



The Wichtower

THE WICCAUK MEMBERS MAGAZINE

Oct - Nov 2003

Issue 6



Inside this issue

Editorial & Cover Art	3
Moot Information	4
Samhain	5
Poetry Corner	6
Through the Amber Spyglass	8
Diaries of a Teenage Witch	9
The Progress of the Initiate in the Western Mysteries Tradition	10
Crystals with Nightwolf	17
Bach Flower Remedies	18
Athena	20
Rune Rhyme	21
Ask Obsidiana	22
Special Events	24

Contacting WiccaUK

The Witchtower
BM WiccaUK
London, WC1N 3XX

ISSN 1741-5691

<http://www.wiccauk.com/>

0870 474 0713

witchtower@wiccauk.com

Editor: Sparks sparks@wiccauk.com

Assisted by: Arual and Casp
arual@wiccauk.com casp@wiccauk.com

Please include an SAE if you want anything returned.

The Witchtower is produced every 6-8 weeks and is distributed free online and in selected shops.

The Witchtower is produced by unpaid volunteers and members of our website.

We welcome submissions from any source. Articles or essays, poetry, book reviews, practical advice on aspects of the Craft are all welcome.

All material is © the listed author. Articles with no author mentioned are © WiccaUK.

Editorial

Welcome all to issue 6 of the Witchtower!

Merry Meet to you all

In this issue we have a whole array of articles to tickle your senses. As well as our monthly round up of the coming moots and special events we have various poems in poetry corner by Monkey and Twilight Girl as well as a Children's Rune Rhyme. Obsidiana continues her help section, this month talking to us all about self love and affirmation.

Sam also gives us the low down on Samhain and Nightwolf continues to inform us about crystals and their various properties with this month including crystals like carnelian, calcite and flourite.

Twilight Girl continues her article about Bach flower remedies this issue showing us the various properties of different plants. ThistleWitch also tells us all about the Goddess Athena.

In this issue we can also find articles from Marty Drury talking about Philip Pullman and 'His Dark Materials' and an article by I_Luv_Willow showing a few days as she see's them as a teenage witch.

On the back page please find details relating to two very special WiccaUK events. Firstly the Manchester Samhain Ball at Bar 38 on the 1st of November and then in December the WiccaUK Yule Ball at Wicked Nightclub.

Finally we have the first in a series of articles by Synesis, writing about the Qabalistic work of the initiate in the western Mysteries Tradition.

Once again welcome to issue 6 of the Witchtower,

BB

Sparks

Cover Artwork

Ascension - Willow Arlena

This is the celebration of the ascension of consciousness of the Earth (Gaia) and her many beings. The differences between religions are dissolved in the greater light that encompasses all. As man and woman meet over the sacred fire, ascended masters and spirit guides help the sincere awaken into their light bodies. The new life that follows this ascension of consciousness is represented in the image of the baby at the bottom of the picture. Old and new come together in a moment outside of time.

Based on her fascination with art, dance, nature, mysticism and psychology, the paintings of Willow Arlena reflect an intensity, spirituality and love of indigenous cultures combined with brilliant tones and fluidity of movement.

Willow's paintings are as colourful and eclectic as her life journey. The fluidity and multidimensionality apparent in her work transports the viewer into more subtle realms of experience. Geometric patterns, flows of energy, luminescence, archetypal images and ethnic designs are combined to convey the transformational journey we all share.

<http://www.designsbywillow.com>

WiccaUK Moot Information

Leeds Moot
18th October

Halloween Festival, London
18th & 19th October

Manchester Moot
25th October

Edinburgh Moot
25th October

Manchester Samhain Party
1st November

CoA Witchfest
8th November

Pagan Federation National
Conference
29th November

London Yule Party
7th December

Crescent Academy Tarot Course
Starts 31 January 04

Blackpool Weekend
12th-14th March 04

Organising a Moot



If you're thinking about running a local Moot or other event, let us know!

Email events@wiccauk.com with what you've decided so far, and we'll try to help as much as possible with the rest.

We'll mention it on the site and, if we have enough notice, mention it in newsletters, both our own and other people, and in this magazine.



The Witches Hat

Specialising in: Energising Crystals, Wands, Altar Tools, Wicca/Pagan Items, Tarot Cards/Pouches, Gothic Jewellery, Crystal Balls, Pendulum Sets, Spells, Magical Incense/Oils, Rune Sets, Relaxation CD's, Candles, Ceremonial Pewterware, Scrying Mirrors, Unusual Gifts and much much more.

158a High Street, Irvine,
Ayrshire, KA12 8AN
Tel: 01294 277200.

*A visit to the Witches Hat
will leave you spellbound!!*

www.thewitcheshat.co.uk
E-mail info@thewitcheshat.co.uk.

Samhain

Samhain (pronounced sow-in), also known as All Hallows Eve and Halloween, and means 'summers end' is celebrated mostly on October 31st and this is when the year ends traditionally in Wiccan beliefs. To witches samhain is one of the four greater sabbats or cross quarter days. Sometimes it is also called the Great Sabbat. It is the most magical night of the year. Many followers of various pagan religions observe this date as a religious festival and as a memorial day for their dead friends and family. Where others may fear the dead, we honour them, knowing that one day we will join them and be reborn with those that we love. It is a time for dimensional openings and workings and also the celebration of the death of the year king. It is a time of endings of bad relationships and bad situations, and it is the time when one can see a glimmer of hope in the future. It is also the time to wrap up old projects, take stock of one's life and initiate new projects for the coming year.

Our modern celebration of Halloween is a descendant of an ancient Celtic fire festival. Samhain was New Year to the Celts and it was at this time of the year that the veil between the worlds was at it's thinnest and the living could communicate with their beloved dead in Tir nan Og. Unfortunately there is little to tell us how the Celts celebrated this festival but we do know that this festival was characterised as one of the four great 'fire festivals' of the Celts. Samhain was also the final harvest of the year for the Celts and anything left on the vines or in the fields after this date was considered blasted by the fey and unfit for human consumption. This holiday was not only Celtic, in fact it is quite startling how many ancient and unconnected cultures celebrate this as a festival of the dead. But the majority of our modern traditions can be traced to the British Isles.

Folk tradition tells us of many divinations dealing with marriage, weather and the coming fortunes for the year. Several methods used the apple, the most popular of the Samhain

fruits and these were performed via such methods as ducking for apples and apple peeling. Ducking for apples was a marriage divination - the first person to bite an apple would be the first to marry in the coming year. Also if you cut an apple in half along the equator and then eat it by candlelight before a mirror, your future spouse will appear over your shoulder. Apple peeling was a divination to see how long your life would be. Another type of divination that is traditional to Samhain is for girls to place hazelnuts along the front of a fire grate, each one to represent one of her suitors. She could then divine her future husband by chanting;

If you love me, pop and fly
If you hate me, burn and die.

It is still a night to practice various forms of divination concerning future events.

The most famous icon of samhain is the jack o lantern. Various authorities attribute it to be either Irish or Scottish in origin and it is clear that people who travelled the road on this night used it as a lantern to scare away spirits or the fey, who might otherwise lead them astray. The custom of dressing in costumes is also of Celtic origin, with survival particularly strong in Scotland. The custom though was not relegated to the children but indulged in by the adults also.

An incense for Samhain.

1 part nettle leaves
1 part bayleaf
1 part tarragon
1 part sage
A pinch of oak leaves
2 drops of frankincense oil.

BB

Sam

Looking for a Place

Take me to a place where I can construct myself
A place where my background holds no ground
And I can ride only the steed I choose.

Have you got a place?
Where we can be on our own,
Maybe for just the once.
Some place, far away
Hidden in alleys and dark streets,
An exhausting trek for even the most sturdy feet,
So all our followers can fall away?
So all these voices can disappear?
Where this paper in my pocket can mean nothing
Because I can not use it to buy your love,
And what else would I need?

Do you know a place?
A place which the world leaves alone.
Exile me, banish me, throw me away,
Let me leave the struggles of this life.
Let me lose the tension stuck in these shoulders,
And swim in oceans,
Blind to the planet's motions
Beside the light of your ever bright eyes.

I look into these eyes, you know that I do.
They let me see what is truly within you.
I know that as long as there is a spark,
Then there is a dream.
Your dream for escape, your wish for fantasy.

The grit of our life, running from dirty ruin to fallen tower,
Beating our feet on stone, broken roads
Is holding you down.
All you want is a little escape,
You want to be a golden spirit, not just a pretty face.
You want to be an entity, not an identity.
You want feelings without practicality, warmth without fire, the touch
Without the hand,
All you want is a little place.
Where gold is just rock, where the screen just flickers images we've already
seen,
Where the clothes are just cloth, and the food is just taste, and our faces
are always clean.
That's what the spark in your eyes tells me.
Don't let it ever fade away,
While there's a dream, there's a way.
If you keep on walking, you'll soon find a place.

Close those eyes, but never let them fade away.

Monkey

The Deception

As the rebirth begins
to find the truth within.
Peeling away the layers of skin.
Torturous pain held within.

Today, Coyote tricked me.
He revealed to me my deepest fears
The things I thought I could never face
For fear it would blow my dreams away

But look inside I must
For there is no other way
Pray for me dear Coyote friend
As I awaken to another day

For in my shamans heart I know
that one day I will forgive
My pain will slowly pass in time
as I walk this lonely path of mine
Knowing I'll never deceive myself again

My spirit guides support me
As each new insight brings
a hidden revelation
Revealing a new layer of skin
For through the pain comes ecstasy (March 1998)

Melanie (aka Twilightgirl)
©Tangled Web Creations 1998-2003

Through the Amber Spyglass

"Never underestimate the importance of mucking about." Sentiments expressed by renowned children's author Phillip Pullman. Mr. Pullman [who was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by The University of Wales Bangor this month] spoke on the vital role 'play' has within our lives. To cite Pullman's Dark Materials trilogy as 'fictitious' would be not so much missing the point as driving forty miles in the wrong direction. Reading Pullman or JK Rowling is like peering cautiously into a rippling lake. What meets your eyes is a reflection of the world around you. Yet, all the time it remains different. One small thing is out of place and as a result anything becomes a possibility.

Pullman remarked to me that: "The only difference between grown-up's books and children's books is that a select few read the former and everybody reads the latter." Victoria Coren stated in her column in The Observer that she couldn't have a second childhood because she was still enjoying her first. Children's stories encourage us to admit we were all children once. We all looked for through The Amber Spyglass and saw a world we didn't understand. A brave new world with possibilities aplenty, hidden dangers and exciting mystery stories. Are we now [as adults in our top business jobs, company cars and river view flats] seriously going to try and convince ourselves that such a world no longer exists? Was it [to paraphrase poor soap-operas] 'all a dream'?

Pullman informed me: "it doesn't matter how many gimmicks you put in, how much style or character, everything must be driven by the story." The same is true in this world. To be an individual you must have a name and a story. The name differentiates

you from the others but the story of your life is written by your actions. Along the way, you meet interesting characters that teach you many secrets. Some are friends. Some wish you ill and others may one day reveal themselves to be Lord Voldermort. Some of these characters you will love and some of them will treasure you back. When you feel the cold in your bones and you know it's time for the final chapter in the story, don't fret. Somewhere in a celestial publishing house, they're already working on the next volume.

Marty Drury

Manchester Ritual Group

A practical group based in Manchester focussing mainly on rituals from witchcraft, Qaballah and Enochian styles (including OTO and Golden Dawn). Other activities will include making items such as incense and candles. Equipment and items will be supplied though donations are welcome.

The main advantage of the group will be the opportunity for an individual to develop closely with others. It will be held every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month at my home in Stretford from 1:00 in the afternoon onwards or alternatively in New Aeon Bookshop. This is not a coven so there is no hierarchy and no initiations will be performed.

If you are interested please contact Adante on 07814 153873

Diaries of a Teenage Witch

Day 1

Wake up to see the sun rise: Is beautiful and really illuminates the distance, This inspires me to pick some herbs, I get my everyday Athame and cut them down, Find some Ribbon and hang them up to dry on my curtain rail. Go back outside and dance to the sun. Then i emerge myself deep in a book that discuss' the endless cycles, that of the moon the sun and life and its phases. Feel truly inspired and make offering of some lovely strawberries to the goddess (bury them at bottom of garden). Find bag - Pack suitcase and head off to wales to the 'Abernant lake hotel' In small welsh town i can't spell or pronounce, Lovely. On the way driving past coventry and Birmingham feel sad, The amount of concrete - sky scrapers a scar in the goddess' side - How could you feel the magick in a place like this?. Had dinner - Was cold but still nice. Go to room and read 'Spells and how they work' By Janet and Stewart Farrar (brilliant book) . Sleep.

Day 2

Get up and walk round the lake before breakfast beyond beauty i loved it, So calm and serene, For one split second when i gazed across the lake into the depths of the lush green trees i felt happy, magick sparkled all around in the Grass, The water and the air just buzzed with energy, The wind slowly blowing my hair out of my face. Lay down on the lawn in the forest all day reading 'The bell jar' by sylvia path. Get up and go back for dinner - It was awfully not cooked (what a surprise), Feel slightly odd after having a drink and continue to hang spoons from my nose and at the same time make a noise by putting my finger round the edge of a wine glass slowly. (Presence of wine glass suggests reason of oddness) People on table find me amusing and witty - teach them to balance spoons on their noses.

Day 3

Go out to the brecon beacons national park - was wonderful and breathtaking (avoiding the sheep poo of course), have some food and take photos of mountains and smile into the wind as it blows past me, later decide to evaluate myself and my feelings so i can understand myself and become a better person. Think off love, Love for this person and agree with their definition on love "Some there m a connection. Knowing you need them and can't be without them Just talking with them makes all the bad things go away", sigh and wish someone would feel that way about me, but the goddess will choose when it is time... Till the i can only play with time.

Day 4

Just before i go to bed go for a walk - Cast a circle invoke the goddess and god and draw power from the earth, the moon the stars to heal my mind and make me feel happy, Bless the goddess world and everything in it one by one, Counting my blessings one by one, using the stars to help me count, Then realize sometimes life can be good to you, But when you least expect it, Your true love will fall on your lap and say sorry and part... Maybe it will be someone on the train next to you, or your work friend... Just wait time with give you its fruits.

I_Luv_Willow

The Progress of the Initiate in the Western Mystery Tradition

The purpose of this series of articles is to demonstrate the Qabalistic plan of the work of the Initiate, as is common throughout the modern Western Mystery Tradition. It will be dense and complex, but as simple as any article of this nature can be. The plan of the articles is thus:

- 1- General Considerations on the Western Mystery Tradition; Malkuth, Tau and Yesod.
- 2- The progress from Yesod to Netzach, the Divine Alchemy and Transformation.
- 3- The three approaches to Tiphareth, The path of Samekh and the Attainment of the HGA.
- 4- The Wings on the Ascent: Geburah and Chesed, Teth. The Abyss.
- 5- Beyond the Abyss, the Dark Night. The Sphere of the Mother and beyond. Conclusion.

Enjoy the ride

“I further promise and swear that with the Divine Permission I will, from this day forward, apply myself to the Great Work - which is, to purify and exalt my Spiritual Nature so that with the Divine Aid I may at length attain to be more than human, and thus gradually raise and unite myself to my higher and Divine Genius...”

-- 5=6 Adeptus Minor ceremony of the Golden Dawn, Candidate's Oath

As practitioners of magick now standing with both feet firmly in the 21st century, we are surrounded by an unparalleled wealth of information, and we also stand as heirs to a vast spiritual tradition which has continued for over two thousand years, from the Corpus Hermeticum and the Greek Magical Papyri through the later Hermetic and Neo-Platonic mystics, the mystical traditions of Islam and Christianity, the occult revival of the renaissance and magicians such as Agrippa, Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, as well as the pseudonymous authors of the Solomonian cycle of grimoires. We stand as heirs to the great Jewish tradition of mysticism, which was later synthesised with the other western streams, and we stand as the spiritual children of the Victorian occult Orders, such as the Golden Dawn and the OTO, both of which are still living in some form today. In the midst of such a sea of knowledge, it is quite easy to

drown, and one of the complaints we hear today is that there seems to be no direction – that we strike out haphazardly onto a path which is unclear. This is not the case, but it is forgivable to think along such lines!

No, we have formulated quite clearly, with the aid of the Qabalah, a roadmap of progress, which accounts for the progress of the initiate of the mysteries through the planes and his interaction with the various forces that will manifest in his life. It is this plan which I will endeavour to make clear in this series. What, then, is the work of the initiate? This question is vast, and one which has been debated for years in magickal forums, and I don't propose to definitely answer it here. However, it is clear that the work of the initiate is to gain control of the faculties of his psyche, and, by application of the Will, to use them towards spiritual ends. This is the concept of the Great Work – this is a mighty-sounding term, but what does it mean? In fact, the phrase originally comes from Alchemy, part of a larger term, the “Great Work of the Sun”. This gives us our clue. The Great Work is the initiate working to achieve union with the spiritual sun, the illuminating source of life and light, through magickal work. It is the transformation of Lead, the dull self, without inspiration or illumination, and upraising it, transforming it into the Gold of the Sun, the self unified with the Greater being, the personal Genius. This goes beyond even the work with the Holy Guardian Angel, the Higher Self, or whatever you wish to call it, leading ultimately even to the source of all existence itself. This is the aim of the initiate – union with the absolute. I have used here the term “initiate” and I don't doubt that this will lead to whinging in some areas – accusations that I have said that only initiates of a certain spiritual tradition can do this, and not solitary magicians. This is nonsense – one does not have to be an initiate of Wicca, the Aurum Solis, the Golden Dawn, the OTO or any other organisation to follow the Way of Return (this term comes from Proclus – an indication that the idea of the return to the absolute was certainly not a uniquely Eastern or 20th century idea – as any Platonist should know!). I use the term here simply because it is the one I am most comfortable with, and that the true initiate in spirit is one who has set foot upon the Way of Return, regardless of exterior considerations.

The first and, to us, the most important part of the

path of the initiate can be described poetically as the Quest for the Beloved. This has a long history in the West, flourishing especially in the tradition of Troubadour poetry and the notion of courtly love. The Troubadours spoke of a spiritual bond between lover and beloved, and while this was often directed at a particular person, it is clear to the astute reader that the spiritual exaltation conveyed in the poetry indicates that the subject of the poetry serves as a locus around which to centre the notion of spiritual love. The beloved, then, is the Holy Guardian Angel, the personal daimon about which we will speak at length in the second of this series of articles. Many have written of the beginning of the magician's career, and something which seems common to all is a sense of longing for truth, an apprehension of reality that is outside of the realm of faith. This quest for gnosis is the impetus for the Great Work, and many mystics, from St Teresa of Avila to Rumi have written that it was only when they underwent the mystical experience that they finally experienced the perfect love that they had searched for. The sense of longing which draws us all on the path of gnosis is commonly expressed in poetry – Edward Carpenter's Towards Democracy is a perfect distillation of the sense of longing and the perfect consummation which characterises the mystical experience. The Islamic poet Rabia al-Adawiyya speaks very clearly and movingly of the mystical experience of divine love, as do many other poets.

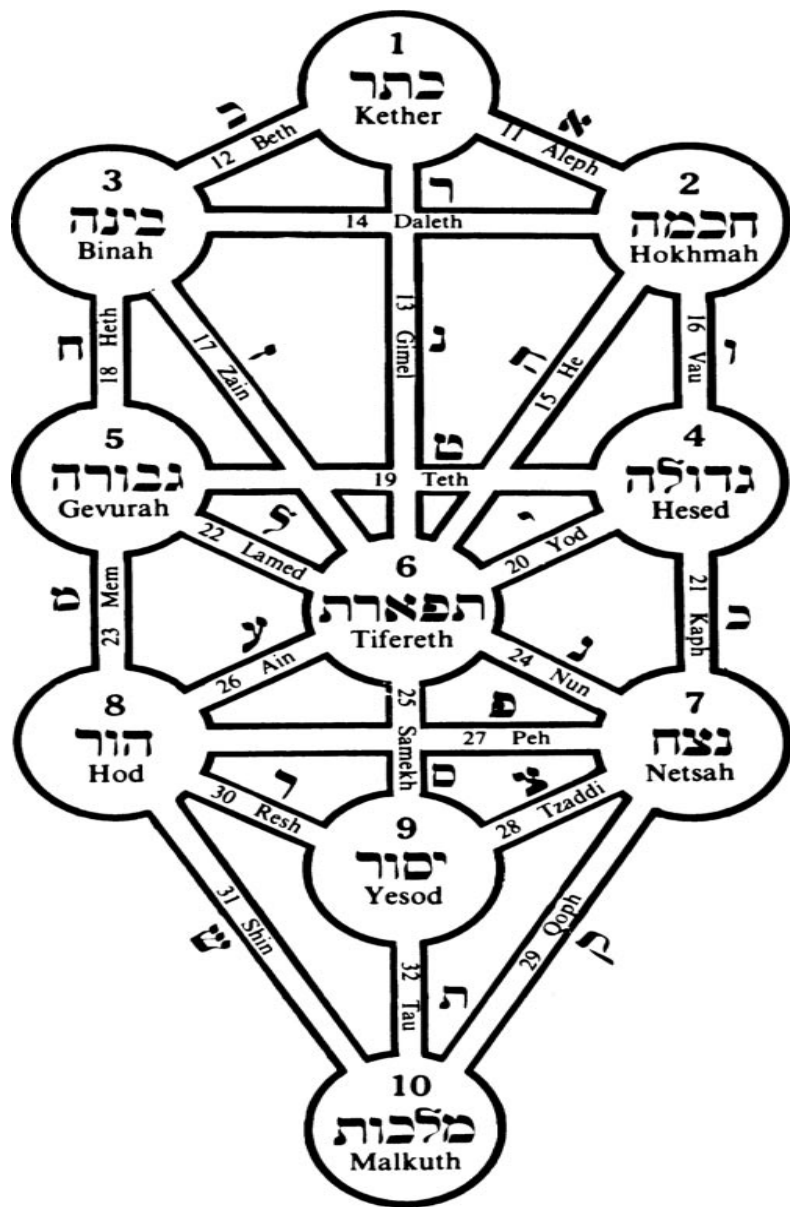
But, properly, these considerations belong in the next article: what concerns us here is the beginning of the path. The Great Work involves just that – work! Understand that the work seems at times dull or repetitive, especially in its preliminary stages. There are periods where it all seems pointless. It is then especially that the Work must continue. It has its rewards – and its rewards are beyond all imagining. Furthermore, those who are naturally suited to be magicians – that is, any human being who experience that compulsion to know more – will find themselves dissatisfied, and returning again and again to those avenues of consciousness. In the Thelemic Holy Books, the Divine Mother (of whom we shall learn more in later articles) says:

“Wherefore I charge you that ye come unto me in the beginning; for if ye take but one step in this Path, ye must inevitably arrive at the end thereof.” (Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni)

The Western Mystery Tradition is, as we have established, that vastly diverse spiritual and intellectual movement which has breathed life into Western culture for as long as it has existed. Over its existence, a tool has been developed which allows us to plan and chart the ascent of the soul. This plan draws from the planetary magic of Chaldea and Babylon, from Egyptian philosophy, from the vast Hermetic cosmology formed in Alexandria, and from the Pythagorean and Platonic lines of thought. Most of all, of course, it was through the mystical side of Judaism that it developed, from the Merkabah mysticism of ancient Israel, through the alpha-numeric mysteries of the Sepher Yetzirah and the emanationism of the Bahir, finally summed up in the Zohar. This tradition is, of course, the Qabalah, the great legacy of Judaism. The Qabalah was taken by the Western Hermeticists, who syncretised it with their own conception of the universe until it became a powerful and refined magical tool. To follow these articles, you will not need to have a background in Qabalah, but the concepts will be easier to grasp for those who do.

For those who do not, suffice to say the Qabalah, besides its various other uses, provides us with a plan of spiritual progression: it symbolically shows the creation of the universe from Nothing to Everything and shows us the way back as well. The diagram of the Tree of Life (Etz ha-Chayyim in Hebrew) consists of 10 spheres which indicate the progression of the energy emitted from the source of all things through ten states, the final one of which is our manifest universe. The paths linking the various spheres together are methods of progression between these ten spheres. For the initiate, the spheres, or Sephiroth as they are known in Hebrew, represent 10 different modes of consciousness and existence, the paths are both manners of travelling between them and influences in their own right, each of which is assigned a particular ideogram or letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The existence of such a plan leads us to ask – do all people progress in the same manner? Certainly, it seems there are many variations in mystical and magickal experience – can we really say that they are comprehended by the Qabalah? The answer is both yes and no. The Qabalah, as a symbol of the



Cosmos, must be capable of containing all things in it; furthermore, there are stages in mystical experience which do broadly apply, and these are contained in the Qabalah. However, one cannot expect that everyone who sets out on the path will have a vision of a woman surrounded by the four Haiioth ha-Qadosh or Holy living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel. Each mind possesses its own unique body of symbolism, and it is through this mesh that we interact with the universe. However, there are certain symbols which are very powerfully embedded in the mind of any Westerner, and there are some basic symbols, on the level of colour and perfume, which are components of any human psyche. The Qabalah is living and personal, otherwise it is useless. Here we may highlight the value of the magickal journal: it is expected by most authorities on magickal work that the student keep a journal of all of his experiences. This journal reflects everything about the psyche and its progression. Though one may not realise it at the time, the journal provides a resource which allows review and the tracing of certain patterns to life and magickal work. Thus the aspirant is recommended the practice of the magickal diary, as one of his most essential tools.

We may now move on to the beginning of our path: the tenth sphere on our diagram, called in Hebrew Malkuth, meaning "Kingdom". This Sephirah refers to manifestation, and the manifest universe. There is a tendency in certain occult circles to overlook this sephirah – and these are often the sort of ascetic circles who believe in some sort of mortification of the flesh, and in the eschewing of the material for the spiritual. These are also the sort of circles who are often ungrounded, with their head in the clouds, and sadly often in love with a metaphysical "truth" which has little basis in reality – often also the sort of people who do not believe in magick per se, and find it perfectly acceptable to go through lengthy rituals without any sort of result. All these problems arise from having neglected the sphere of Malkuth. In some Qabalistic texts, Malkuth is said to be "fallen" – disconnected from the knowledge and perception of deity. Those who confine their perceptions to Malkuth alone can be likened to the sleepers, and the first lesson of Malkuth is to awaken from that sleep (one of the paths leading from Malkuth is assigned the Tarot image "Judgement" which signifies this awakening). Of course, Malkuth is not always

regarded as fallen – it is said that "Malkuth is in Kether [the highest sphere], and Kether in Malkuth" – and this perception that deity pervades everywhere is part of this joyous awakening. But the lessons the Magician has to learn in Malkuth are both practical and spiritual – and we aim to outline some of them here. Firstly, there is the importance of a decent foundation, and a sense of priority: one cannot pursue the Great work if one is living on the street! The magician must learn that as an inhabitant of the material plane, he has needs which must be fulfilled, such as warmth, food and clothing. The first lesson, then, is that to reach above the heavens, our feet must be firmly planted on the earth. The spiritual path involves upheaval, and the continued participation in the daily reality of work is a necessity for those who would like to be able to deal with the various upheavals as they come. There is also another lesson to be learned about material things, and one that may be harder for modern Westerners to learn: you are not your possessions. While there is nothing wrong with luxury, the initiate should be wary of placing such emphasis on his possessions that he becomes a slave to them, rather than his possessions serving as tools for him. Magick, at a fundamental level, is about change – and one cannot enter whole-heartedly into it if one is continually hoarding possessions, and, worse still, believing that one simply must have a certain object in order to complete oneself. Thus far, the lessons of Malkuth have been simple things about grounding and understanding the balance between spirituality and material existence. These are all virtues of Earth, and Malkuth is the only Sephirah to which is attributed the element of Earth in the whole Tree. One of the other virtues associated with Earth is the steady work of the Ox (the elemental affinity of the sign Taurus is Earth) – and this is, in a sense, the most important lesson to be learned in this Sephirah. It is only through persistent effort that you will manage to get anywhere on the Way of Return – daily work, unstinting, when you want to and when you don't want to. That is the only way that you will be able to develop those faculties of the psyche necessary in the Great Work to a level where they are workable. It is like learning to play a violin – you wouldn't get anywhere if you sporadically practised anything that you felt like, sporadically, perhaps once a month (or, indeed, eight times a year). Yet people seem to expect progress on the

magickal path to be instantaneous – often through a misunderstanding of the nature of magickal work. So it is here that the Work starts – the daily work of basic ritual, meditation and invocation which is to be found in dozens of books on magick. The majority of people simply cannot do this – if you recognise yourself here, don't worry. Simply, we are all lazy and guilty of procrastination, but the only solution is to get up and do it now. Indeed, stop reading this article, get up and do the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram. Now! The article will still be here when you've finished doing it.

One of the titles of Malkuth in Qabalistic literature is *shar*, meaning "the gate". This is true – Malkuth is the gate to the whole tree, to the whole universe, and we must pass through it. But our passing through the gate must be a willed action, a willing step into the unknown. This is one of the most difficult aspects of Malkuth: the manifest universe as we know it is, despite its hardships, largely comfortable. It is secure, and it is tangible. The easiest route would be to sit it out here, doing nothing beyond sating our physical needs and desires, and waiting to pop out of incarnation. The path of the magician is hard, but also wonderful: but in order to understand the universe, we must pass beyond its surface, and this can be both uncomfortable and unsettling, especially in its initial phases. Its reward, however, is beyond any splendour of this world.

Finally, we must learn never to deny Malkuth. It is allowed to indulge in the pleasures of the world. No-one should spend their whole day doing ritual – magick must not be the only thing in life. The substance of magick is life itself, and without experiencing life, you will never experience magick. One of the highest realisations is that eventually every act becomes a magickal act – the magician becomes the path itself. Yet this is a consideration that should never become an excuse for the beginner. It is in Malkuth that all the influences in the universe come to manifestation, and magickal work must always come through to this level – for otherwise, what is it but stale ritual and ego games?

Setting out on the magickal path means setting foot outside of Malkuth, and the first path the magician must experience is the Path of Tau, which leads from the Tenth Sephirah to the Ninth, Yesod, which means "foundation" in English. It has been said that this is the hardest path on the Tree of Life, and this is quite probably accurate.

This path is attributed the influence of the planet Saturn and in the *Minutum Mundum*, the representation of the colours of the Sephiroth and paths used by the Golden Dawn, it is coloured a deep indigo. The letter attributed to it is the Hebrew letter Tau, meaning a "cross" and the imagery here is redolent of the cross on the lintels of the doors at the Passover, a symbol of the spiritually chosen. Thus it is a path of initiation, and begins the way of return. As we begin to consider this path, I will quote from the *Aurum Solis*' Song of Praises, a Qabalistic hymn, encompassing the whole of the Tree of Life. This verse is attributed to the Path of Tau:

Thine is the Sign of the End, Being fulfilled,

Sum of Existences:

Thine is the ultimate Door opened on Night's

Unuttered mystery:

Thine, the first hesitant step into the dark

Of those but latterly born to the Labyrinth!

Quite clearly, then, the Path of Tau is a path of Night. It is the first step on the path. I'm sure there are many reading this who will remember reading a lot about magick in its various forms before embarking on the actual work – indeed, I am sure there are those reading this now who will happily read away and do nothing. Often the excuse is that people want to know more before setting out and actually doing the work. One of the lessons for the Initiate on this path is on the nature of magickal work itself: you will never reach that perfect state of knowledge where you know exactly what to expect in a ritual – the only way to progress is to actually get out there, do the work, and see what happens. We step out into the dark from Malkuth, not knowing, but trusting in the unseen world behind the darkness. The tarot card attributed to this path, The Universe, assures us that when we are willing to work in this darkness, when we are willing to set foot into the unknown and follow the path though it is shadowy and unclear, we have the entire universe, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, as our reward.

As I have mentioned, the influence on this path is the planet Saturn. Traditionally, in astrology, Saturn is a "malefic" planet, ruling over the harvest and death, the ancient over-thrown Kronos dwelling in the cold outer reaches of the solar system. Yet Saturn has

ever had a dual aspect, which we will come to later. Firstly we must consider the limiting and restricting aspect of Saturn, which is the most obvious aspect which presents itself on this path: from the comfort and stability of Malkuth, the Initiate has entered into those regions which are considered taboo by orthodox religion and society. In a sense, he has invoked the reaping-hook of Saturn.

The stage of progress associated with this path is a difficult one, and if the truth be known, there are many who fail at this hurdle. Up until the initiate begins a regular practice of magickal ritual, he has not been terribly bothered by those strange outer portions of his mind which are so necessary to magickal work, and they have fallen into a slumber. Now, suddenly, he is poking about in the recesses of the subconscious, and, frankly, it would probably be happier left to wallow in its own darkness. In the classical terminology of occultism, he has disturbed the Dweller on the Threshold, that mysterious, shadowy figure who guards the boundaries of consciousness. Suddenly, all those things he has repressed about himself, the issues he hasn't wanted to face, the inner demons that he has suppressed, start to leap out at him. This is truly a path where the initiate must face himself and begin to understand (it is no accident that the Sephirah to which Saturn is attributed is called Binah, "Understanding"). It is not without reason that the ancient Greek seeker after truth was exhorted at Delphi to "Know Thyself", for it is this which is the first major phase of magickal work. While traversing this path, there will probably be a period of uncertainty, near depression. All those questions which linger in the back of the mind about magick – "Is it real? Am I deluding myself? Am I just mad?" – will probably hit him front on. Good. These questions need to be addressed and dealt with, or they will be an impediment to further progress. They are uncomfortable questions, and they are not the only ones which will arise on this path – all sorts of questions will come up, most of them deeply personal – but this is all highly important in order to build a stable foundation. Would you sooner be doing magick with a vast set of neuroses?

Let us address another curious phenomenon which seems to be common on this path – the "dry phase". The Initiate has begun his work with a burst of enthusiasm, his daily rituals invigorated by that heady sense of excitement which accompanies everyone's first steps. Soon, however, he has to face the reality

that this work takes time and effort – this still is not usually a problem, but it is disheartening, especially when the initiate feels he has been working hard and is still not experiencing the high ecstasies and mystical visions spoken of by many authorities on occultism. The Angels do not suddenly appear in full raiment at each quarter, though their presence may begin to make itself known, and this may disappoint some people. Still, most understand that this is not a path which is overly quick, and are still willing to do the work. Suddenly, however, it seems they run into an insurmountable barrier: their previous experiences are drying up. Nothing is working right. They can't feel anything when they do the rituals. What is going on? A lot of us have been there, and it is not a pleasant experience. It is what many magicians call the "dry phase". It is simply something that has to be worked through, and not something that anyone can help alleviate. This is why Crowley lays importance on the Magickal Oath – that the initiate will carry on and fulfil his work regardless of whatever manner in which his mind or body protests. All that can be said to reassure someone experiencing this phenomenon is that it will soon drift away: though it does not seem so, it is ultimately an illusory barrier, and with a little resolve, it will soon pass, and a greater level of understanding and proficiency will be reached.

A side note: those who are familiar with the general terminology of mysticism may well be tempted to say that they are experiencing the Dark Night of the Soul (a term derived from the work of St John of the Cross). While this experience is a reflection of the Dark Night, it is in no way the Dark Night proper, which is an experience belonging to the sphere of Binah itself, and we will consider it in the last of this series of articles. Nevertheless, these moments of spiritual darkness have their place all along the path, and the aspirant would be foolish to think that the path will be all sweetness and light: The two pillars through which we pass to enter the temple are both Black and White, and incomplete without one another. Neither black nor white reaches the highest point, and to adhere to one to the exclusion of the other is to enter the realm of the Qliphoth, the shells, the realm of unbalanced forces. To put it in Thelemic jargon: LVX is incomplete without NOX.

Lastly, we will consider that second, more occult aspect of Saturn: supernal Saturn, the sphere of the Divine Mother, who dwells beneath the darkness. The Divine Mother remains unknown directly, espe-

cially in these lower paths (indeed, Her essence is in Binah). However, it is She who weaves the Web of Life, and it is she who dwells in all things. We must consider that She is the secret wisdom, and it is She who guides our steps on the path, though we do not see it. All along this path especially, being as it is the reflection of Binah on the paths, She dwells guiding all our actions, but always unseen. In a sense, it is in knowing this, that we can give ourselves over to the work, though its end may be unclear at any given time. Let us also consider that it is written: "Wisdom hath built her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Proverbs 9:1). Wisdom here refers to Binah, the sphere of the Supernal Mother (note that wisdom is also Sophia in Greek – but the mysteries of Sophia, Shekinah and the fallen mother must wait for another article!). And the seven pillars to the seven Sephiroth beneath it. In some of the oldest Qabalistic texts, Binah is imaged as an ocean with the seven lower Sephiroth as streams running from it. This is not inapt: the presence of the Mother is felt dimly throughout all of the paths, and, as we shall see, it is into the vastness of her being that we ultimately fling ourselves, across the Abyss.

So what awaits our traveller at the end of this particular path? The path of Tau terminates in the Sephirah of Yesod, number nine on our diagram, to which is attributed the Moon in all her ever-changing splendour. And the Moon is a fitting emblem for Yesod, which is truly one of the "gate-sephiroth", as are all those on the Middle Pillar. It is strongly associated with the Qabalistic world of Yetzirah, what we might more familiarly call the "Astral Plane" in all its diverse and fluctuating wonder. And this properly comprehends the highest levels of the Astral, those ever-verdant Elysiums where all manner of high spiritual beings can be met, and the darkest depths of the human soul, the hells and all their associated unpleasantness. To attain the gate of Yesod properly is the beginning of the flowering of the psychic senses, those faculties which are latent in all of us. Yesod is the gate through which we enter in to the Astral realm, and, in a sense, to have attained Yesod properly means a certain sense of stability in these traffickings with the Astral world. Yesod in Hebrew means "foundation", and it is upon the foundation built on the Path of Tau that we enter in to the Astral realm. Those who attempt to rush in to the Astral without first building that sense of identity are liable to be deceived by the deceptively strong

currents present here. In brief, this plane is a haven for fantasists, egotists and the sexually obsessed. Yesod is our foundation which allows us to participate in these currents and drink deeply of the beauty of the Astral world without being so swept up in its powerful glamour that we lose sight of our aim. One need only take a look at the powerful fantasy lives dreamt up by so many of those on the occult scene, the continued obsession with gratifying the childish demands of ego which is also prevalent among many so-called magicians to see the danger of the Astral currents. Yet let this not be a warning against pleasure and play – truly, the unashamed delight in sex, love and play is one of the characteristics of the initiate who has truly attained Yesod. These things are entered into in a spirit of freedom, knowing truly that they will never become that person's God or Devil, simply affirmations of the delight in life that is the reality of the magician's inner existence.

The planet attributed to Yesod is the Moon, and its ever-changing face should remind us of the playful mirror of the astral world. Briefly, it is the mysteries of the Moon that are so closely linked to this sphere: the mysteries of sexuality, and the astral plane which, like the Moon, is so close to the earth, but tantalisingly out of touch for most human beings. It is also in the astral world that we begin to advance to the higher sphere of Tiphareth, the spiritual sun (more accurately, Tiphareth in Briah). The light of the spiritual sun is reflected throughout the Astral world, and it is to the gradual approach to this inner sun that we will deal with in successive articles. Let us now end with a supplication to the Moon, which has guided countless initiates through the tribulations of their first few steps on the path:

Ebb and flow of the tides of the world, silver light which quickens to growth every seed of the earth: when we walk in darkness and our eyes are turned from the light of the Sun, thine be the mirror, O Threefold Goddess, which shall reflect his beams upon us
In the next article, we will address the progress of

The Initiate through the paths to Netzach, the seventh sphere of the Tree of Life. We shall concentrate especially on the transformational aspect of the divine Alchemy, expressed through the Path of Shin, the Solve et Coagula formula of the Path of Peh, and the complementary nature of Hod and Netzach.

Crystals with NightWolf



Blue Lace Agate – a light blue form of agate displaying beautiful white lacy patterns. Gentle activator of the throat and third eye chakra. The Stone for expanding consciousness and awareness. Helps you maintain a high level of consciousness and promotes qualities of kindness, patience, wisdom and peace. Elevates you to higher levels of spirituality. It calms the mind and nervous system.



Black Tourmaline – one of the best stones for protection and grounding. Absorbs negative energies from electric appliances and prevents nightmares. Placed around the home it protects the whole environment from negative energies and so needs regular cleansing.



Calcite – found in a wide range of colours, often displaying beautiful rainbows. Works on different chakras according to the colour. Acts as an energy amplifier brings laughter and happiness and humour. Promotes spontaneous action as well as positive thinking. Helps reduce fear, stress and tension.



Carnelian – a form of chalcedony ranging in colour from yellow and orange to red. The stone of action, it activates the navel and solar plexus chakras and enhances the flow of life force. It supports all forms of activity, it helps to overcome apathy shifting you into action mode. Increases vitality and activates sexual energy, recommended for disorders of the liver, gallbladder, kidneys, neuralgia and M.E.



Diamond – the rarest, hardest and most precious of all gemstones. The Supreme Being within the mineral kingdom. A master healer it activates the crown chakra and aligns all other chakras. It expands and strengthens your whole energy field, helping you reach your fullest potential on all levels. The most famous symbol of everlasting love, it's energy assists in all relationship situations, encouraging trust and constancy.



Emerald – A member of the beryl family of vibrant green colour. The stone for lasting beauty and relationships. Opens the heart chakra and attracts harmony and tranquillity. Improves the eyesight and strengthens the heart and the immune system.



Fluorite – a transparent mineral often found in layers of different colours. The stone for the mind, it helps with learning and absorbing new ideas. It brings order to chaos and inspires an expanded view. Attracts harmony and tranquillity, good against flu, colds, and sinus problems.



Garnet – a deep red stone also found in light-pinks and rare greens. Activates the Kundalini energy. It fires up the root chakra boosting and energising the whole chakra system giving you extra energy and endurance. The stone of physical strength, it enhances love life, sexual; drive and promotes good health and vitality.



Haematite – an opaque, silvery black stone of heavy weight and metallic lustre. Activates and energises the root chakra, a stone for grounding and centering brings into balance your male and female aspects, a high iron content makes it beneficial for blood disorders, Also used for fever and high temperatures.

Bach Flower Remedies by Twilight Girl

Part 2:

Choosing remedies for yourself

Begin by writing down the remedies that you feel you need from the descriptions of their properties, then start to prune the list down to approx 5 or less. By pruning down the list you will reach your innermost needs. It is common to prescribe between two and six remedies at a time. This prescription should be revised every three weeks in accordance with changes in the mental state.

REMEDIES

The most popular Bach flower remedy is the Rescue Remedy. It consist of five of the Bach remedies – Star of Bethlehem (for shock and numbness), Rock Rose (for terror and panic), Impatiens (for great agitation, irritability and tension), Cherry Plum (for violent outbursts and hysteria), and Clematis (for the bemused, faraway sensation that often precedes a faint).

Agrimony

Imbalance – For those who hide their problems and inner selves behind a cheerful face, masking real feelings of unhappiness and unworthiness. They are the life and soul of a party. The person who needs this remedy finds it hard to deal with the darker, less pleasant parts of life and extreme emotions. They are reluctant to burden others and dread arguments, pursuing peace at all costs. This can lead to an inner anguish that is often masked by alcohol or drugs.

Outcome – The ability to laugh at life and to love ourselves as we are. To put aside the mask. It helps us to cope with the difficult parts of life by helping us to see them from a balanced perspective.

Aspen

Imbalance – For those who feel frightened, a sense of dread, and that “something awful” may happen. This may be extreme enough to affect appetite and sleep patterns.

Outcome – Reassurance that there is nothing to fear. It helps us to face the unknown with courage and

trust.

Beech

Imbalance – For those who are over-critical and intolerant. They have their own way of doing things and do not understand that everyone has different strengths and experiences. They think “cannot” means “will not” and therefore become irritable and short-tempered with others. They may also feel unappreciated.

Outcome – Tolerance and understanding of others, the ability to see the good in everyone and everything without judgement.

Centauray

Imbalance – For those who have an excessive need to please others and a willingness to serve. They are unable to say no and this leads to frustration, stress, and a loss of self-confidence and appreciation.

Outcome – A balanced recognition of your own needs, the ability to say no when appropriate.

Cerato

Imbalance – For those who lack trust in their own judgement. They are constantly seeking advice and approval from other people. They may appear silly and imitate others or become an ever changing “fashion victim”

Outcome – Helps us to listen to advice from within, restores confidence and strengthens our trust in ourselves to follow our path even if it runs contrary to the expectations of others.

Cherry Plum

Imbalance – For those who fear letting go or losing control. Often accompanied by outbreaks of temper. Also for fear of harming themselves or others, suicidal thoughts or nervous breakdowns.

Outcome – The ability to cope with inner turmoil, trust and control of the mind and emotions.

Chestnut Bud

Imbalance – For those who fail to learn by experi-

ence so repeat the same old mistakes.

Outcome – The ability to gain knowledge and wisdom from every experience, to break free from negative patterns of behaviour.

Chicory

Imbalance – For those who are possessive of people and things, demanding sympathy, love and affection. Often uses emotional blackmail. They can be fussy, nagging and manipulative. Prone to hypochondria as a way to gain attention and love.

Outcome – Inner security and wisdom, respecting the freedom and individuality of others, selfless love given freely.

Crab Apple

Imbalance – For those who feel “unclean”, self-disgust, anxious, obsessed with imperfection, may be sexually repressed and have a distaste of bodily functions. May suffer with an eating disorder. Obsessive thoughts and behaviours.

Outcome – The wisdom to see things in their proper perspective, self respect, freedom from obsessive thoughts and behaviours, acceptance of the physical body.

Elm

Imbalance – For those who suffer despondency as a result of feeling overwhelmed by responsibility, a tendency to overwork, a sense of isolation through having to rely on their own resources.

Outcome – Strength to balance responsibilities with the practical needs of everyday life. Self confidence and inner security that the tasks will be completed.

Gentian

Imbalance – For those who are easily discouraged. When everything is going well they are happy but they can easily be disheartened and slip back into a negative outlook. Doubt and lack of faith are important elements.

Outcome – Helps put disappointments and setback into perspective. Provides strength and inspiration to try again.

Gorse

Imbalance – For those who suffer strong feelings of hopelessness and despair. They may seek help in order to please others but underneath feel that nothing more can be done for them.

Outcome – Gives courage to try and rebuilds renewed hope.

Heather

Imbalance – For those who are caught up in themselves and their own interests, who believe themselves to be the centre of the universe. They are poor listeners and do not like to be alone. They may intrude into other people’s personal space.

Outcome – Helps us to look after ourselves without being obsessed with our own personal needs. It gives us the space to listen to others, and to experience genuine love and companionship.

Holly

Imbalance – For those who are attacked by feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy, suspicion and revenge. They may also have other intense emotions but they are too frightened to express them fully.

Outcome – Helps to give us the strength to open our hearts and feel the flow of love and compassion.

Honeysuckle

Imbalance – For those who dwell too much on memories of the past and who do not expect to experience such times again. The past seems rosy and familiar; the future seems bleak and dark.

Outcome – The ability to retain the lessons taught by past experiences, but not to cling to the memories at the expense of the present. Emotional clarity and a sense of freedom.

Hornbeam

Imbalance – For tiredness, boredom, laziness, weariness, that “Monday morning” feeling.

Outcome – Provides a renewed interest in life, energy and involvement in daily tasks.

Part 3 continued in the next issue of the Witchtower

Athena:

Goddess of Wisdom, Handicrafts & Defensive Warfare

The worship of the goddess Athena can be dated back to around 1400BCE when a Mycenaean temple dedicated to her was built in Troy. The Romans worshipped her as Minerva, the goddess of handicrafts. Athena was one of the twelve great Olympian deities and, as well as Artemis and Hestia, one of the three virgin goddesses. She was the goddess of the defensive use of warfare to protect the community and as such she was widely worshipped and protectress of many cities, including her namesake Athens.

The Birth of Athena

Athena had an unusual birth in that she was not born of woman; instead she was born from the head of her father Zeus. Her mother Metis was pregnant with Athena when Zeus was told that she would bear a son that would take his place as king of Gods and men. To prevent this from happening he swallowed the pregnant Metis whole. The ingested Metis began to make a robe and a helmet for her daughter resulting in Zeus getting terrible headaches. Eventually, when the pain became too much for him, Hephaestus cleaved open Zeus's head with an axe and out sprung the fully clothed Athena. This myth was said to symbolise the rebirth of intelligence (Metis) as wisdom (Athena) and as such Athena was regarded as the goddess of wisdom.

As Goddess of Handicrafts

As well as being associated with women's crafts such as weaving and spinning, Athena was also the patron of men's crafts such as carpentry and pottery. She played a role in the building of the wooden horse during the Trojan War and helped to build the Argo, which Jason sailed to retrieve the Golden Fleece.

One myth relating to Athena as goddess of handicrafts is the story of Arachne. Arachne

was a young woman who was so good at weaving that people would comment that she must have been taught by Athena herself. She refuted this and said that her skill surpassed that of the goddess. Athena became angered by Arachne's boasts and taking the form of an old woman challenged her to a weaving contest. Arachne chose to weave and embroider scenes depicting the failings of the gods which angered Athena greatly. The goddess revealed herself and tore Arachne's tapestry from its loom resulting in Arachne feeling such guilt and regret for her actions that she hung herself. However, Athena took pity on her and turned her into a spider destined to spin and weave for all of its days.

Representations of Athena

Athena was generally represented as a robed woman wearing a helmet and carrying a sword and shield. She is often clad in the Aegis - a goatskin robe trimmed with snakes and sometimes decorated with the gorgon's head.

Athena has many aspects and this is reflected by the number of names she was known by. One of these is "Pallas" Athena. The epithet "Pallas" has been suggested to mean "brandisher of weapons" or "maiden". There is also the myth that during the war between the Gods and the Giants, Athena slew the giant Pallas and flayed him of his skin to use as a shield.

Athena has also been called "glaukopis" Athena. The exact meaning of this word is not known but it is possible that it means "owl-eyes" or just refers to the green colour of the Goddess's eyes. Athena was often portrayed with an owl, a bird often associated with wisdom. On Athenian coins one side had an owl and the other side depicted the head of the Goddess.

Worship of the Goddess Athena

The main place of worship for Athena was Athens. The city was named after her as a result of a contest between her and Poseidon. Both deities loved the city so much that neither was willing to give it up to the other, therefore it was decided that the deity that gave the best gift to the city would win the right to be its patron. Poseidon created a spring of sea water while Athena gave an olive tree. The Gods decreed that Athena's gift was the more valuable and the city became hers. Since that point the olive tree is sacred to Athena and is one of her symbols. Her temple, the Parthenon (House of Virgins) sat high upon the acropolis where it could be seen from most points in the city. Other temples to Athena can be found at Delphi, Megara and Tegea.

There were many festivals dedicated to Athena. The main Greek one was the Panatheneia where the statue of Athena was taken from the Parthenon and paraded through the streets of Athens. There were games and contests and it was a time of much merry-making. The Romans also had a festival dedicated to Minerva which was held during the month of June and was probably similar in nature to the Panatheneia.

Nowadays, Athena is a very good goddess to work with in ritual. She can be called upon for strength and wisdom and I have found her extremely useful around exam times! Athena is also very effective during situations which require an element of assertiveness as she seems to promote the ability to stand up for oneself without aggression.

Sources:

Cassell's Encyclopedia of Classical Mythology by Jenny March
The Greek Myths by Robert Graves
www.goddess-athena.org

Thistlewitch

A Children's Rune-Rhyme

by Skarpheðinsson of the Great Bear Kindred

Fehu is Cattle, which once measured our wealth.
Uruz is Aurochs, and can foster good health.
Burisaz is Strength, whether thurses or Þórr.
Ansuz is a God, who breathes fury and lore.
Raiðo is Riding, that the right road be found.
Kenaz is a Torch, for the Smith or grave-mound.
Gebo is a Gift; let the giving begin!
Wunjo is Joy, which binds kith and kin.
Hagalaz is Hail, a seed-pattern begun.
Nauðiz is the Need, by which deeds must be done.
Isa is the Ice, bringing stillness and rest.
Jera is a Year, by a good harvest bless'd.
Eihwaz is the Yew, from which Tree Óðinn fell.
Perþro is Lot-Box; Wyrð written in the Well.
Elhaz is an Elk, used to bless and to ward.
Sowilo is Sun, both a shield and a sword.
Tiwaz is a God, the Wolf bit off his hand.
Berkano is Birch, who brings life to the land.
Ehwo, Two-Horses, to a friend or fetch binds.
Mannaz is a Man; may we all use our minds!
Laguz is Water, which lets life and luck flow.
Ingwaz is a God, whose sown seed waits to grow.
Þagaz is the Day, when the new dawn awoke.
Opala is Land, which belongs to our Folk.

Ask Obsidiana

Self Love and Affirmation

Hi All,

Hope you all enjoyed my last column on problem solving. This month I'm focusing on Self Love and affirmation. I can already see some of you saying loving yourself? How Vain but if you were to do a survey of the population my guess would be that 80% of people struggle with loving others because there are so many things they do not love about themselves.

Even the children raised with the most loving of parents who had happy childhoods and where showered with gifts can sometimes find it difficult to look within them and truly say "I am wonderful person and I love everything about me!"

So what is the reason for this? Well quite simply we have high expectations of ourselves, our parents had high expectation's of us and just about every person around us have high expectations of each other.

Our own unique individuality is what makes us who we are and the imperfect nose, the bad spelling, the need to be slimmer, Fatter, Shorter, Taller all comes from the intrinsic need for bettering oneself. Perhaps you're already nodding in agreement by now. How many times have you said to yourself "I just can't do it, I'll never be healthier, happier, richer because I just can't do it. How many times have other people criticised you just for being you?

So how then if we have this dire need to be perfect but never will be can we ever learn to accept who we are and find divine affirmation? Well I don't have all the answers to that but what I can tell you is a technique for raising self love and really getting to know who you are

1. Self Examination

The first place you need to start is by stripping down all the layers and finding out what is inside. One particularly good way of doing this is to start by writing your own epitaph. Sit down in a quiet room and write the names of all the most precious or important people in your life and then try to visualise what they would say about you at your funeral (morbid I know but we are shedding layers here!)

Would they say you were a good person? Would they say that you deserved critics because you were selfish, uncaring? Or would they say that like most of us there are good and bad things that if you really focused on you could change for the better.

2. Find out what's important to you

Once you have your epitaph from each of your loved ones, sit down and examine what you wrote and block it into columns headed good and bad. Really examine what your inner feelings where and then decide does this help or hinder me? If it helps then keep the trait, if it hinders and your really not comfortable with it then change it. Also examine well what comes

from me and what comes from others? Is it me with the personality trait that needs changing or am I merely reacting to others or external factors.

3. Relearn your inner mind talk

Every time we let self doubt creep in we are listening to that little voice inside that felt criticised or vulnerable as a child. I can't do that. I don't want to face this; they will make me feel stupid again. One of the things we do naturally is jump back to old inadequate feelings without really thinking about it. If we told that little self talk inside that it's different now a lot of confidence blows and inner turmoil would be completely stopped in it's tracks. Affirmation is all about accepting how you behaved or reacted in the past and changing that behaviour to suit you as an adult. It sounds silly but look in the mirror and think about the wonderful traits you have. You may be pretty, you may be extremely talented, and you may have a particular skill that makes you special. Affirm this by telling yourself over and over again that you're worth it "think Loreal ad here guys hehe)

4. Practice loving you!

Yes that's right just give yourself time and treat yourself, give yourself treats and really spoil that inner you. Just like when you where a child and mum gave you a big hug to make you feel better, give yourself an inner emotional hug. All to often we depend on others to make us feel better when in actual fact with a little mind training we can learn to do this ourselves. (Ladies I'm not talking reaching for the Mars Bars here) I'm talking about not beating yourself up if like 99% of the population you fall short of expectations.

We can only truly learn to love another if we are happy with ourselves and you can be as long as you train yourself not to listen to the mind talk creeping in.

5. Turn the knot into determination!

Finally I'm going to describe a little bitty knotty feeling that starts in your tummy. You know when you say to your husband does my bum look fat in this and he refuses to answer. That little knot raises and wells up in your throat and BANG by the time it hits your head - your mind talk is telling you that he doesn't fancy you anymore and he will have run off with the barmaid from The dog and Peacock by seven o'clock this evening. - Yes I put it into humour but honestly hands up how many people have experienced that feeling. Well guess what. To stop that all you have to do is tell your mind talk whilst its in your tummy that it's being ridiculous and then forget about it. Don't let it get bigger and bigger just squash it right there and then.

I cant promise miracles over night - it takes a long time to have control over your mind talk rather than having it control you, but I hope some of the advice I give hits home with a couple of people and helps them to try some techniques on learning to love yourself a bit more. Of course let me know if anybody does try them and notices a difference

Love and light to all of you
Obsidiana xx

Manchester Samhain Ball

WiccaUK and New Aeon Books are proud to present our first Sabbat event in the North West - a Samhain Party!

Tickets cost £13 each, or £11 for Full Members.

It's going to be held on Saturday, November 1st. This is an all night event, starting at 7.30pm. Last entry will be 9pm unless you notify us in advance you'll be late.

The venue is Bar 38, Peter Street. A map is printed on the back of the ticket, or can be viewed here. The party will be Fancy Dress for those who want to dress up a bit, with prizes donated by New Aeon Books. For more details, view this forum thread. The party is strictly OVER 18s only! This is the decision of the venue, we can't sell tickets to anyone we know to be under 18, and the venue have the right to demand ID and eject you from the club if you can't show it.

Purchasing Tickets

Tickets can be purchased from New Aeon Books, 95 Oldham Street, Manchester.
To purchase by post, send a cheque made payable to "WiccaUK", and send it along with your name and address to:

Manchester Party, BM WiccaUK, LONDON, WC1N 3XX

London Yule Party

Sunday 7th December 2003

7pm - Late

Wicked Night Club, Tooley Street, SE1
(Under London Bridge)

Tickets: £15 / £10 for Full Members

After the fantastic success of our Lammas Ball in London, we're doing it again!
We have two rooms in a fantastic huge nightclub just two minutes walk from London Bridge main-line and underground stations. One room will feature a live band and a DJ, the other will be for socialising and the buffet! We'll have a number of available too, including indian head massages and tarot readings.

There's no strict dress code but we'd love to see you in your best Witchy or Gothic gear!

Ordering Tickets

You can order tickets by cheque - please make it payable to "WiccaUK". Write your name and address on the back, plus the number of tickets you want (mention if any are Full Members rate) and post this to:

Yule Party, BM WiccaUK, LONDON, W1N 3XX

We also accept payments by PayPal and NoChex. We'll have a shopping card added here shortly, but until then, you can pay to the account "casp@wiccauk.com".

Tickets will be available on the door, but ask you let us know if you're going to be turning up so we can ensure the buffet is large enough - drop us an email to let us know.