and our second sight.
Mother of creation the original source
You are potential, power, the ultimate force.
Grandmother of time, wise one from above
Do we summon thee here with honor and love.*

ALL

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen

Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!

The Salutation

The ATTENDANT hands the bowl and floating candle to the PRIEST who begins the Salutation of the Goddess in anticipation of her arrival.⁶

*Gracious Goddess and Mother of All,
Give us the wisdom to discover you,
The intelligence to understand you,
The diligence to seek after you,
The patience to wait for you,
The openness of mind to accept you,
And the dedication to proclaim you,
We welcome you within our hearts
Now and forever; so shall it be!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST places the bowl and floating candle in the center of the altar, rings the bells, genuflects, and picks up the Chalice. He kneels in front of the PRIESTESS and holds the Chalice in offering as he speaks with great reverence:

*Lady of the Morning Star
Queen of the Heavenly Sea
Power of the mighty wind
You alone were chosen to be.*

*Lady who guides the mighty Angels
Mother of selfless devotion
Enchantress of the mysteries
And Keeper of time and motion.*

*Lady we now invite thee here
As the Virgin of pure love
The one who moves the soul of man
With her splendor from above.*

*Lady we now invite thee here
As the Mother of sacred earth
Whose power is beyond compare
When dreams are given birth.*

*Lady we now invite thee here
As the Wisdom from the past
That within this holy Grail
Come blessings that will last.*

The PRIESTESS places her hands over the Chalice and speaks with great reverence:

*Behold the Brilliant Evening Star
The Virgin of Celestial Light
Behold the Goddess's from afar
The Mother of Second Sight.*

*Behold the Queen of twilight hour
The Wise and Vigilante Protector
Behold the Goddess's silent power
The Mother most regal and Splendor*

*Behold the Lady who must descend
The Mystery hidden beneath the veil
Behold the Goddess who rises again
The keeper of the golden Grail.*

The PRIESTESS picks up the Athame, and before plunging it into the Chalice exclaims:

*I offer to thee courage and wisdom
And I bring thee strength and might
I offer to thee warmth and pleasure
And I bring thee love and light
I offer to thee the seed of the sun
And I bring thee honor and power
I offer to thee the staff of life
And I bring thee fruit and the flower.*

The Invocation

The PRIEST rises and hands the Chalice to the PRIESTESS who, with great emotion,⁷ performs the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). All members salute the Goddess by saying:

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen!*

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS share the wine and pass it to the other members, saying:

Blessed are the faithful, for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.

At this point, there is a meditation, group work, or spiritual reflection as determined prior to the ritual.

The Conclusion

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, ring the bells, and genuflects. He or she proceeds to the North, extinguishing the Quadrant candles in order, saying:

(North)

*There is but one reason, it came from the earth
So to our dreams the gods would give birth.*

(West)

*There is but one feeling, it comes from the ocean
To help us learn control over each emotion.*

(South)

*There is but one spark, it comes from fire
Brings us the passion to create desire.*

(East)

*There is but one spirit, it came from the air
And with us its knowledge and wisdom did share.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He or she extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Let now the potential, Power, and force
Return unto the original source.*

(Left)

*Let now the motion, Direction, and sight
Return unto the original light.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS takes up the Athame and banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Sunday Morning Solar Rite

The Solar Rite is optional, mainly because many Wiccans and Pagans are offended and dismayed with anything totally God-oriented. However, many of our students and the vast majority of our members are not so prejudiced and enjoy the balance created by having both Solar and Lunar rites available.

This ritual is dedicated to the God of the Sun and is performed at either sunrise or high noon on the first Sunday of the month. As with our Lunar rite, this celebration is

open to only the initiated priesthood. It also follows the same ritual format as the lunar rite, except the blessings are replaced with those that stress the solar god concept.

Basic Requirements

For this ceremony the altar is covered with a red or yellow cloth; on it are placed two orange altar candles, the Chalice filled with red wine, the Athame, salt and water bowls, a censer, and the bells. For the representation of the Sun God, we use a large red candle⁸ with four wicks, which we place on a pedestal in the center of the circle.

When the altar and circle preparations have been completed, the appointed members light the Quadrant and altar candles (Chapter 18).

The Liturgy of the Solar Rite

All members of the priesthood gather in the chapel or ritual area.

The Opening

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar and lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*O Great Father of Burning delight
Let all your children see,
As they revel in full sunlight
The glory that belongs to Thee.*

(Left)

*O Great Father of Heavenly power
Whose splendor does inspire
Be with us at this morning hour
And grace us with your fire.*

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Opening Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18). The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

With the preparation of sacred space completed, an ATTENDANT approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He or she recites the following proclamation:

*O Great Father to whom the Sun belongs
Providence of great mystery
Keeper of the Primal Fire
Guardian of unapproachable light
Host of the heavenly vault.
Be with us now and forever, Amen!*

ALL

Be with us now and forever, Amen!

The ATTENDANT rings the bells three times and places some incense in the censer, which he or she hands to the PRIEST.

The PRIEST walks once around the circle, carrying the incense and saying:

*Holy art thou, Lord of the Most High
Blessed is the Son of Your creation
As is the Child of His seed and the
Holy Spirit of Light and Life.*

The PRIEST returns to the altar and replaces the censer.

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. She proceeds to the center of the circle where she delivers the following proclamation:

*Praise be the Lord,
The King of Kings,
Sovereignty of the Heavens,
First breeze of breath,
Primal flame of fire,
Initial pleasure of passion,
Principal making of matter,
Sire of the sacrifice,
Father of the Beloved Sun,
Creator of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us now and forever, Amen.*

The Salutation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He lights a small taper candle. He takes the candle to the center of the circle and begins the salutation with great emotion:

*At this time on the first of days
God the Father's name we praise,
Who, creation's Lord of Spring
Did the world from darkness bring.
For on this day the eternal Son
The rising King, his triumph won
And when the Holy spirit came
He brought the gift of living flame.
We call the blessed Three in One
Let your will and work be done,
We pray the words that set us free
As we start each day our faith in Thee.*

The PRIEST lights each wick of the jumbo candle and then says:

*Glory to the Father, to the Son and
To the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, it is
Now and will be forever.
Amen!*

ALL
*Glory to the Father, to the Son, and
To the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, it is now
And will be forever.
Amen!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and ring the bells. The PRIESTESS picks up the Chalice, kneels in front of the PRIEST, and holds the Chalice in offering, saying with great reverence:

*O Sacred Son, life of all below
Thou a fount of life and fire
Surpassing all the joys we know
And all we should desire.*

*My longing heart calls thy name
For thee I do adore
And seeking thee, itself in flame
To seek thee more and more.*

*This cup I hold shall thee bless
That we may love alone
And ever in our lives express
The rapture we have known.*

The PRIEST places his hands over the Chalice and recites with great reverence:

*Behold our Lord and Father,
Eternal heavenly light,
To whom the Sun belongs,
Blessed is His sacrament,
Kept as a covenant,
With the sacrificed God,
Who shed his blood,
For the love of the Land,
That life everlasting,
Should be our reward,
As we drink the elixir of life.*

The PRIEST picks up the Athame and before plunging it into the Chalice exclaims:

*Let thy grace my sole chief treasure
Love's pure flame within thee raise.
King that my words can't measure
The blessing of your splendid praise.
Within my heart is devoted feeling
Vainly should my lips express.
I come before thy altar kneeling
And pray this wine thee shall bless.*

The Invocation

The PRIESTESS rises and hands the Chalice to the PRIEST, who holds it in offering, saying with great emotion:

*Sol Invictus is the high Sun Lord
As Pan and Apollo are much adored.
The Christ has risen, a twice-born Son
Ascending to the Father and Holy One.
Wearing a crown of glistening gold
His glory and majesty we behold.
O Savior who became a sun-blessed ray
We rejoice in your rebirth this day
And hope for the Spirit and peace divine
To grace and bless this sacred wine.*

The PRIEST faces the group, holds the wine in offering, and speaks the following:

*Glory to the Father, to the Son, and
To the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, it is now
And will be forever.
Amen!*

ALL
*Glory to the Father, to the Son, and
To the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, it is now
And will be forever.
Amen!*

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS share the wine and then pass it to the other members, saying:

Blessed are the faithful, for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.

At this point, there is a meditation, group work, or spiritual reflection determined prior to the ritual.

The Conclusion

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He or she proceeds to the North, extinguishing the Quadrant candles accordingly (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He or she extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)
*O Great Father of Heavenly power
Whose presence reigns from above
Be with us at this morning hour
And grace us with your love.*

(Right)
*O Great Father of Burning delight
Your mysteries we now know,
As we extinguish now this light
In peace profound we go.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST approaches the altar, rings the bells, and genuflects. He recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS takes up the Athame and banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The Ten Holy Days of Obligation

People recognize the changing of the seasons: the smell of spiced cider, a chill in the air, and the ripening pumpkin bring forth the image of autumn. Snow-laced trees, a hearth draped with holly, and the sweet scent of bay remind us of winter. Clear blue skies, daffodils, and the chirping of birds tell us spring is on the way. Hazy skies, high heat, humidity, and an occasional thunderstorm make the presence of summer known. And so the wheel turns, bringing hope, promise, growth, and reward; the cycle of birth, life, and death continues.

Like most Pagan traditions, our system of spirituality professes a belief in the beauty, power, and presence of the energies that prevail during the different seasons. For this reason, we find it spiritually uplifting to celebrate these shifts or transitions with a Sabbat ritual that expresses our appreciation for the times of light and life.

There are two ways to celebrate the seasonal changes or Sabbats. The first approach is one of spiritual thanksgiving, which deals strictly with the honor and glorification of deity and is the way the Sabbats are approached here. The second method is one of magical petition and those rituals can be found, in their entirety, in my first book, *Reclaiming the Power* (Llewellyn, 1992). Although the rituals may seem similar in their approach, they are different in their presentation. In addition to the Solstices, Equinoxes, and mid-solar changes, we have added two exceptionally powerful rituals to our calendar. The first is the Rite of Remembrance, celebrated on the Christian Good Friday; the second is the Feast of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated on September 7. These ten designated times complete our ten Holy Days of Obligation.

One note: At Our Lady of Enchantment, we celebrate the Sabbats on the exact date. We do not feel that it is too much to ask of our members to put aside ten days out of the year, be they weekend or weekday, for the God and Goddess. However, this observation is not a hard and fast rule; it is just the way we prefer to handle our spiritual obligations.

The Winter Solstice or Yule

Yule is a pre-Christian holiday or festival celebrated on the Winter Solstice, around December 21. It is the true New Year, both astronomically as well as spiritually. At this time, we see the simultaneous death and rebirth of the Sun-God represented in the shortest day and longest night of the year. From this time forward, the sun grows in power and strength. We use this time to acknowledge the Sun of Righteousness and welcome back the spiritual aspect of the light that brings life.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be a large yellow pillar candle, seasonal incense, and decorations. The ritual begins as usual:

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardians

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Blessed be the fire of faith which brings
Forth the light.*

(Left)

*Blessed be the light of the world which brings
Forth life.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she recites the following:

*Blessed be the White Goddess
Blessed be the Sacrificed King
Blessed be their Spiritual Seed
Blessed be their Children of Light.*

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He picks up the yellow candle and holds it in offering, saying:

*Desolate and dormant is the earth above
Fertile and vital is its soul below.
Our mind knows what our eyes cannot see
For all is resting and waiting.
The canopy of death hangs heavy about us
Life ends and life begins all in a moment.
We attain spiritual strength and happiness
When we seek from within rather than from
Without.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar; the PRIEST hands the ATTENDANT the candle, which he or she offers at each Quadrant, saying:

(East)

*Blessed be the light coming from the East
Which inspires us.*

(South)

*Blessed be the fire coming from the South
Which warms us.*

(West)

*Blessed be the moisture coming from the West
Which refreshes us.*

(North)

*Blessed be the fertile earth of the North
Which nourishes us.*

The ATTENDANT returns, genuflects, and places the candle on the altar.

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. She lights the yellow candle⁹ and places it in the center of the circle, saying:

*Lord and Lady of the Night
Of mist and of moonlight,
Though you are seldom seen
We meet you in the heart of dream,
Bless now our thoughts and deeds
And help us to fulfill our needs,
On this night we honor thee
To make your presence a reality,
Love and honor we give to thee
For all our blessings, so mote it be!*

ALL take hands and chant:

*God of Glory
God of Light
Return to us
This Solstice night!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He addresses the congregation:

*On this night we petition the presence of the
Lord of Light and the Lady of Life,
We revel in their wonderment and bathe
In their illumination,
We are guided and guarded by their love,
Wisdom, and understanding,
And only seek their blessings.
Let us sing their praises as they
lift up our hearts in joy and exaltation.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;*

*Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be Cerridwen and Cernunnos!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. The ATTENDANT rings the bells and the PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

ALL respond to the passing of the wine and host:

*Blessed are the faithful,
for they shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He proceeds to dismiss the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Blessed be the fire of faith for bringing
Forth the light.*

(Right)

*Blessed be the light of the world for bringing
Forth new life.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Imbolc or Oimele

Imbolc, also known as Oimele or Brigantia, is celebrated on February 1. This is the feast of the waxing light or feast of lights and is related to the Goddess Bridget or Bride. This great day is associated with the return of life and light. Imbolc marks the awakening of the earth and the promise of spring, a time of new beginnings.

The Eleusinian Mysteries included a torchlight procession on February 1 in honor of Demeter when she searched for her lost daughter, Persephone; when Persephone was found, light was brought back to the world. This is also the time of the virgin-maiden aspect of the Goddess, being courted by the young Lord God. Their passion for each other is felt in the seasonal energy at this time. Close in relationship to Imbolc is the Christian festival of Candlemas, celebrated on February 2, and is a time of purification.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be a white or pink Goddess (pillar) candle, seasonal incense, and fresh new flowers.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Fearless Lord, Protector and Father of All
Bring forth Light, Life, and Wisdom.*

(Left)

*White Maiden, Gentle Mother, Silent One
Deliver us from Ignorance and Darkness.*

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she picks up the Goddess candle, saying:

*Our Lady has been with us from the beginning
She is our Light and Life.
Our Lord comes from the glory of the Lady
And he is our Strength and Power.*

*Together they bring forth the wonderment
Of all things past and present.*

The ATTENDANT hands the candle to another ATTENDANT who offers it at each of the Quadrants, saying:

(East)

Let now the Dawn and Spring of Life come forth.

(South)

Let now the Fire and Spirit of Life come forth.

(West)

Let now the Passion and Love of Life come forth.

(North)

Let now the Balance and Wisdom of Life come forth.

The ATTENDANT returns to the altar and, still holding the candle, recites the following and ALL join in:

*Out of Death comes Life,
Out of Darkness comes Light,
Out of Winter comes Spring.*

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar and genuflects. She faces the group, saying:

*The Sun has been reborn and
Our Lord has risen,
The Moon reflects his glory and
Our Lady is transformed.
Together they bring forth Light and Life
Delivering us from Darkness, Death, and Sorrow.
Out of Death comes Life,
Out of Darkness comes Light,
Out of Winter comes Spring.*

ALL

*Out of Death comes Life,
Out of Darkness comes Light,
Out of Winter comes Spring.*

The Invitation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He faces the group, saying:

*Let us banish the Winter and welcome the Spring,
As Light brings Life to every living thing.
The Glory of the Gods we now behold,
For all that is given returns three fold.
As we revel in the warmth of their presence and light,
We pray they will bless and protect each of us this night.*

The PRIEST lights the Goddess candle,¹⁰ saying:

*For out of Death comes Life,
Out of Darkness comes Light,
Out of Winter comes Spring.*

ALL

*Out of Death comes Life,
Out of Darkness comes Light,
Out of Winter comes Spring.*

*Ayea, Ayea, Brighid¹¹
Ayea, Ayea, Brighid
Ayea, Ayea, Brighid
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, rings the bells three times, and recites:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;*

*Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be Brighid and Cernunnos!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He proceeds to dismiss the Guardians (Chapter 18).

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Lady of Light, Wise One, thou art pure in Spirit
And Love Eternal.*

(Right)

*Lord of Fire, Passionate One, thou art true Force
And Endless Power.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The Spring (Vernal) Equinox

The Vernal Equinox is celebrated around March 21. This is the time when the sun crosses the plane of the equator, making the day and night of equal length. The Vernal Equinox is the beginning of Spring and the agricultural season. Many Christian

Easter customs come from this festive occasion. The most popular of these practices is that of decorating eggs. In ancient Egypt, Rome, Greece, and Persia, brightly colored eggs were eaten at this time as symbols of immortality, fertility, and resurrection.

The Equinox is a time of balance, when we seek equality and harmony between the masculine and feminine forces in nature. It is also a time of resurrection when all life returns—one reason why Christianity decided upon this time for the resurrection of their divine king. The dates for Good Friday and Easter Sunday are calculated from the time of the Equinox.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be a basket filled with decorated eggs and bouquets of fresh flowers tied with ribbon and packages of seeds. Have enough so that each member can have an egg, seed packet, and bouquet of flowers to take home for their own altars.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation. All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Lord of the Dark realm descend,
And move the spirit of our soul.
Renew within the vital force,
Blend thy energies, make us whole.*

(Left)

*Lady from the Dark realm come,
Lead us into the new dawning day,*

*Protect us from the passions of man,
Guide us along thy secret way.*

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and picks up the basket of flowers and eggs. He or she offers them at each one of the Quadrants, beginning in the East, saying:

(East)

*May the blessings of the Spirit of Air
Bring forth new beginnings and insight.*

(South)

*May the blessings of the Spirit of Fire
Bring forth personal power and wisdom.*

(West)

*May the blessings of the Spirit of Water
Bring forth rest and regeneration.*

(North)

*May the blessing of the Spirit of Earth
Bring forth endurance and stability.*

The ATTENDANT returns and places the basket on the altar.

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. She faces the group, saying:

*Our Lord and Lady are known by many names;
They are our light and life.
We stand within their sacred temple and
Feel their presence, passion, and power.
This is their house, their home, their season
All hail to thee, Cerridwen and Cernunnos.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He picks up the basket of eggs and flowers, offers it to the Goddess, and turns and faces the group. Still holding the basket, he says:

*We invite Thee, O Ancient One
White Maiden, Blossoming Mother,
Seed of Spring.*

*Thou who are the bounty of desire,
Pregnant with promise and the
Living Earth.
Come, be with us now.*

*We invite Thee, O Horned One,
Antlered Stag, Green Lord
Quickening will of Light.*

*Thou who dies and returns
With the first bud of Spring
Come be with us now.*

*We invite Thee, Lord and Lady
Forces of regeneration
Powers of blessed earth and
Sacred sky to be with us
From dawn to dusk
In work and prayer
Now and forever, so be it!*

The PRIEST places the basket in the center of the circle and leads everyone in the chant:

*Blessed be the flower and seed
Grant to all what they need.*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, rings the bells three times, and recites:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;*

*Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be Cerridwen and Cernunnos!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He proceeds to dismiss the Guardians (Chapter 18).

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Blessed be the Seeds of Earth
That bring promise and hope.*

(Right)

*Blessed be the Light of the Spirit
That brings us new beginnings.*

The ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and retrieves the basket in the center of the circle. He or she offers it in closing to the four Quadrants, saying:

(North)

*Let us always remember the Earth,
For it provides hope and promise.*

(West)

*Let us always remember the Waters of Regeneration,
For they render rest and renewal.*

(South)

*Let us always remember the Fires of Passion
For they give us protection and power.*

(East)

*Let us always remember the Eternal Spirit
For it brings forth the first light of Spring.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The ATTENDANT stands at the edge of the circle and allows each member to take his or her seed package, egg, and flower bouquet as they leave.

Good Friday, Eucharist, Rite of Remembrance

The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek *Eucharistein*, meaning to give thanks. During the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread with his Apostles in an upper room of a house in Jerusalem, and the celebration of the Eucharist¹² came into being. By blessing the bread and the wine, which Jesus then shared with his disciples, the rite of the Eucharist was instituted and in time became the focal point of the Christian mass.

On Good Friday, at sunset, Christians all around the world gather in solemn reverence to remember their Son of God, Jesus the Christ. They gather to celebrate his symbolic passion and love for humanity and pray for his resurrection in the days to follow. With such an outpouring of love and emotion at this time, the energy levels are extremely high. It seems only reasonable to experience some of the spiritual ecstasy so abundant at this time.

I realize that many Wiccans and Pagans tremble with terror at the prospect of expressing any emotion whatsoever for the Christian Savior God, Jesus Christ. However, keep in mind that Jesus is just another version of the Pagan dying and resurrected god who gave his life for the good of the land and the people who lived on it. From a religious standpoint, everyone should be able to appreciate what Jesus said and did during his time. He was indeed a divine victim or sacrificial king in every sense of the word—one reason why every year at Our Lady of Enchantment, we repeat the Rite of Remembrance and celebrate the Eucharist of Christ.

At least four people are needed to perform the speaking parts for this ritual. Because the main focus of the ritual is on the blessing of the sacred Wine and Bread through the Rite of Union and Rite of Redemption, the entire ritual is memorized.

The main altar is in the North and a smaller altar is placed in the center of the circle. Both are covered with white altar cloths and draped with purple vestments. Candles on the main altar as well as those used for the Quadrants are purple. The floor altar candles are white and are placed next to the altar of offering. Easter lilies are placed on both altars and one at each of the Quadrants. In addition to the regular altar tools, the PRIEST uses his Staff, which should be decorated with a wreath of white flowers tied with purple ribbon.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

The Eucharist Rite of Remembrance

ALL follow the PRIEST, carrying the staff, into the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

The two ATTENDANTS approach the main altar, genuflect, and light their candles. They go to the altar of offering and light the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

Lord of Blood

Red Glory, Pulsing Bright

Cast away shadows

Bring in the light!

(Left)

Lady of Gleaming Beauty

Jewel of power

Enter our souls

For this hour!

The PRIESTESS and PRIEST approach the altar and genuflect. The PRIESTESS picks up the water bowl and the PRIEST picks up the salt bowl. They each offer them, saying:

PRIESTESS (water)

Blessed shall be this sacred fluid

Born of the raging sea

*Transformed into passion
Bringing us love and harmony!*

PRIEST (salt)
*Blessed shall be this sacred remembrance
Brought from the dark forest floor
Transformed into power
Bringing us life ever more!*

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardians

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18), using his staff rather than the Athame.

When the PRIEST returns to the altar, he genuflects, rings the bells three times, and faces the altar. Holding up his staff, he recites:

The Salutation

*Praise the Divine Victim and His glory,
Of His love we now sing;
Of the blood, the price exceeding,
Shed by our immortal King,
Destined for the world's redemption,
From the noble womb did spring.*

*From the Goddess as Virgin pure,
Born to us on earth below,
He was the man to teach the Word,
Spread the seeds of truth to sow;
Then he closed the solemn order
Miraculous his life of woe.*

*On the night of his Last Supper,
Seated with his chosen band,
He, the Paschal Victim eating,
Fulfills the Law's first command,
Then the food passed to his brethren,
Gives of himself back to the Land.*

*Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,
And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.*

ALL

*Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,
And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.*

The Invitation

An ATTENDANT takes his or her place in front of the altar of offering, ringing the bell three times and saying:

(ring the bell and say)

In thee we are reconciled.

(ring the bell and say)

In thee we feel harmony.

(ring the bell and say)

In thee we find love.

(ring the bell and say)

In thee we are made new again.

(ring the bell and say)

*Blessed are the Lord and Lady, for they
Bring unification of the mind and soul.*

*Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,
And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.*

ALL

*Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,
And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.*

An ATTENDANT rings the bell three times and the PRIEST and PRIESTESS genuflect, as do the attendants who are standing in front of the altar of offering.

The PRIEST picks up the Host container in offering and says the following:

(Hosts)

Lord of the Sacred and most Holy

Source of all Life,

Be thou ever constant and within us

So that we may remain in thy abundant joy!

The PRIESTESS picks up the vessels of red and white wine in offering and says the following:

(Red and white wine)

Lady of the night, Queen of all Mysteries

Source of invisible power,

*Be thou ever constant and within us
So that we may remain in thy abundant joy!*

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

One ATTENDANT reads the Twenty-Third Psalm, "The Lord is My Shepherd,"¹³ as the other ATTENDANT passes out the Remembrance tokens. (See the end of this ritual for token suggestions.)

The Conclusion

An ATTENDANT takes his or her place in front of the altar of offering, ringing the bell and saying:

*(Ring the bell)
In thee we are reconciled.*

(Ring the bell)

In thee we feel harmony.

(Ring the bell)

In thee we find love.

(Ring the bell)

In thee we are made new again.

(Ring the bell)

Blessed are the Lord and Lady for they

Bring unification of the mind and soul.

Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,

And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.

ALL

Praise be to the Father, and to the Mother,

And to the Lord of the Land. Amen.

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The ritual area is left with candles lit so that all may return for personal prayers and blessings if they wish.

At Our Lady of Enchantment, we make up little cards with an explanation of what the cross symbolizes (see below) on one side and a copy of the selected reading done during the rite on the other and attach a small cross to it. These are wrapped in purple paper, tied with white ribbons, and given as ritual remembrances to all who participate.

Key Symbol—The Cross

The cross is a universal symbol of communication between heaven and earth. The cross also represents the Tree of Life and the Tree of Nourishment. The vertical line represents the masculine, positive, and active polarity; the horizontal line represents the feminine, negative, and passive side of nature. The cross is dualism in nature and the union of opposites as the material and spiritual planes cross and unite with each other.

Beltane or May Eve

Beltane is celebrated on April 30 (May Eve) and is primarily a fire and fertility festival. Beltane, meaning “Bel-Fire,” is named after the Celtic God Bel, also known as Beli or Balor, which means Lord. Some seem to think that Bel was comparable to the Celtic Gaul god, Cernunnos. This is possible as most male gods relate to the sun and fire aspects.

Beltane is also the time of the May Queen, in which a young woman was chosen from the village to represent the Earth Goddess and reflected the transformation of maiden to mother. This was also the time of the kindling of the "Need Fire," when all fires in the village were extinguished and ritually relit the following day.

Fertility played an important role in the Beltane celebrations. The most significant symbol of this was the May Pole, also known as the *axis mundi*, around which the universe revolved. The pole personified the thrusting masculine force; the disk at the top depicted the receptive female. Tied to the pole were seven colored ribbons, which represented the seven colors of the rainbow. Fire and fertility, for the most part, dominated the rituals at this time.

Beltane is one of the two highest of the Holy Days of Obligation (the other being Samhain on October 31). As the aspect of fertility and growth is personified at this time, the Rite of Union and Rite of Redemption take on a greater significance, as these are the two rites that allow us to unite spiritually with the God and Goddess.

In addition to the usual altar and tools, there should be a cauldron placed in the center of the circle, surrounded by flowers and with a candle inside. There should also be a crown of fresh flowers that the PRIEST places on the head of the PRIESTESS in remembrance of the May Queen and Goddess reigning as the Queen of heaven.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Blessed be our Lord of Light and Power,
For He transforms our souls for this hour.*

(Left)

*Blessed be our Lady of Love and Passion
For our Hearts and Future She shall fashion.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, rings the bells, and recites the following:

*Let now the Light and Life of the Creative Spirit
Deliver us from Darkness, bring us
Wisdom and Clear Vision, as we progress
Toward our Lord and Lady. So be it!*

The Salutation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He lights a taper candle and proceeds to the center of the circle where he recites the following and lights the candle in the cauldron:¹⁴

*By the Oak and by the Stone,
Stands the Cauldron of the Crone,
Mistress of our Birth and Death
From who comes life's first breath,
We approach your altar on this Night
To summon forth thy sacred Light,
And all of those who dare to seek
Of your Mysteries we shall speak,
With torch and flame this fire we fashion
To arouse your tempting passion,
For you are the Maiden, Mother, and Wife
Whose Triple Will brings forth all Life!*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invitation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and speaks the following:

*Cerridwen, Glorious Lady of the Moon,
Holiest of Holy, we honor thee this night.
Thou art the Maiden, the Mother and the
Crone, Transcendent and Ageless Splendor,*

*To whom we pay homage. Now do we celebrate
The cycle of return, the promise. For all
That shall be touched by Thy Light, shall
Be Transformed.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and picks up the crown of flowers. He escorts the PRIESTESS to the center of the circle where they stand beside the cauldron. The PRIESTESS kneels and the PRIEST holds the crown in offering, saying:

*Thou who rises from the Raging Sea,
Shall now accept thy destiny.
Let now the Lady of Inner Earth,
To the Land of promise give birth.
So that all the seed, fruit, and grain
Shall in abundance come forth again!*

The PRIEST places the crown on the head of the PRIESTESS and she rises.

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness*

*Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Blessed be the Lady who came from the night
For she has brought to all love and light.*

(Right)

*Blessed be the Lord who shines forth as the sun
For his will and work shall now be done.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIESTESS recites the Closing Benediction and then banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The Summer (or Midsummer) Solstice

Summer or Midsummer Solstice is celebrated around June 21, and is the longest day and shortest night of the year. The festival of the Summer Solstice is concerned with both fire and water. From this point on, the sun declines in its power; the symbology

of fire was used in keeping the sun alive. The water element was used for the ritual blessing of individuals, sacred wells, and springs.

One of our ancestors' customs was to leap over or pass through fires. It was believed that the higher one jumped, the higher the crops would grow. As with Beltane, cattle were driven through the fires for purification and fumigation. It was also believed that the fire repelled the powers of evil and protected the cattle as well as all who passed through it.

Another symbol used at this time is that of the wheel. The wheel's turning suggests the season's turning or progression. Wheels were decorated with flowers and lighted candles. The decorated wheels were taken to a body of water and set afloat.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be a yellow floating candle placed in a bowl of water. The altar of offering should be set in the center of the circle with the floor altar candles next to it. Fresh flowers should be used to decorate the area. For this ritual, we make wheels out of fresh flowers for each of the Quadrants.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Cernunnos be with us in truth and might
As in your honor this candle we light.*

(Left)

*Cerridwen now send your divine guiding power
Through candle flame bless each this hour.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and picks up the bowl with the floating candle in it. He or she offers this at each of the Quadrants, saying:

(East)

*Let the winds of consciousness bring
Forth insight and wisdom
As the East gives rise to the light.*

(South)

*Let the fires of awareness bring
Forth motivation and inspiration
As the South gives host to the Sun.*

(West)

*Let the waves of completeness bring
Forth love and passion
As the West accepts the twilight.*

(North)

*Let the blossoming fertile Earth bring
Forth manifestation of desire
As the North returns from darkness.*

The ATTENDANT places the floating candle in the bowl on the altar of offering.

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and picks up a taper candle. She lights it and proceeds to the altar of offering where she lights the floating candle, saying:

*Our Lord is the fire of the Golden Sphere,
Our Lady's time now draws near,
For through the candle flame they speak,
Bringing insight and wisdom to all who seek.
The mystery of life within their power lies,
That will in time allow mankind to rise,
Above the limitations of this confined earth,
To all we know and see they have given birth.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!

The Invitation

The PRIEST faces the group and delivers the following message:

*At this time of Light and Life
Do we celebrate the Summer Solstice,
For all life has blossomed forth
And Nature flourishes around us.
Great indeed is our joy this night
As our Lord and Lady bless us with
Their abundance.
Our Lord provides strength and passion
And our Lady love and understanding.
They allow us to progress and grow
As they free us from past restrictions.
Great indeed are their blessings.*

The PRIESTESS goes to the altar of offering and picks up the floating candle. She holds it in offering to the Goddess as she recites the following:

*To the Lord and Lady
Our gratitude we show
As in life and spirit
We progress and grow.
Let us all thank them
By our work and deed
That we may all receive
What we wish and need.*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The PRIEST asks everyone to take hands and form a circle around the altar of offering as they chant the following:

*Candle and flame
Bring joy and gain!*

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
we acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
we affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
we pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
we now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

Blessed be the Lady, for she is life and light.

(Right)

Blessed be the Lord and all who gathered here this night.

Closing Benediction

The PRIESTESS recites the Closing Benediction and then banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Lughnasadh or Lammas

Lughnasadh (Celtic) or Lammas (Christian) is held on August 1. *Lughnasadh* means loaf feast and refers to the first loaves baked from the first grain harvested. The priesthood blessed these loaves and distributed them among the members of the congregation. Observing this festival ensured an abundance of fruit and grain in the months to come. The first fruit picked or sheaf cut was considered sacred to the Gods and therefore treated in a special manner.

Corn and grain are the primary features of rituals at this time because they symbolize the fertility of the earth, awakening of life, and life coming from death. The golden ears of corn are seen as the offspring of the marriage of the sun and virgin earth. Corn and wine, like bread and wine, represent human's labor and ability to sustain life.

Wine and candle making were also done at this time of year, along with food preserving and other preparations for winter. Some customs include rush-bearing, decorating water wells with vines, and blessing food.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be a large John Barleycorn, which is a man shaped out of cookie dough that contains seven grains, including cornmeal and barley flour. There should be a basket large enough to hold the corn that each member brings. Every participant should bring at least one ear of corn.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Our Lord is the passion
He brings forth the light
The harvest is of his seed.*

(Left)

*Our Lady is the power
She brings forth the life
The harvest is her reward.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, rings the bells, and recites the following:

*Our Lady teaches that naught receives naught.
That as we have sowed, so shall we reap.
On this night all shall receive accordingly,
Nothing shall be withheld for those deserving.
For blessed are the fruits of our labors.*

The ATTENDANT goes around the circle, gathering the corn and leading all in the chant:

As the corn—we are reborn!

The PRIEST takes the basket of corn from the ATTENDANT and offers it at each one of the Quadrants, saying:

(East)

*I call upon soft and whispering winds
The realm of intellect and perception
Bring forth the spirit of wisdom.*

(South)

*I call upon the warm and quickening light
For thou art fire and inspiration
Which warms the hearth and heart.*

(West)

*I call upon the cool waters of sea and stream
The realm of our watery beginnings
Temper our emotions with love and compassion.*

(North)

*I call upon flowering field and forest
For thou our land of beauty and pleasure
Bring forth abundance and great bounty.*

The PRIEST places the corn in the center of the circle.

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and recites the following:

*Once again has the Goddess provided,
For our seeds, once planted, became flowers
And those flowers became the fruit of our Desires.
Bountiful is our Harvest and great shall be our reward
We rejoice, as we once again come full cycle.*

The Invitation

The PRIEST picks up the John Barleycorn, holds it in offering, and asks the blessing upon it as follows:

*Corn and barley are of this earth
With love and work we gave them birth,
Though they were just once small seeds
Through them we achieved our wishes and needs.
Behold John Barleycorn who was our plight
Brings us joy and abundance this night,
Because of him we know and see
The truth of our own reality.*

The PRIEST hands the John Barleycorn to an ATTENDANT who offers him at each Quadrant while another ATTENDANT reads the legend of John Barleycorn:¹⁵

(East)

*There were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hath swore a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.*

*They took a plough and plough'd him down
Put clods upon his head,
And they hath sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.*

*But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.*

(South)

*The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong,*

*His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.*

*The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.*

*His color sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.*

*They've ta'en a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
They ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue of forgerie.*

(West)

*They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full score;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.*

*They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heaved in John Barleycorn—
There let him sink or swim.*

*They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still as signs of life appear'd,
They tossed him to and fro.*

(North)

*They wasted o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But the miller used him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.*

*And they have ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;*

*And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.*

*John Barleycorn was a hero bold
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
T' make your courage rise.*

The ATTENDANT returns to the altar and hands the John Barleycorn to the PRIESTESS. She holds it in offering and says:

*Our Lord and Lady shall provide
Long after all has withered and died,
Though they have given us life through the land
What we now hold, is the work of our hand,
And always remember, just as the corn
We, like they, are ever dying and reborn.*

The PRIESTESS places the John Barleycorn in the center of the circle with the corn. All take hands and chant the following to bless the corn and grain:

*Corn and grain
Bring joy and gain!*

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

Our Lord and Lady

We acknowledge your greatness;

Our Lord and Lady

We affirm your wisdom and love;

Our Lord and Lady

We pray for your presence;

Our Lord and Lady

We now ask for your blessing.

Blessed be the Lord and Lady!

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

Blessed be the Maiden, Mother, Crone

As we now approach the Harvest Home.

(Right)

Blessed be the King of corn and grain

As now the season of abundance does wain.

Closing Benediction

The PRIESTESS recites the Closing Benediction and then banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

The John Barleycorn is usually placed on the feast table for everyone to partake of. Members take their ear of corn home, dry it, and use it to make their corn baba for Autumn Equinox (See Endnote 16).

The Feast of the Blessed Virgin

The Feast of the Blessed Virgin occurs on September 7 and/or 8. It is a celebration of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, like many Christian deities, was a compilation

of many early Pagan goddesses. Much of the symbolism that surrounds Mary is identical to that of Ishtar and Isis.

For this ritual, we emphasize the principle of everlastingness and realize the nature of constant motion from birth through life to death. All matter moves, progresses, and evolves whether it wants to or not. As we are moving from a season of life to one of death, the concept of birth and honoring the Goddess for her life-giving properties is important.

The purpose of the ceremony is to bring down the blessings of the Goddess as we ask her to help us improve our lives.

In addition to the usual altar tools, there should be an empty cornucopia placed on the altar of offering in the center of the circle. All members bring a fruit or vegetable.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

*Hail, Great Mother shining light,
Bring us birth and all that's bright.*

(Left)

*Hail, Great Mother from Heaven above,
Bring us life and all that is love.*

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and recites the following:

*Lady of all life, below and above
We gather here with warmth and love.
So that all who come before thy throne
Shall learn of mysteries yet unknown.
Let each now behold your beauty and grace
As this now becomes your sacred space.*

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and reads the following prayer:

*Holy sweet Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
daughter of the Highest King and Mistress
Of the Angels. Mother of our Creator,
Queen of Heaven, receive us under your protection.
Queen of Mercy, we implore you and your
Holy Son for health, comfort, and strength
To serve your righteous cause. We ask for
Your blessings now and forever, Amen.*

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS stands in front of the altar of offering. She genuflects, picks up the cornucopia, and recites the following:

*Our Lady's love is deep and wide
To some her secrets are denied.
But we shall fearless still proceed
To follow where she may lead.
She fills our life with hope and laughter
So we have no fear of what comes after.*

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen.*

ALL

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother, and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen.*

Each member approaches the altar of offering, genuflects, asks the Goddess' blessing, and puts a fruit or vegetable into the cornucopia. Before returning to his or her place, each says:

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother, and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He recites the following with great emotion:

*Blessed be the Lady, Mother of All
For you are our wisdom and hope.
Thou, who was before mankind,
Who was at our birth and shall
Claim us at our death.
We now ask your blessings this night.
Be with us now and forever,
In this life and all those to come*

ALL

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother, and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen!*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and speaks the following with great reverence:

*For each morning with its light
My Lady, we thank thee.
For rest and shelter in the night
My Lady, we thank thee.
For health and wealth, love of friends
For everything thy goodness sends,
My Lady, we thank thee.*

ALL

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother, and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen!*

The Invocation

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;*

*Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles. He or she then says:

*Beloved Lady of Light and Life,
Who art blessed amongst women,
Mother of all upon the earth,
Be with us now in our hour of need,
For we are your children conceived in love
And brought forth to honor your name.
Guide us and guard us in all we do,
That we shall bring only honor to your name.*

ALL

*Praise be to the Virgin, to the Mother, and
To the Queen of Heaven, now and forever, Amen!*

Closing Benediction

The PRIESTESS recites the Closing Benediction and then banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Autumn Equinox (or Mabon)

The Autumn Equinox, also known as Mabon, is celebrated sometime around September 21. As with the Spring Equinox, this is a time of equal day and equal night. However, after this night, the days grow shorter and the sun begins to wane in power.

This festival is also known as the Harvest Home and is the end of the agricultural year. All the crops have been gathered. Canning and storage for the winter is a priority and wine making is in full progress. Leaves turning color, bird migrations, corn harvesting, and bonfires remind us of the time of year.

The purpose of the Autumn Equinox is thanksgiving. We want to thank the God and Goddess for all of our gifts and pledge ourselves to maintain what we have gained throughout the year. This is a wonderful time to decorate the house and the ritual area with signs of the season. Pumpkins, corn stalks, basket of Indian corn, and gourds add to the autumn atmosphere and bring the symbolic meaning of the harvest into the home and sanctuary of the God and Goddess.

In addition to the usual altar and tools, the altar of offering should be placed in the center of the circle. On it are placed a basket, the corn baba,¹⁶ and a red candle. Each participant brings his or her own corn baba for blessing during the ceremony.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He or she lights the floor altar candles, saying:

(Right)

Lord of the Dark Realm descend

Your strength and power now lend.

(Left)

Lady of the Moons bright light

In your name we gather on this night.

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar of offering and genuflects. He or she picks up the corn baba and offers it at each Quadrant, saying:

(East)

Equal day and equal night

Golden leaves, icy wind and the Dying Sun,

Shadows cast from the fading light

And the spirit of the Harvest is upon us.

(South)

Flaming Autumn Fires

The memory of a Summer past,

Fills our hearts with warmth and passion

As we revel in the bounty of the Harvest.

(West)

Water cooled by a setting Sun

Reflecting the last glimmer of day,

Thou art the twilight, the time of passing

Do we realize the wisdom of the harvest.

(North)

Barren land reveals the pitted soil

Gathered crops provide food and joy,

Death awaits rebirth

And the promise of the Harvest sustains.

The ATTENDANT replaces the corn baba on the altar of offering and hands the red candle to the PRIESTESS.

The Salutation

The PRIESTESS holds the candle in offering to the God and Goddess and recites the following:

Golden-haired Corn Mother

Red Dying King,

Leaves turn, sickles gleam

Summer's end is at hand.

Our Harvest has been heart y

And our dreams fulfilled.

Blessed is the Autumn Fire

*Which brings hope and promise,
Blessed be our Lord and Lady
Who brought us Life and Light.*

ALL

Blessed be our Lord and Lady.

The PRIESTESS lights the candle and places it on the altar of offering in front of the corn baba.

The Invitation

PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He delivers the following invitation:

*This is the time of equal day and equal night
The time of gathering and celebration,
A time when the abundance of life flows freely
And yet the chill of Death lingers near.
For now the Corn Maiden, our Silver Moon Goddess
Offers up her bounty and withdraws,
The Corn King, Red Lion of the South, Giver of Life,
Bringer of Death remains ever steadfast.
Is the time for petitions
Is the time for reward,
Is the time for Thanksgiving,*

*Blessed be the Lady
Blessed be the Corn
Blessed be the Lord
Blessed be the Harvest.*

ALL

*Blessed be the Lady
Blessed be the Corn
Blessed be the Lord
Blessed be the Harvest.*

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar of offering and the PRIEST rings the bells. The ATTENDANT picks up the basket and collects the corn babas from each member. The ATTENDANT returns to the altar of offering.

The Invocations

The ATTENDANT places the basket on the altar of offering and steps aside. The PRIESTESS comes forward and blesses the corn babas by doing the Invocation to the

Goddess (Chapter 18). Then the PRIEST comes forward and empowers them by doing the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The PRIEST asks everyone to take hands and chant the following over the corn babas:

Blessed be the harvest.

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects and rings the bells three times, saying:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;
Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Death is upon us but rebirth will follow and
The Lady will guide us through the night.*

(Right)

*Our hearts are filled with warmth and passion and
The Lord will provide for us through the Winter.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Samhain or All Hallows Eve

Samhain, which means Summer's End, is celebrated on October 31. It is the end of the agricultural season and the beginning of the Celtic New Year. Samhain is the festival of the dead and was Christianized as All Souls or All Saints Day. This is a time of chaos and the reversal of normal order due to the simultaneous aspects of ending and beginning something.

For our ancestors, Samhain was when the majority of the herd was butchered, providing food for the winter months. Slaughter, barren earth, and decreasing daylight made the concept of death an ever-present reality. Because of this, Samhain has always been considered a time when the veil between the worlds was thin, a night of magic charms and divination—when the dead could be easily contacted.

On this night, we see the goddess of vegetation and growth return to the underworld, for it is the time of the Horned God of the hunt, the god of death and regeneration. He rules the winter months, the time of transition when we switch from life to death. As Beltane was a time of life and growth, Samhain is its opposite: a time of death and decay.

In addition to the usual altar tools on the main altar, there should be a skull and a pair of horns. Place the cauldron in the circle with a red candle in it. For this ritual, the altar cloth is black. The candles on the main altar are red and the floor candles next to the altar are black. Fill a basket with bundles of dried herbs tied with black ribbon, which will be given to the participants during the ritual. These bundles are taken home and placed above the doorway for protection during the winter months.

ATTENDANTS are responsible for the altar and Quadrant preparation (Chapter 18).

All enter the chapel or ritual area.

The Benediction

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Benediction (Chapter 18).

The Litany of the Lord and Lady

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Litany of the Lord and Lady (Chapter 18).

The Consecration

The PRIESTESS consecrates the elements and casts the circle (Chapter 18).

The Calling of the Quadrant Guardian

The PRIEST calls in the Guardians of the four Quadrants (Chapter 18).

The Declaration

An ATTENDANT lights the floor altar candles next to the altar of offering, saying:

(Right)

*Blessed be our Lord of Death
For he brings rest and regeneration.*

(Left)

*Blessed be the Death Crone
For she transforms the soul of man.*

The PRIESTESS approaches the altar, genuflects, and addresses the group, saying:

*We gather together this night
In a place that is not a place
And a time which is not a time.
All that was green has died
And memories are our retribution and reward.
For now the season of life draws to a close
So begin the dark times of rest and reevaluation.
Death brings life, life brings death.*

ALL

Death brings life, Life brings death.

The Salutation

Two ATTENDANTS approach the altar and genuflect. One picks up the skull and the other picks up the horns; they say in turn:

(Holding the skull)

*Blessed is the Death Crone
As her silent tides of death and birth,*

*For she alone brought love,
Life, and wisdom to our Earth.*

*(Holding the horns)
Blessed is the Dying King
And the sacrifice of blood he shed,
For he alone will guide us
Through the Dark times of Dread.*

ALL praise the God and Goddess:

*Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Cerridwen
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The Invitation

The PRIEST approaches the altar and genuflects. He lights a taper candle and hands it to an ATTENDANT who offers it at each of the Quadrants, saying:

*(East)
Death brings awareness of the Eternal Spirit.*

*(South)
Death brings awareness of the Divine Spark.*

*(West)
Death brings awareness of the Mother's Grace.*

*(North)
Death brings awareness of the Final Atonement.*

The ATTENDANT returns to the main altar and hands the lighted taper to the PRIEST.

The PRIEST proceeds to the middle of the circle and lights the candle in the cauldron, saying:

*As with life, so with death
We have come full circle,
Let us now bid farewell to all
Which has not been productive,*

*The past does not bring sadness
But produces guidance for the future,
All which passes away shall make room
For what we wish to bring about.*

The PRIESTESS joins the PRIEST at the cauldron. An ATTENDANT comes forward and picks up the basket with the herbal bundles in it. He or she holds the bundles so the PRIESTESS can bless them, saying:

*The land has died, the earth is cold
The Horned One comes from times of old.
He brings the word, he is the death
He whispers to all with icy breath.
The spirits of the dead are abroad this night
Take heed, find comfort in the cauldron light.
For all across the land, Death does roam
But the Lord guides, and guards his own.*

ALL

*Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Cernunnos
Ayea, Ayea, Ayea!*

The ATTENDANT proceeds around the circle with the basket and each member takes a bundle of herbs. All chant while the ATTENDANT is coming around:

Death brings life, life brings death!

The Invocations

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar and genuflect. An ATTENDANT rings the bells three times. The PRIESTESS does the Invocation of the Goddess (Chapter 18). The PRIEST performs the Invocation of the God (Chapter 18).

The Proclamation

An ATTENDANT standing in front of the altar of offering genuflects, rings the bells three times, and then recites:

*Those who walk in darkness
Shall now experience great light;
Those who hunger and thirst
Shall be quenched at the altar of life;
Those who call upon righteousness
Shall take the hand of the Lord and Lady;*

*Those who approach with anticipation
Shall receive the gifts of the spirit.*

ALL

*Our Lord and Lady
We acknowledge your greatness;
Our Lord and Lady
We affirm your wisdom and love;
Our Lord and Lady
We pray for your presence;
Our Lord and Lady
We now ask for your blessing.
Blessed be the Lord and Lady!*

The Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption

The PRIEST and PRIESTESS approach the altar, genuflect, and face each other. An ATTENDANT rings the bells. The PRIEST and PRIESTESS perform the Rite of Union and the Rite of Redemption (Chapter 18).

The Conclusion

The PRIEST approaches the altar, genuflects, and rings the bells. He dismisses the Guardians (Chapter 18).

An ATTENDANT approaches the altar, genuflects, and extinguishes the floor altar candles, saying:

(Left)

*Blessed be the Death Crone
For she transforms the soul of man.*

(Right)

*Blessed be the Lord of Death
For he brings rest and regeneration.*

Closing Benediction

The PRIEST recites the Closing Benediction (Chapter 18). The PRIESTESS banishes the circle (Chapter 18).

Allow the candle in the cauldron to burn out completely.

Synopsis

For those who have been practicing the old Pagan ways and Wiccan religion, the rituals that make up the yearly calendar of Sabbats take on a special significance. Besides being times of worship and fellowship, these celebrations allow us to connect with the potent, intoxicating presence of deity. This is why so much attention should be given to the Sabbat rituals and their presentation. It is important that everything be as perfect as it can be to show proper respect and devotion for the Gods, as well as our dedication to the religion itself.

Many things can make a ritual work, besides the mouthing of memorized script. The rituals must correspond geographically to the hemisphere in which they are being enacted. Mythically, they should progress—as do the seasons themselves—revealing the mystery of their intention to the participants. The leaders of the ceremonies should be well trained, competent, and poised in both their spiritual awareness as well as in their delivery of liturgy.

Attention to proper symbolism, atmosphere, and ritual attire should be taken into consideration long before the event is to take place. Preparation of the Chapel or ritual area should be done with respect and reverence for the god and goddess who will be called forth. And everyone should be made to feel as if their participation, no matter how minor, in some way contributed to the overall effect of the ceremony itself.

In conclusion, everyone has the right to worship as they see fit. What people do not have the right to do is make a mockery of deity, religion, and spirituality in general. When it comes to religion, no one true, right, and only way exists; but there is definitely a right and a wrong way of performing religion's rituals and ceremonies.

ENDNOTES

1. *The Temple Book of Prayer and Scripture* is the equivalent of the Wiccan/Pagan Book of Shadows or Witches' Grimoire. We changed the name so it was both recognizable and distinguishable from the works of other traditions and acceptable to non-Wiccan/Pagan seekers.
2. Use of the censer and incense is solely up to the discretion of those doing the ritual. Some people like a lot of incense and some cannot stand it. Use common sense here, please.
3. For Friday Night Church services we do not call in the Guardians of the Quadrants. These rituals are less formal than Full Moons and Sabbats because they are open to the public and people who have never experienced ritual before.
4. *Mixed* refers to initiated and non-initiated members. As most of our rituals are open to students, members, and sincere seekers, most of the people are not formally trained or ordained priests.
5. White is universal but not mandatory; you may use seasonal colors for the altar cloth and flowers. Keep the altar candles white for this ceremony.

6. This is the part that everything else has been leading up to: the actual calling in of the Goddess to manifest through the priestess. In some Pagan traditions, the segment that follows the salutation is called Drawing Down the Moon.
7. This segment of the mass is difficult if not impossible to do if you have not been properly trained and initiated. At the moment of the blessing, the priestess must be able to open herself as a channel for divine energy to flow through into the Chalice, permeating the wine with the sovereignty of the Goddess.
8. Three-, four-, and five-wick candles are twelve inches high and from four to six inches in diameter. These candles frequently come in the primary colors; you can purchase them at most candle shops.
9. This candle is left to burn out.
10. The Goddess candle is left to burn out completely. When the ritual is over, the candle can be placed in a coffee can or metal pan with some water and then set in the tub for safety.
11. For Imbolc, we use the Goddess Brighid in our rites, for this festival is also Oimele or Brigantia.
12. The early Roman Church developed the Eucharist as a formal rite. However, the blessing of bread and wine or bread and water was a common practice in almost all of the early, Pre-Christian mystery religions.
13. For those who do not wish to use the twenty-third Psalm from the Bible, you may substitute "Of the Office of the Anthem" section VII, from the Gnostic Mass, *Gems of the Equinox*, Israel Regardie, Falcon Press (see Bibliography).
14. If the rite is performed outdoors and it is permissible to have a fire, the fire would take precedence over the candle in the cauldron.
15. "John Barleycorn" is from the book *Egyptian Myth and Legend*, by Donald A. Mackenzie (see Bibliography).
16. To make a corn baba, strip dried husks from a corn cob and soak the husks in water until pliable. Use the cob as the body. Use paper or a small Styrofoam ball for the head. Cover the ball with strips of husks and attach them to the cob. Cut a narrow strip of husk and roll it into a seven-inch length; tie off at the ends with string for arms. Attach it to the cob and then fashion a dress from strips of corn husks.

The Creative Spirit

I must create a new system or be enslaved by another man's; I will not reason and compare: my business is to create.

William Blake

New Beginnings

One of the main objectives of this book is to introduce you to our system of Wicca, Co-Creation Spirituality, and make you aware of some of the options available to you regarding the practice of Pagan ways. Another purpose is to encourage you to refresh your present religious tradition—or inspire you to create a new and better method of religious worship.

Religion and spirituality are a part of life. In order for them to be effective, they need to be progressive and timely. The priests and leaders of today's religions need to be aware of changing attitudes and ideals. They also need to regularly improve and renew their theology and rituals to keep pace with contemporary thought. We can learn from the past. However, it is the moment we experience, and the future to which we look forward, that shapes and gives life to our endeavors.

Getting started is usually the hardest part of any project, whether it is upgrading something old or creating something new. This is especially true when it comes to spirituality. It is easier to start with the fun stuff first, like rites and symbolism, and leave the history and theology for last. Unfortunately, this approach does not work, because without a realistic and functional belief system, there is nothing upon which devotion can be based. There must be reason and logic behind the new concept of worship before it can become a legitimate and workable spiritual path. All lasting

religions began by building strong theologies, then adding the appropriate symbolism, rites, and ceremonies to enhance their existing beliefs.

With something as vague and autonomous as Paganism and Wicca, it is difficult to get a hold on anything substantial. In general, most of the followers of the Pagan way gloss over theology because they do not want to appear dogmatic. The more vocal members of the Wiccan movement will not take a stand on anything relating to established doctrine because they fear they might jeopardize their popularity—and goddess forbid they lose some of their adherents. These attitudes leave the Wiccan/Pagan seeker stumbling around in the dark, looking for the light and a place to begin.

However, there are options available when the individual's motivations are sincere and reasonable. For the most part, there are three reasons for addressing personal spirituality. The first comes from the individual who is not happy with what he or she has been exposed to and wants to create something new and different. The second comes from the individual who likes his or her basic belief system but wants to update it. The third response comes from the person who is happy with his or her religious tradition, but wants to stimulate and strengthen his or her spiritual skills and knowledge.

It does not matter which type of person you are because the following syllabus will help you organize your thoughts and ideas. Once arranged in a logical order, these personal observations and viewpoints will substantiate your present beliefs or help you design a new system. Basically, this is how all religious and spiritual traditions start. Someone puts his or her theories about god, the universe, and life into a coherent format and then promotes the conclusions. If the new theory has been properly arranged, it will attract others who are of like mind.

Of course, this does not mean you have to share your thoughts with others. If you do decide to share, however, you will have something of value to present. With all your thoughts and ideas organized and recorded, you have a readily available program that will provide the doctrine and guidelines for your group activities.

The Spiritual Seeker's Plan of Action

The categories and associated statements that follow should be dealt with in the order in which they appear. So often when we begin to deal with deeply spiritual thoughts and emotions, all sorts of wonderful ideas begin to emerge. By keeping things in order and not jumping around, you allow for a greater expansion on each topic presented. This makes it easier to deal competently and completely with the proposed subject matter.

1. Beliefs and Faith

- a. List the positive and negative aspects of the religion in which you were raised. Even if you hated the religion, try to find at least one positive thing to say about it.

- b. From the above answer, which concepts of your early religious training would you keep and which are of no value to you now?
- c. Make a list of the things you feel religion should, in general, help you accomplish on a spiritual level.
- d. Explain your feelings about deity as in the Creator, God the Father, Goddess the Mother, and secondary gods and goddesses who provide spiritual stimulation to their disciples.
- e. Choose a god and a goddess to work with and make clear your reasons for picking them.
- f. Write down the major myths associated with each deity you have chosen.¹ If available, collect illustrations and photographs that express the major concept of the associated myths.

2. Practices and Ceremonies

- a. Make a list of the dates and festivals held sacred to your God and Goddess. These should be clearly noted on your calendar of spiritual events.
- b. List and then describe in detail any additional times or celebrations that you wish to include in your spiritual system.²
- c. If you are not using the invocations and rituals in this book, design your own. These should be written down exactly as they will be performed.³
- d. Design a special prayer or invocation for the goddess you have chosen.
- e. Design a special prayer or invocation for the god you have chosen.
- f. Make a list of the offerings that would be appropriate to present to your god and goddess on their special days or occasions.⁴
- g. If you are going to perform your rites within the bounds of a circle, write out how the circle will be cast.
- h. If you are going to call on Guardians, as we do, create a process for doing so and write it down as well. Describe how you see the Guardians and what it feels like when they are called into your sacred space.

3. Religious Objects and Places

- a. Make an inventory of all the symbols and objects that are held sacred to your god and goddess and those special items that represent your religious beliefs.

- b. If you are going to use additional symbols, such as the traditional Wiccan tools,⁵ list these and their purpose along with their meaning and how they are to be used.
- c. You will need an altar and an established place for your worship—consider these carefully. Once set up, the altar and surrounding area will become sacred and should not be used for any other purpose. If you do not already have an altar and place of worship, consider setting one up at this time.

4. Values and Morals

- a. Compose a set of spiritual values that you feel should be followed by yourself and those people you may work with in the future.
- b. List what is acceptable behavior within the bounds of ritual and what is not.
- c. If you plan to include others in your circle, set some basic standards of practice and ethics that the group must follow. These standards should be written out and copies made for every member.⁶

5. Leaders and Priesthood

- a. If you will be working with others, pick a group leader. He or she should be someone everyone respects and can get along with. List the possibilities.
- b. Conductors of ritual will need to be decided upon in advance. This can be done by group vote or rotation.⁷ Again, a list should be made of who will be doing what ritual and when. Prepare a calendar for three months in advance that designates who will be in charge of each ritual.
- c. A list of duties for the leaders of the ritual should be prepared and given to each leader, along with their personal responsibilities and obligations toward the group.⁸
- d. Proper initiation and ordination are necessary for those who wish to call themselves priest or priestess. If this is something you desire, whether you are working alone or with a group, make the arrangement to get the proper training. For more information on priesthood training, contact *Our Lady of Enchantment*, P. O. Box 1366, Nashua, NH 03061.

Synopsis

Imagination and creativity are the keys to formulating a religious system that will be both functional and spiritually beneficial. Reach out and learn about other traditions and their religious viewpoints. Always compare what you are doing with what others

are doing. Keep a journal about the different methods others use to achieve the same thing you are doing. Make notes about their ideas on theology, ritual, and symbolism.

If you have been taught one way to do something, try a new approach. You can always go back to the way you were doing things before if the new way does not work. After all, if our ancestors had not tried new things, we would still be living in caves.

I remember being uncomfortable with the way I had been taught to do the symbolic Great Rite; however, I continued to do it the same way for years. Then I happened upon someone doing it a bit differently and I liked what I saw, so I tried it their way. The new way seemed more fitting than the old, and eventually I was able to develop the Rite of Union we use today. I did not lose anything by trying something different, but gained from the experience. Trying new things helps us grow and progress.

If you are a solitary and do not have access to any other groups or a teacher, read. You can find hundreds of books about Wicca, Paganism, Mystery religions, and ritual. Compare what the different traditions have to say about deity, theology, and ritual practice. Select what you like from each one and put these ideas together. Begin with the traditions in this book. This is what I did to come up with the system we now have today.

I chose European deities and incorporated their traditional seasonal celebrations into a basic theological doctrine. I added the esoteric symbolism from the early Greek and Roman Mystery traditions. This was structured around a common sense approach to the basic prevailing religious ideals of our time.⁹

Creating a system of your own is not complicated. The basic framework for a working religion already exists within this book and others which pertain to the art of religious crafting. All you need to do is choose the god and goddess you want to work with. Include their personal, as well as traditional, symbolism and combine this with active ritual worship. If you are going to be working with others, you will also need to incorporate a code of ethics for all to follow. It is that simple.

In closing, I want to say that starting your own religious tradition shows your creativity, sincere dedication to the gods, and willingness to incorporate spirituality into your life. It does not make you a priest or priestess—these are stations that must be conferred by the proper authorities. If priesthood is something you wish to acquire, go through the proper channels, get the training, and submit to the initiation process. Those who are willing to work and are respectful of their teachers achieve and develop spiritual maturity. Those who are looking for overnight enlightenment and superficial titles for ego gratification never endure.¹⁰

ENDNOTES

1. For this project, you will need some good mythology books. Compile as many myths as possible about the gods you are working with, as this makes them that much more real.
2. If you are going to use the Ten Holy Days of Obligation offered in this book (Chapter 19), then these dates should go onto your calendar of events as well.

3. The power in ritual is in repetition. If you do not write everything down exactly as it will be done, you will not be able to repeat it.
4. Special offerings can include flowers, foods, special objects, candles, and beverages.
5. Traditional Wiccan tools include: Athame, Chalice, Wand, Pentacle, Censer, Salt and Water Bowls, God and Goddess Candles, and Cauldron.
6. Standards include proper dress, being on time for ritual, necessary items others need to bring, and any monetary obligations.
7. At Our Lady of Enchantment, we use a rotation so all the initiates get a chance to lead ritual. Only initiated and ordained priests lead ritual. The congregation and members training for the priesthood assist with speaking parts and other ritual duties.
8. This list should mention that participants should notify the group if they are unable to attend, and should also arrange for coverage of their functions in advance.
9. Religious ideals of our time include the patriarchal neurosis of Fundamental Christian thought and practice.
10. This is obvious in the number of Wiccan and Pagan groups, covens, groves, newsletters, etc., that have come and gone just in the last five years. On the other hand, those who were properly trained are still around, serving their community.

Bibliography

- Angus, S. *The Mystery Religions*. New York: Dover Publications, 1975.
- Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.
- Baring and Cashford. *The Myth of the Goddess*. New York: Viking/Arkana, 1991.
- Barrett, Clive. *The Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. New York: Aquarian/Thomas, 1992.
- Benko, Stephen. *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Blofeld, John. *Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Kuan Yin*. Boston: Shambhala, 1988.
- Bonwick, James. *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions*. New York: Dorset, 1986.
- Brandon, George. *Santeria from Africa to the New World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Budge, E. A. Wallis. *Egyptian Heaven and Hell*. Peru, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1974.
- Budge, E. A. Wallis. *Egyptian Religion*. New York: Dover, 1987.
- Carr-Gomm, Philip. *The Druid Tradition*. New York: Element Books, 1991.
- Cotterell, Arthur. *The Macmillan Illustrated Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1989.

- Davidson, H. R. Ellis. *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988.
- Dolfyn. *Shamanic Wisdom*. Earth Spirit, 1990.
- Drury, Nevill. *The Elements of Shamanism*. New York: Element Books, 1989.
- Drury, Nevill. *The Shaman and The Magician*. New York: Arkana, 1982.
- Earhart, Byron H. *Religious Traditions of the World*. New York: Harper, 1993.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Religions of Antiquity*. New York: Macmillian Publishing, 1987.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Fatunmbi, Awo Falokun. *Iwa-Pele, Ifa Quest: The Search of Santeria and Lucumi*. Bronx, NY: Original Publications, 1991.
- Finegan, Jack. *Myth and Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989.
- Fowler, William Warde. *Roman Ideas of Deity*. Indianapolis, IN: Books for Library Press, 1969.
- Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.
- Goodwin, Joscelyn. *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.
- Graves, Robert. *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. Hanlyn, 1968.
- Hooke, S. H. *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild. *The Treasures of Darkness: The History of Mesopotamian Religion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.
- James E. O. *The Ancient Gods*. New York: G.P. Putnams Sons, 1960.
- James, E.O. *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1958.
- Karade, Baba Ifa. *The Handbook of Yourba Religious Concepts*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1994.

- Leeming, David Adams. *The World of Myth*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Lurker, Manfred. *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1974.
- Macmullen and Lane. *Paganism and Christianity*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.
- Matthews, Caitlin. *The Celtic Tradition*. London: Element Books, 1989.
- Meyer, Marvin W. *The Ancient Mysteries: A Source Book*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Neimark, Philip John. *The Way of the Orisha*. New York: Harper, 1993.
- Newsome, James D. *Greeks, Romans, Jews*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1992.
- Nichols, Ross. *The Book of Druidry*. London: Aquarian Press, 1990.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Jesus Through the Centuries*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Reitzenstein, Robers. *Hellenistic Mystery Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*. San Francisco: Pickwick Press, 1978.
- Robertson, Lawrence Durdin. *The Year of the Goddess*. London: Aquarian Press, 1990.
- Robinson, John S. *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Free Masonry*. New York: M. Evans & Company, 1989.
- Ross, Nancy Wilson. *Buddhism: A Way of Life and Thought*. New York: University Books, 1981.
- Rutherford, Ward. *The Druids: Magicians of the West*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 1879.
- Sabrina, Lady. *Reclaiming the Power: The How and Why of Practical Ritual Magic*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1992.
- West, John Anthony. *The Traveler's Key to Ancient Egypt*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
- Wilken, Robert L. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Willis, Roy. *World Mythology*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993.

Index

- Abred, 17
- Abred, Spiral of, 17
- absorption, 195
- active force, 130
- Adonis, 58
- Africa, 63-65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75
- Air, 17-18, 20, 49, 68, 72, 90, 93-94, 104, 109, 114, 116, 127, 139-140, 144, 147-151, 153, 157, 164, 226
- altar, 20, 29, 50, 65, 94, 124, 130, 132-133, 161-169, 183-187, 189-192, 196-202, 204-208, 210-228, 230-233, 235-245, 247-262, 268
- Annwn, 17
- Apollo, 90, 103-104, 115-116, 137, 189, 214
- Archangel, 150, 152, 154, 156
- Asia, 41, 47, 75-77, 79, 81
- aspergillum, 10, 131, 166, 184, 197, 202
- athame, 124-125, 133, 166, 168, 186, 190-193, 197, 200, 202, 204-205, 209-211, 214-215, 231, 270
- authority, 10-11, 16, 26, 29-30, 33, 58, 61, 122, 128-129, 131, 133, 140, 144, 156, 160, 164, 168, 173-174, 176, 193, 200, 204
- Autumnal Equinox, 9, 19, 248, 253
- Babaluaiye, 35, 37
- baptism, 27-28, 153
- bell, 29, 81, 97, 112, 150, 232-234
- Beltane, 9, 19-20, 106, 234-235, 239, 257
- benediction, 80, 131, 137, 182, 184, 191-192, 197, 201-202, 205-206, 210-211, 215, 217, 220-221, 224-225, 229-230, 234-235, 238-239, 242-243, 248-249, 252-253, 257-258, 261
- birth, 6-7, 17, 28, 45, 58, 77-78, 88, 92, 97, 99-100, 102-103, 108, 115, 125, 130, 141, 144, 149, 153, 188-189, 203, 208, 210, 216, 236-237, 240, 245, 249, 251, 258
- Blessed Virgin, 9, 184, 187, 192, 216, 248
- blessing, 28, 123-124, 131, 133, 137, 152, 162, 170, 184, 190, 192, 196, 200-202, 204, 214, 220, 224, 226, 228-229, 233, 238-239, 242-243, 245, 248, 250, 252-253, 256, 261, 263
- blood, 24-25, 30, 37, 58, 70, 78, 91, 115, 152, 191, 214, 230-231, 246-247, 259
- bread, 20, 24, 45, 67, 70, 87-90, 93, 98, 114, 116, 124, 170, 229, 243, 263

Buddha, 41-42, 44-45, 80, 82, 167

Buddhism, 13, 41-45

candles, 28, 32, 81, 97, 132-133, 163-166, 176, 183, 196-197, 201-202, 205-206, 210-211, 215, 217, 220-221, 224-225, 228, 230, 234-235, 238-239, 242-243, 248-249, 252-253, 256-258, 261-263, 270

catholic, 5, 25-34, 72, 97, 110-111, 161-162

cauldron, 1, 10, 18, 20, 36, 53, 70-71, 98, 100-101, 106, 119, 130, 154, 167, 200, 204, 235-237, 257, 259-261, 263, 270

Celts, 15-18, 21, 96, 98, 106

censer, 10, 29, 131-132, 166, 197, 202, 205, 211-212, 262, 270

ceremony, 28, 36, 49-50, 85, 93, 115, 132, 136, 180, 182-184, 192, 196-197, 201, 205, 211, 249, 253, 262

Cernunnos, 9, 101, 185-186, 188-190, 199, 219-220, 223-224, 226, 228, 234, 239, 241, 259-260

Cerridwen, 9, 100, 130, 185-186, 188, 190, 200, 203, 207, 209, 219-220, 226, 228, 236-237, 239-240, 259

chalice, 10, 20, 27, 29, 116, 123-124, 154, 166-168, 190-191, 197, 200, 202, 204-205, 208-209, 211, 213-214, 263, 270

chapel, 10, 82, 130, 163, 165-169, 183, 197, 202, 206, 211, 225, 230, 239, 243, 249, 253, 257, 262

Christian, 4-6, 10-11, 16, 23-26, 28-29, 33, 37, 48, 72, 75, 83, 113-116, 122-123, 131, 144, 170, 174, 216, 221, 224, 229, 243, 248, 270

Christianity, 5, 12-13, 16, 23-27, 29-30, 32-33, 84, 94, 96-97, 108, 113, 115, 134, 169-170, 225

church, 3, 5-6, 8-9, 25-33, 62, 97, 113, 116, 123-124, 131, 145, 159, 161, 173, 196-197, 262-263

circle, 17, 29, 51-52, 127, 137, 143, 150, 162-163, 166, 168, 170, 186-187, 197-198, 201-203, 205-206, 210-212, 215, 217-218, 220-221, 224-225, 227-231, 234-239, 241-244, 247-249, 252-253, 257-261, 267-268

cleansing, 49-50, 85, 94, 137

Co-Creation, 8-13, 19, 21, 28, 30, 38-39, 52, 57-58, 83, 94, 122, 124, 136, 148, 161, 168, 170, 175, 179, 265

communication, 5, 35, 45, 51, 93-94, 103, 110, 121-123, 125-126, 128, 136, 145, 149, 160, 165, 234

compassion, 80-81, 114, 184, 193, 244

confession, 27

confirmation, 27-28

consecration, 36, 129, 132, 137, 182-183, 186, 197-198, 202, 206, 211, 217, 221, 225, 231, 235, 239, 243, 249, 253, 258

Consecration, Rite of, 132

craft, 32, 99, 175, 205

creator, 6, 16, 27, 49, 66-67, 84, 92, 94, 97, 110, 212, 250, 267

custom, 13, 49, 64, 96-97

death, 4-7, 17, 19, 21, 24-27, 30, 34, 44-45, 77-78, 80, 86-91, 102-103, 106, 129-130, 149, 153, 188-190, 198, 216-217, 243, 249, 254-255, 257-261

dedication, 28, 38, 95, 160, 169, 174, 176, 208, 262, 269

Diloggun, 35

divination, 8, 16, 33, 35, 45, 69, 96, 102-103, 134-136, 138, 144, 257

Divine Victim, 9, 58, 229, 231

divinity, 7, 16-17, 24, 53, 55, 57, 59, 62, 84, 94, 111, 117, 123, 133-134, 182, 194

druid, 16-17, 20, 95, 97

drumming, 50, 63

dynamic energy, 56, 133, 147

Earth, 17-20, 47-52, 56, 58, 67-68, 70, 77-78, 86-88, 93, 98, 101-106, 109-113, 127, 130, 139, 142-143, 147-148, 155-157, 186-189, 198, 203, 207-208, 210, 217-218, 220, 226-228, 231, 234-235, 237, 240, 243, 245, 252, 257, 259-260

Earth Mother, 50-51, 58, 105, 157

east, 44-45, 75, 150, 168, 183, 186, 192, 198, 201-204, 206, 210, 218, 222, 226, 229, 240, 244-245, 254, 259

Elegua, 35-36, 38, 67-68, 71-72

elements, 3, 8, 17-18, 25, 29, 48, 50, 57, 63, 68, 77-79, 86, 88-90, 93, 101, 103, 109-112, 116, 125, 127, 133, 136, 139-140, 144, 147-149, 151-155, 157-158, 168, 186, 197-198, 202, 211, 217, 221, 225, 231, 235, 239, 243, 249, 253, 258

enchantment, 9-11, 13, 15, 19, 30, 35, 50, 82, 130, 163, 165, 169, 177, 179-180, 196, 205, 216, 229, 234, 268, 270

enlightenment, 6, 42-43, 45, 59, 75, 82, 123, 174, 184, 269

Eucharist, 9, 27-28, 30, 123-124, 166, 182, 187, 189, 229-230, 263

Europe, 15, 95-97, 99, 101, 103, 105-106

feast, 9, 28, 37-38, 57, 65-67, 69-72, 77, 81, 85, 87, 92, 98, 100, 102-103, 112, 114, 176, 180, 187, 216, 220, 243, 248

Fire, 17-20, 33-34, 37, 49, 56, 68-69, 71, 78-79, 89-91, 96-97, 100, 116, 127, 129, 139-141, 144, 147-148, 151-153, 183, 186, 188-189, 201, 203, 206-207, 210-213, 217-218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 234-236, 238-240, 244, 254, 263

Full Moon, 28, 59, 116, 163, 205

function, 10, 38, 56-57, 61, 85, 107, 122, 125, 136, 148, 168, 173-174, 177

fundamental, 11-12, 16, 41, 47, 59, 76, 106, 121, 128, 147, 182, 270

god, 5-6, 9-10, 17-21, 25-30, 33-38, 47-48, 50, 55-59, 65-66, 69-71, 75-79, 81, 87-88, 90-92, 96, 101, 103-104, 106-110, 113-117, 126, 128-135, 147-148, 152-153, 159-167, 181-182, 187-189, 191, 193-197, 199, 201, 213-214, 218-219, 221, 227, 234-235, 237, 241, 250, 253-254, 256-257, 259-260, 269-270

goddess, 9-10, 34-38, 50, 58-59, 61-62, 77-78, 80-81, 83, 85-86, 88-89, 91, 94, 96-97, 100, 102-111, 113-114, 117, 122-127, 130, 132-134, 143-144, 153, 159-167, 181-182, 184-189, 193-198, 201, 203, 205-209, 217, 219-221, 227, 231, 235, 237, 241, 245, 249-251, 253-257, 259-260, 262-263, 266-267, 269-270

Good Friday, 9, 28, 30, 116, 187, 216, 225, 229

grail, 95, 98, 114, 123, 125, 130, 154, 200, 204, 208-209

Great Spirit, 50-51

Greek, 24-25, 27, 29-30, 86-89, 91-92, 95, 103, 106, 115, 117, 145, 164-165, 170, 229, 269

growth, 8-9, 11, 29, 32, 38, 87-88, 114, 155, 216, 235, 257

guardian, 34-36, 49, 51, 64, 68, 76, 101-103, 152, 175, 184, 186-187, 191-192, 203, 212, 221, 225, 235, 239, 243, 249, 253, 258

Gwynyd, 17

harvest, 7, 19, 48, 88, 100-101, 105, 108-109, 148, 244-245, 248, 253-256

Heaven, 27-28, 30, 52, 77, 108, 113, 159, 186, 188, 234-235, 249-252

Hecate, 59, 102-103, 126, 137, 164, 167-168

Hermes, 77, 102-104, 115, 131, 164

Hindu, 45, 75, 77, 164

Holy Communion, 27

Holy Days of Obligation, 19, 28, 196, 216, 235, 269

Holy Orders, 27-28

home, 3-5, 10, 15, 19, 32, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 81-82, 97, 108, 134, 155-156, 161, 176, 183, 201, 204, 225-226, 248, 253, 257

Horned One, 101, 188-189, 227, 260

host, 27, 124, 159, 191, 220, 232, 240

Ifa, 33, 35-37, 64, 73, 136

Ifa, Table of, 35

illumination, 45, 69, 132, 177, 197, 201, 219

Imbolc, 9, 19, 97-98, 106, 220-221, 263

initiation, 5, 9, 11, 24, 28, 33-38, 58, 70, 73, 105, 115, 174, 193, 268-269

inspiration, 45, 55, 59, 78, 96-97, 100-101, 119, 123, 130, 137, 149, 174, 183, 190, 195, 199, 201, 203, 240, 244

invitation, 208, 213, 218, 223, 227, 232, 236, 241, 245, 251, 255, 259

invocation, 132, 165, 174, 182, 187-188, 199, 203, 209, 214, 219, 223, 227, 237, 241, 247, 251, 255-256, 260, 267

Ishtar, 86, 108-109, 111, 114, 126-127, 137, 143, 167-168, 249

Isis, 78, 86-90, 109, 114, 117, 137, 249

Jesus, 23-30, 32, 88, 94, 97, 113, 115, 117, 124, 229

John the Baptist, 25

judgment, 27, 30, 66-67, 75, 77, 87, 116, 138, 140, 142, 191

justice, 8, 23, 34, 58, 68, 79, 109-110, 149

Key Stones, 126-127, 137, 143, 145

knowledge, 9, 11-12, 35, 43, 49-50, 75-77, 98, 100, 102, 131, 138-142, 148-149, 151, 153, 155, 177, 193, 210, 266

Kristos, 117

Lady, 9-11, 13, 19, 30, 35, 50, 65, 67, 82, 91, 108, 111, 124, 130, 133, 163-165, 169, 177-180, 183, 185-186, 190, 192-193, 196-197, 199-200, 202-209, 211, 216-222, 224-230, 232-244, 247-258, 260-261, 268, 270

lance, 29, 95, 200, 204

leadership, 4, 11, 21, 177, 179, 182, 205

life, 6-7, 9-10, 16-18, 24-25, 30-33, 41-43, 56, 59, 61, 63-68, 70, 76-77, 80-82, 91, 98-102, 106-112, 115, 121-123, 125, 127-130, 132-133, 136, 138-139, 144, 147-149, 162, 167, 169, 184-186, 189-190, 199-200, 209, 212-214, 216-217, 219-223, 225-226, 228-229, 231-234, 240-244, 246-247, 249-252, 255-260, 265-266, 269

light, 19, 55, 59, 79, 89-90, 99-100, 108, 115-116, 122, 133, 143, 150-152, 157-158, 162, 167, 187-189, 191, 195, 198-200, 202-203, 205-207, 209-212, 214-224, 226-230, 233, 235-242, 244, 247, 251-252, 254-256, 260, 266

Lord, 4, 9, 27, 76, 78-79, 87, 89, 101, 109, 133, 165, 183-186, 189-193, 197, 199-200, 202-206, 211-214, 217-222, 224-228, 230-236, 238-244, 247-249, 252-253, 255-258, 260-261

Lughnasadh, 9, 19, 99-100, 106, 243

lunar, 88-89, 109, 129, 160, 196, 205-206, 210-211

magic, 7, 32, 58-59, 61, 63, 65-66, 76, 79-80, 82, 84, 86, 95, 99-100, 102, 110, 131, 205, 257

Mary, Virgin, 23, 25-26, 32, 81, 86, 94, 109, 111, 113-115, 248-250

Mass, 4, 9, 28, 78, 124, 144, 162-163, 184-185, 187, 191, 194, 229, 263

matriarchal, 149

medicine power, 49, 52

medicine wheel, 50-51

meditation, 50-52, 92, 123, 145, 150, 152, 154, 157, 164-165, 200, 209, 215

messiah, 23-25, 30, 115-117, 174

Michael, 47, 152, 203

Mithraic Mysteries, 24, 115

Mithras, 24, 115

moderation, 10, 45, 67

monotheism, 57

moon, 20, 28, 44, 51, 59, 78-79, 89-90, 100, 102-103, 109, 114, 116, 127, 160, 163, 183, 205, 222, 236, 255, 263

omnitheism, 12, 57-59

oracle, 35, 125-127, 135-139, 141, 143-145, 160

ordination, 9, 11, 27-28, 268

Orisha, 33-37, 63-69, 71-73

Orpheus, 24, 30

Orphism, 24, 30

Orunmila, 35

Oshun, 34, 36-37, 65-66, 111

Osiris, 58, 78, 86-90, 131

Our Lady of Enchantment, 9-11, 13, 19, 30, 35, 50, 82, 130, 163, 165, 169, 177, 179-180, 196, 205, 216, 229, 234, 268, 270

Oya, 34

Pagan, 4-5, 10-11, 24-25, 28, 30, 33, 37, 84, 97, 113, 115-116, 122, 124, 147, 168-170, 174, 176-179, 205, 216, 229, 249, 262-263, 265-266, 270

Paganism, 5-6, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 169, 175, 179, 266, 269

palm branches, 28, 30

pantheism, 57

pantheon, 33, 38, 58, 61, 64, 70, 84-85, 93, 106-107, 111, 164

passion, 26, 28, 34, 37, 56, 76, 122, 148, 151-153, 184-185, 187-188, 191, 198, 200, 204, 206-207, 210, 221-222, 226, 229, 231, 236, 240-241, 244, 254, 257

paten, 10, 29, 123-124, 191

patriarchal, 158, 270

Persian, 25

Pisces, 12, 153-154

politics, 4, 13, 30

polytheism, 57, 84

power, 4, 16, 18, 20, 24, 29, 34-35, 37-39, 43, 49-50, 52, 56, 58, 63-64, 66, 68-69, 71-73, 76, 78, 81, 83-85, 87, 89, 91, 96-99, 108-109, 112-113, 116-117, 124-125, 127, 138, 140-141, 143-144, 147-149, 156, 159-161, 163, 167, 174, 176, 179, 181, 185-188, 191-193, 199-201, 203-205, 215-216, 221, 224, 226, 229-232, 235, 238-240, 253,

prayer, 8, 10, 50, 52, 62, 131, 157, 159-161, 163, 165-167, 169, 181-182, 186-187, 195-200, 227, 250, 262, 267

priest, 7-9, 27, 32, 36, 38, 85, 88, 113, 124, 174-175, 177-180, 183-187, 189-192, 196-204, 206, 208-215, 217-221, 223-225, 227-239, 241-245, 247-253, 255-261, 268-269

priestess, 9, 36, 38, 85, 88, 124, 137, 167, 174-175, 177-178, 180, 183-187, 189-193, 196-206, 208-215, 217-243, 245, 247-258, 260-261, 263, 268-269

priesthood, 8-9, 11-12, 15-16, 20, 26, 48, 83-85, 166, 173-179, 184, 191, 196, 205-206, 211, 243, 268-270

proclamation, 189, 206-207, 212, 219, 223, 227, 233, 237, 242, 247, 251, 256, 260

prophecy, 16, 97, 115, 135-136

quadrant, 168-169, 183, 186, 197, 202, 205, 210-211, 215-218, 221, 225, 230-231, 235, 239, 243, 245, 249, 253-254, 257-258

quest, 4-5, 49, 125, 161

Raphael, 150, 203

reading cloth, 126-127, 137-139, 144-145

Redemption, Rite of, 124, 182, 187, 189, 193, 196, 205, 220, 224, 228-229, 233, 235, 238, 242, 248, 252, 256, 261

regeneration, 87, 90, 101-103, 106, 112, 130, 193, 200, 204, 226-227, 229, 257-258, 261

religion, 3-9, 11-16, 24-25, 29-39, 41-42, 44-45, 47-48, 50, 52, 73, 83-84, 94-96, 110, 116, 122-123, 135-136, 160, 166, 169-170, 174, 176-179, 181, 193, 195, 262, 265-267, 269

requirement, 3, 12, 125, 134, 159

respect, 8, 11, 18, 21, 30, 37, 48, 51, 61, 72, 92, 96, 108, 132, 141, 160, 262

resurrection, 24-26, 28, 87-90, 225, 229

rites, 6-7, 18, 33, 48, 85, 96, 102, 110, 130, 137, 144, 148, 158, 168, 173, 182, 189, 195-197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209-211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265-267

ritual, 6-8, 10-11, 16, 18, 20, 27, 33, 43, 47-48, 50, 59, 64, 82, 85, 89, 100, 106, 108, 110-111, 122, 124-125, 131-133, 136-137, 144-145, 148, 158, 161-163, 165-168, 170, 174, 176, 178, 181-184, 186-187, 189, 191, 193, 195-198, 201-202, 205-206, 209-211, 215-216, 225, 229-230, 233-234, 239, 243, 249, 253, 257, 262-263, 268-270

Rod of Authority, 10, 122, 128-129, 133, 168

Roman Catholic, 5, 25-34, 72, 97, 110-111, 161-162

Rome, 25, 225

Sabbat, 9, 19, 123, 180, 216, 262

- sacrament, 27,174,214
- sacred fluid, 127, 129,230
- sacred pipe, 50-51
- sacred symbol, 19
- sacrifice, 33, 35, 37-39,64,70, 72, 131, 199,212, 259
- saint, 32,34-35,37, 68-69, 71-72
- salt, 29,67, 130, 132-133, 156,166-167, 186, 197,202,205, 211, 230-231, 270
- salutation, 208, 212,218, 222, 226, 231, 236,240,245,250,254,258, 263
- salvation, 24, 30, 75, 80
- Samhain, 9, 19-20,98-99, 101, 106,235, 257
- Santería, 13, 31, 33-39,64, 66,69, 73, 110-111
- season, 19, 166,224,226, 239, 248-249, 253,257-258
- shamanism, 13, 21, 47-49, 51-52
- smudge, 50
- Sol Invictus, 24, 30, 116, 184, 214
- solar, 24, 86, 91, 106, 115, 129, 160, 184, 187, 192, 196,205,210-211
- soul, 5,7, 20-21,45,55,66, 117, 149, 174, 181, 183, 187-188, 190, 193, 208, 217, 225,232,234,258,261
- south, 79, 104,152, 167-168, 183, 187, 192,198,201, 203-204,206,210,218, 222,226, 229,240, 244-245, 254-255, 259
- Speaking Stones, 35, 126-127, 136-139, 143-144
- spirit, 17, 19-21,28, 31, 49-51,56,65, 113, 119, 139, 141, 148-150, 153, 161, 174, 176, 181-184, 188,190-191,193, 195, 198,201-202, 206-207, 209-210, 212-215,219-220,222, 224-226,228-229, 233,236,238,241-242,244,247, 252,254,256,259,261, 265,267, 269
- spirituality, 4-13, 19, 25, 28, 30, 38, 45, 47,49, 51, 57-58, 83,94, 122-124, 128, 136,139,148,161, 168, 170, 175, 177, 216,262,265-266,269
- staff, 52, 71-72, 92, 98, 104, 109-110, 112,114,116,130-131, 150, 169,209, 230-231
- statue, 81-82, 85,94, 114, 132, 160, 163-167
- Stone People, 50
- structure, 8, 10-11, 15, 21, 48, 59, 95, 147, 160, 173, 179, 182
- Summer Solstice, 9, 19, 238, 241
- sun, 19-20, 24,28,44, 51,56,58, 67,79, 84-85,88-91, 94, 96,99, 112, 116, 150-151, 155, 160, 183-184, 188,203, 209-212,214, 216, 222,224, 234, 238-240, 243,253-254
- Sun God, 88, 90-91, 94, 99, 211
- Sweat Lodge, 49-50
- sword, 18,20, 69, 77-78, 81, 99-100, 103, 114,124-125, 152, 200,204
- symbol, 12, 19-20, 27, 30, 51, 58, 64, 68, 71, 86-87,90-91,101, 106, 119,121, 130-131,150,152,155, 157, 160,234-235,239
- system, 4-5,7-9, 13-14, 16-17, 19,26, 30-31,35, 38-39, 42,47,50,52,57, 62, 84,94, 105, 122, 125, 136, 148, 154, 157, 170,174-175, 177,179,216,265-269
- Tammuz, 58,88, 129
- temple,24,26,29,38,43, 76, 80,82-83, 85,87-94, 105, 108, 114-115, 160-161, 167, 178, 196,202,226, 262

tools, 7, 10, 34-35, 50, 70, 72, 87-88, 98, 110, 121-125, 127, 129, 131-133, 144, 150, 152, 154, 156, 162, 164-166, 216, 221, 225, 230, 235, 239, 243, 249, 253, 257, 268, 270

totem, 49-51, 67, 100, 127, 143-144

tradition, 1, 8, 12-16, 24, 30, 34, 39, 42, 84, 94, 107, 114, 124, 131, 136, 168, 179, 182, 205, 265-266, 269

transcend, 44, 116

transformation, 5, 9, 32, 43, 70, 90-91, 101, 108, 125, 130-131, 151, 161, 181, 183, 185, 191, 193, 222, 235, 237, 261

transubstantiation, 174, 181, 193, 195

truth, 3, 8, 14, 19, 25, 29-30, 41-42, 52, 58, 79, 103-104, 121, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 149, 174, 191, 197, 201, 206-207, 231, 239, 245

Union, Rite of, 28, 123-124, 182, 187, 189-190, 193-194, 196, 205, 220, 224, 228-229, 233, 235, 238, 242, 248, 252, 256, 261, 269

universal, 6, 26, 29, 42, 59, 75, 112, 148, 153, 173, 184, 234, 262

unmanifested, 8-9, 17

values, 8, 10, 122, 141, 268

Vernal Equinox, 9, 28, 116, 224

vessel, 10, 35-36, 39, 109, 122, 125-128, 131-133, 136-137, 143, 154, 167-168, 200, 204

Vessel of Creation, 10, 35, 122, 125-128, 132-133, 136-137, 168, 200, 204

virgin, 9, 32, 34, 65, 77, 81, 86, 93, 97, 109, 111, 113-114, 184, 187, 192, 200, 208-209, 216, 231, 243, 248, 250-252

vision quest, 49

wand, 29, 69, 71, 104, 110, 112, 150, 164, 270

Water, 17-18, 20, 29, 36, 45, 49, 64-66, 68, 76-79, 81, 86, 88-89, 97, 101, 103, 105, 109-112, 131-133, 137, 139, 141-142, 144, 147-148, 153-156, 160, 166, 178, 186, 197, 202, 205, 207, 211, 226, 230, 238-239, 243, 246, 254, 263, 270

west, 15, 44-45, 88-89, 154, 168, 183, 187, 192, 198, 201, 203-204, 207, 210, 218, 222, 226, 229, 240, 244, 246, 254, 259

Wicca(n), 10-11, 21, 83-84, 122, 124, 147, 161, 165, 168-170, 175-178, 205, 210, 229, 262, 265-266, 268-270

wine, 20, 24, 66, 68, 70-71, 87-88, 91, 93, 111, 116, 123, 190-191, 196-197, 200-202, 204-205, 209, 211, 214-215, 220, 229, 232, 243, 253, 263

wisdom, 8, 11, 17-18, 29-30, 41, 43, 48-49, 61-62, 66-67, 69, 76-77, 79-80, 97-98, 101, 121, 123, 133, 148, 161, 163-164, 167, 174-175, 181, 183-185, 190-192, 197-199, 201-202, 204-205, 207-210, 219, 221-222, 226, 228, 233, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 251-252, 254, 256, 259, 261

worship, 4, 7, 9-10, 16, 20, 27, 31-33, 36-37, 52, 56-57, 59, 62, 73, 75, 77, 83-84, 87, 115-116, 123, 132, 147, 153, 158-167, 169-170, 174, 181-182, 193, 195-196, 205, 262, 265, 268-269

Yemoja, 34, 36-37, 64-65

Yeshua ben Joseph, 25

Yule, 9, 28, 216

Stay in Touch

On the following pages you will find listed, with their current prices, some of the books now available on related subjects. Your book dealer stocks most of these and will stock new titles in the Llewellyn series as they become available. We urge your patronage.

To Get a Free Catalog

To obtain our full catalog, you are invited to write (see address below) for our bi-monthly news magazine/catalog *Llewellyn's New Worlds of Mind and Spirit*. A sample copy is free, and it will continue coming to you at no cost as long as you are an active mail customer. Or you may subscribe for just \$10 in the United States and Canada (\$20 overseas, first class mail). Many bookstores also have *New Worlds* available to their customers. Ask for it.

To Order Books and Tapes

If your bookstore does not carry the titles described on the following pages, you may order them directly from Llewellyn by sending the full price in U.S. funds, plus postage and handling (see below).

Credit card orders: VISA, MasterCard, American Express are accepted. Call us toll-free within the United States and Canada at 1-800-THE-MOON.

Special Group Discount: Because there is a great deal of interest in group discussion and study of the subject matter of this book, we offer a 20% quantity discount to group leaders or agents. Our special quantity price for a minimum order of five copies of *Cauldron of Transformation* is \$67.80 cash-with-order. Include postage and handling charges noted below.

Postage and Handling: Include \$4 postage and handling for orders \$15 and under; \$5 for orders over \$15. There are no postage and handling charges for orders over \$100. Postage and handling rates are subject to change. We ship UPS whenever possible within the continental United States; delivery is guaranteed. Please provide your street address as UPS does not deliver to P.O. boxes. Orders shipped to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico will be sent via first class mail. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. International orders: Airmail—add retail price of each book and \$5 for each non-book item (audiotapes, etc.); Surface mail—add \$1 per item.

Minnesota residents add 7% sales tax.

Mail orders to:

Llewellyn Worldwide, P.O. Box 64383, Dept. K600-9
St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, U.S.A.

For customer service, call (612) 291-1970.

All prices subject to change without notice.

Reclaiming the Power

The How & Why of Practical Ritual Magic

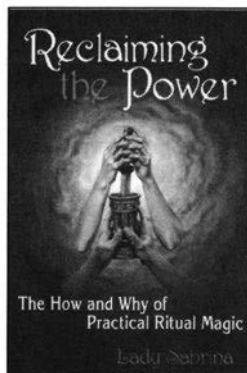
Lady Sabrina

By far one of the most usable and workable approaches to magic written in a long time, *Reclaiming the Power* is for anyone who has ever wondered about magic, ever wanted to try it, or ever had a goal to achieve. This is the first book to explain just what ritual magic is without the trappings of a specific tradition. It is a simple, straightforward approach to magic, stressing the use of natural and seasonal energies to accomplish what needs to be done.

Getting results is what *Reclaiming the Power* is all about. The average person, untrained and uninitiated, will learn magic that can be performed anywhere and for any purpose. Everything, from what magic is to spell-casting, is explained in simple, easy-to-understand language. All of the rituals presented are complete and can be easily adapted to solitary working.

0-87542-166-0, 256 pp., 5 1/4 x 8, illus., softcover

\$9.95



The Ancient & Shining Ones

World Myth, Magic & Religion

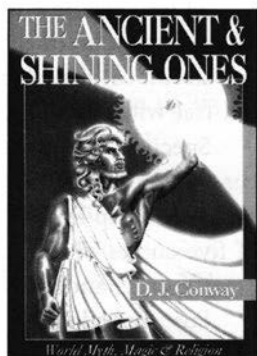
D.J. Conway

The Ancient & Shining Ones is a handy, comprehensive reference guide to the myths and deities from ancient religions around the world. Now you can easily find the information you need to develop your own rituals and worship using the Gods/Goddesses with which you resonate most strongly. More than just a mythological dictionary, *The Ancient & Shining Ones* explains the magickal aspects of each deity and explores such practices as Witchcraft, Ceremonial Magick, Shamanism and the Qabala. It also discusses the importance of ritual and magick, and what makes magick work.

Most people are too vague in appealing for help from the Cosmic Beings—they either end up contacting the wrong energy source, or they are unable to make any contact at all, and their petitions go unanswered. In order to touch the power of the universe, we must re-educate ourselves about the Ancient Ones. The ancient pools of energy created and fed by centuries of belief and worship in the deities still exist. Today these energies can bring peace of mind, spiritual illumination and contentment. On a very earthy level, they can produce love, good health, money, protection, and success.

0-87542-170-9, 448 pp., 7 x 10, 300 illus., softcover

\$17.95



To order, call 1-800-THE-MOON

All prices subject to change without notice

Global Ritualism

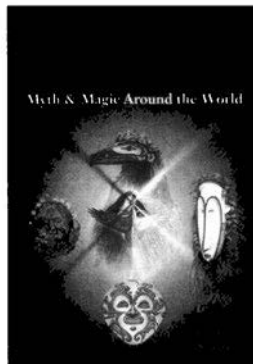
Myth & Magic Around the World

Denny Sargent

The concept of ritual and spirituality is common to all peoples, as the same archetypal powers dwell in the psyches of people everywhere. From Haiti to Egypt, *Global Ritualism* analyzes the common themes and archetypal symbols of higher ritual so that you can define how these archetypes play out in your own life. As you build a "global vocabulary" of such spiritual and magical symbols, you will be able to construct your own vibrant, living rituals—actively following a mythos that you create rather than one that has been given to you.

Let the subconscious language of human archetypes become your path to spiritual evolution and meaning. Become an "eclectic ritualist" and dare to live a more fulfilling life! Includes 300 photos of actual rituals as they are enacted around the world, including 16 pages of color photos.

0-87542-700-6, 256 pp., 7 x 10, 271 photos, 16 color pgs., softcover **\$19.95**



Dancing Shadows

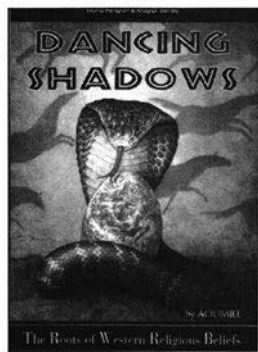
The Roots of Western Religious Beliefs

Aoumiel

At last, a contemporary Pagan perspective on Western religious history! Discover the historical roots of Neo-Paganism and its relationship to modern religions. Learn the story of how the Pagan deities have been absorbed into the hierarchy of mainstream religions, and why Pagan beliefs have been borrowed and refuted by Aryan religions over the centuries. *Dancing Shadows* traces Western religions back 3,000 years to the Dravidian god/goddess beliefs of the ancient Indus Valley (which evolved into the Western Pagan tradition) and the patriarchal sky-god religion of the Aryans from Central Asia (on which modern Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are based). This book will show you how the cross-fertilization of these two belief systems—both traceable to a common religious ancestor—is the source of conflicts that continue today.

Aoumiel draws together current research in the fields of history, religion, archeology, and anthropology to formulate a cohesive theory for the origins of modern Neo-Paganism ... and presents a refreshing affirmation of the interconnection between all Western peoples and beliefs.

1-56718-691-2, 224 pp., 6 x 9, softcover **\$12.95**



To order, call 1-800-THE-MOON
All prices subject to change without notice

Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft

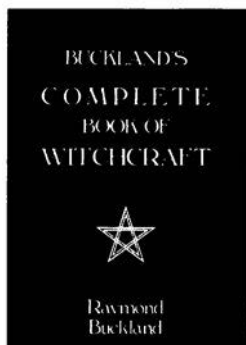
Raymond Buckland

Here is the most complete resource for the study and practice of modern, non-denominational Wicca. This is a lavishly illustrated, self-study course for the solitary or group. Included are rituals; exercises for developing psychic talents; information on all major "sects" of the Craft; sections on tools, beliefs, dreams, meditations, divination, herbal lore, healing, ritual clothing and much, much more. This book unites theory and practice into a comprehensive course designed to help you develop into a practicing Witch, one of the "Wise Ones."

Never before has so much information on the Craft of the Wise been collected in one place. Traditionally, there are three degrees of advancement in most Wiccan traditions. When you have completed studying this book, you will be the equivalent of a Third-Degree Witch. Even those who have practiced Wicca for years find useful information in this book, and many covens are using this for their textbook. If you want to become a Witch, or if you merely want to find out what Witchcraft is really about, you will find no better book than this.

0-87542-050-8, 272 pp., 8 1/2 x 11, illus., softcover

\$14.95



Santeria: The Religion

Faith, Rites, Magic

Migene González-Wippler

When the Yoruba of West Africa were brought to Cuba as slaves, they preserved their religious heritage by disguising their gods as Catholic saints and worshiping them in secret. The resulting religion is Santeria, a blend of primitive magic and Catholicism now practiced by an estimated five million Hispanic Americans.

Blending study with her experience, González-Wippler describes Santeria's pantheon (orishas); the priests (santeros); the divining shells used to consult the gods (the Diloggún) and the herbal potions prepared as medicinal cures and for magic (Ewe) as well as controversial ceremonies—including animal sacrifice. She has obtained remarkable photographs and interviews with Santeria leaders that highlight aspects of the religion rarely revealed to nonbelievers. This book satisfies the need for knowledge of this religious force that links its devotees in America to a wisdom seemingly lost in modern society.

1-56718-329-8, 400 pp., 6 x 9, 64 photos, softcover

\$12.95



To order, call 1-800-THE-MOON
All prices subject to change without notice

Celtic Myth & Magic

Harness the Power of the Gods & Goddesses

EdainMcCoy

Tap into the mythic power of the Celtic goddesses, gods, heroes and heroines to aid your spiritual quests and magical goals. *Celtic Myth & Magic* explains how to use creative ritual and pathworking to align yourself with the energy of these archetypes, whose potent images live deep within your psyche.

Celtic Myth & Magic begins with an overview of 49 types of Celtic Paganism followed today, then gives instructions for evoking and invoking the energy of the Celtic pantheon. Three detailed pathworking texts will take you on an inner journey where you will join forces with the images of Cuchulain, Queen Maeve and Merlin to bring their energies into your life. The last half of the book clearly details the energies of over 300 Celtic deities and mythic figures so you can evoke or invoke the appropriate deity to attain a goal. This inspiring, well-researched book will help solitary Pagans who seek to expand the boundaries of their practice to form partnerships with the divine.

1-56718-661-0, 464 pp., 7 x 10, illus., softcover

\$19.95



The Crafted Cup

Ritual Mysteries of the Goddess and the Grail

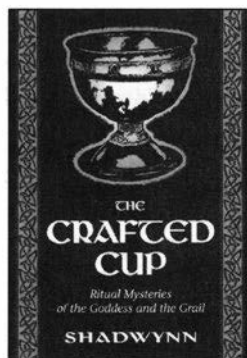
Shadwynn

The Holy Grail—fabled depository of wonder, enchantment and ultimate spiritual fulfillment—is the key by which the wellsprings of a Deeper Life can be tapped for the enhancement of our inner growth. *The Crafted Cup* is a compendium of the teachings and rituals of a Pagan religious Order—the Ordo Arcanorum Gradalis—which incorporates into its worship ritual imagery based upon the Arthurian Grail legends, a reverence toward the mythic Christ, and an appreciation of the truths and techniques found scattered throughout the New Age movement.

The Crafted Cup is divided into two parts. The first deals with the teachings and concepts which hold a central place within the philosophy of the Ordo Arcanorum Gradalis. The second and larger of the two parts is a compilation of the sacramental rites and seasonal rituals which make up the liturgical calendar of the Order. It contains one of the largest collections of Pagan, Grail-oriented rituals yet published.

0-87542-739-1, 420 pp., 7 x 10, illus., softcover

\$19.95



To order, call 1-800-THE-MOON

All prices subject to change without notice

The Sabbats

A New Approach to Living the Old Ways

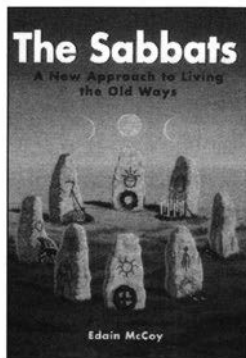
EdainMcCoy

The Sabbats offers many fresh, exciting ways to deepen your connection to the turning of the Wheel of the Year. This tremendously practical guide to Pagan solar festivals does more than teach you about the "old ways"—you will learn workable ideas for combining old customs with new expressions of those beliefs that will be congruent with your lifestyle and tradition.

The Sabbats begins with background on Paganism (tenets, teachings, and tools) and origins of the eight Sabbats, followed by comprehensive chapters on each Sabbat. The last section provides 16 complete texts of Sabbat rituals—for both covens and solitaires—with detailed guidelines for adapting rituals to specific traditions or individual tastes. Includes an extensive reference section with a resources guide, bibliography, musical scores for rituals, and more. This book may contain the most practical advice ever for incorporating the old ways into your Pagan lifestyle!

1-56718-663-7, 320 pp., 7 x 10, illus., photos, softcover

\$14.95



Ancient Ways

Reclaiming the Pagan Tradition

Pauline Campanelli, illustrated by Dan Campanelli

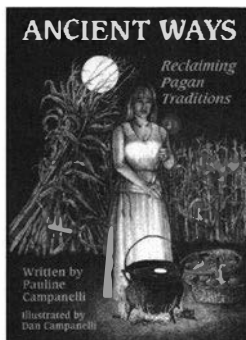
Ancient Ways is filled with magick and ritual that you can perform every day to capture the spirit of the seasons. It focuses on the celebration of the Sabbats of the Old Religion by giving you practical things to do while anticipating the sabbat rites, and helping you harness the magical energy for weeks afterward. The wealth of seasonal rituals and charms are drawn from ancient sources but are easily performed with materials readily available.

Learn how to look into your previous lives at Yule . . . at Beltane, discover the places where you are most likely to see faeries . . . make special jewelry to wear for your Lammas Celebrations . . . for the special animals in your life, paint a charm of protection at Midsummer.

Most Pagans and Wiccans feel that the Sabbat rituals are all too brief and wish for the magick to linger on. *Ancient Ways* can help you reclaim your own traditions and heighten the feeling of magick.

0-87542-090-7, 256 pp., 7 x 10, illus., softcover

\$14.95



To order, call 1-800-THE-MOON
All prices subject to change without notice

A Radical New Vision

Cauldron of Transformation will challenge your old ways of thinking and provide you with a whole new perspective. Co-Creation Spirituality is a non-judgmental way to re-evaluate your current spiritual path and determine just what you find appropriate and meaningful for yourself.

In a refreshingly no-nonsense manner, Lady Sabrina identifies the five primary qualities of a religion and goes on to teach you how to apply these principles to revitalize your own spiritual path.

Explore the basic tenets and structure of Celtic Druidism, Shamanism, Christianity, Santería, and Buddhism and learn how to combine the wisdom and knowledge of these diverse traditions into a living spiritual system of your own.

- Construct your own Oracle and Vessel of Creation—an essential tool for spiritual advancement never before published—to establish and strengthen your own magical link to Divinity
- Discover the true nature and purpose of sacraments, prayers, and the days of holy obligation and adapt or develop versions of these rites for your own path



Lady Sabrina is an initiated High Priestess and legally ordained minister of Wicca. She is the founder of Our Lady of Enchantment Church and School of Wicca in New Hampshire, which has facilitated the training of over 20,000 students through mail-order classes.

A Radical New Vision

Cauldron of Transformation will challenge your old ways of thinking and provide you with a whole new perspective. Co-Creation Spirituality is a non-judgmental way to re-evaluate your current spiritual path and determine just what you find appropriate and meaningful for yourself.

In a refreshingly no-nonsense manner, Lady Sabrina identifies the five primary qualities of a religion and goes on to teach you how to apply these principles to revitalize your own spiritual path.

Explore the basic tenets and structure of Celtic Druidism, Shamanism, Christianity, Santería, and Buddhism and learn how to combine the wisdom and knowledge of these diverse traditions into a living spiritual system of your own.

- Construct your own Oracle and Vessel of Creation—an essential tool for spiritual advancement never before published—to establish and strengthen your own magical link to Divinity
- Discover the true nature and purpose of sacraments, prayers, and the days of holy obligation and adapt or develop versions of these rites for your own path



Lady Sabrina is an initiated High Priestess and legally ordained minister of Wicca. She is the founder of Our Lady of Enchantment Church and School of Wicca in New Hampshire, which has facilitated the training of over 20,000 students through mail-order classes.

ISBN 1-56718-600-9



51695>



9 781567 186000

\$16.95 US

\$23.50 CAN

Llewellyn Publications
St. Paul, MN 55164-0383
PRINTED IN THE USA