

# MEZLIM

PRACTICAL MAGICK FOR TODAY

Volume V, Issue No. 4

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Our Next Generation:  
Children in the  
Magickal Community

# MEZLIM

*Practical Magick for Today!*

MEZLIM IS PUBLISHED BY  
N'Chi

MANAGING EDITOR  
Kenneth Deigh

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
ΔKeter Elan

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT  
Donna Stanford-Blake

SPECIAL THANKS TO  
Holly Teague

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jaq D. Hawkins, Althea Northage-Orr,  
Tath Zal, Michael Sontag, Mishlen,  
Lisa Dugan Manor, Ann Robbers, J. Barrett  
Wolf, Holly Teague, Donna Stanford-Blake,  
Philos Moon, Donald Michael Kraig,  
Dr. Richard Kaczynski, Esmeralda, Greg  
Moorcroft, Larry Cooper, Antero Alli,  
Dexter Magnus Edmonds,  
& Norman Jope.

## CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Jasmine, John Krajewski  
& Catherine Cartwright-Jones

## COVER

Bryan Perrin

## BACK COVER

Jasmine

## DISTRIBUTORS

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"Just what does the word "Mezlim" mean, anyway?"

I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm sure there are many others who just wonder in silence. It comes from the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word *Mazel* (as in *Mazel tov!*). It means, literally, "the influence of the divine", or "the sparks emanating from Kether", the Crown of the Tree of Life. It references the fact that the divine lives in many paths, with each path as unique as the individuals who walk it.

Here at **MEZLIM**, we subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements; celebrating the spirituality of the Living Earth!

So, in our own way, we are attempting to bring a few "sparks of the divine" into the world through our magickal labor of love: Mezlim.

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# MEZLIM

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# Awakening the Magickal Child

The words *Inner Child* have been used in the past few years to describe the childlike qualities inherent in all of us, as well as those portions of our personalities which were repressed in childhood.

As a non-parent, I don't feel qualified to mount a soap box on issues concerning the proper raising of children – at least in conventional terms. But I can certainly speak to the thrilling and healing process of awakening the magickal child within.

It's somewhat strange when you consider that, for many of us, this Inner Child usually only puts in its appearance around age thirty – if at all. We're too old to still be in our first childhood; too young to be entering our second.

Just as a newborn baby goes through its phases and stages of growth, so does our Inner Child. At first it is shy, only coming out when coaxed into an extremely safe setting. And it has its own idea of what constitutes "safe". Then, as it begins to trust more, it starts to venture out at more frequent intervals. Each visit is an opportunity for us to rediscover a part of our Self that had been pushed

aside in our haste to "grow up".


Much like any toddler, this new child will test our limits; gently encouraging us to discover abilities, interests and peculiarities we've never realized we had. It will challenge us; question our certainty and our authority. And it will, as it becomes healthier and happier, insist on the very best of treatment.

Oddly enough, when the scar tissue has healed and the bandages are removed from our healing inner selves, we find a child who is quite clear on what it wants and needs. Almost as if, deep beneath all the programming and polishing, we really do know what's best for us.

If this holds true for the child we were before we learned to answer to any name, perhaps it is true as well for the children we bring into this world, before they learn too much of words and names and definitions. In that brief time of innocence, I would like to believe that we remember something of the connectedness and beauty from which we emerge, a serenity which we forget all too soon.

Kind of makes me want to have a child, just to find out.

Happy Samhain,



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# WHAT DO WE TEACH THE CHILDREN?

by Jaq D. Hawkins

Pagans and Magicians are like other people in many very human ways. We laugh, we cry, we fall in love, we have jobs, and many of us have families. It is not surprising that nature religions which revere fertility and the cycles of nature would include members who have children. Even solitary Magicians are subject to human emotions, and many may have spouses and offspring who function in the mundane world just as “normally” as the neighbors who go to church on Sunday.

The primary difference between “Us” and “Them” is one of personal philosophy and belief. Parents who believe in a magical religion or philosophy have to deal with the exact same issues of child raising that members of any other religion will encounter. Potty training, nutrition, schools, teaching acceptable behavior and how to get along with others are universal concerns for all parents.

Like all parents, we

want to teach our beliefs to our children as they grow, and this is where we run up against the differences between “Us” and “Them”, especially if we live somewhere like the Bible Belt of the United States where publicly admitting to our beliefs can lead to all sorts of trouble.

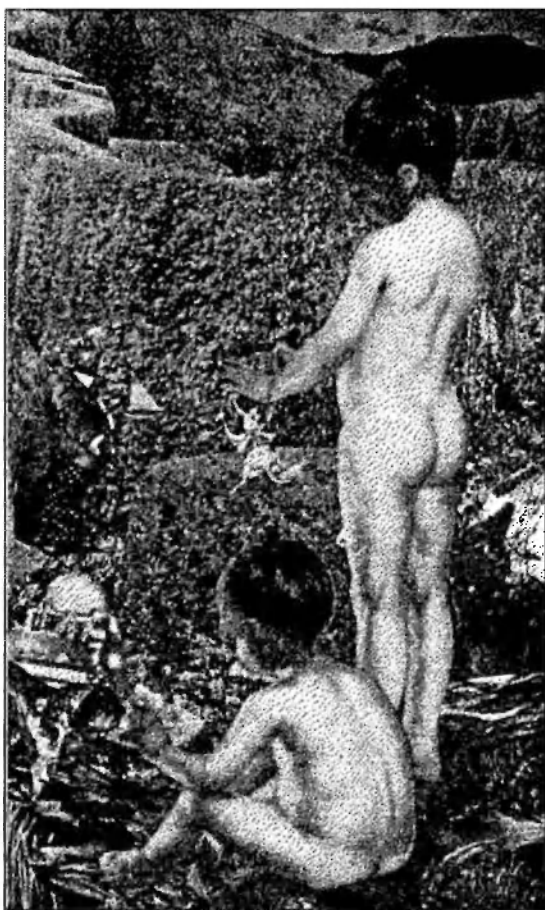
Another issue we must deal with is the vast spectrum of beliefs among “Us”. In general, magical people are more inclined to allow for individuality within our belief structures rather than insisting on black or white dogma. For example, there are many variations on the concept of reincarnation. We may be sure that we believe in reincarnation, yet be open to various theories about being reincarnated through lifetimes as other creatures, specifically humans, or even carried down through our own ancestral line, not to mention simultaneous incarnations. Keeping an open mind is integral to most magical philosophies.

It is natural for parents awaiting the birth of their first child to speculate on all the wonderful things that they will someday teach their child. However, when the child is born they will soon discover that the child has much more primal concerns in mind for some time to come. Even as the child learns language and begins to play with other children, deep philosophical concepts are unlikely to be high on the agenda. In the years between learning to speak and beginning school, a child is likely to begin to ask simple questions about life and death and the general nature of the universe, which is where many seeds can be sown.

At this age, simple answers to direct questions are most appropriate, rather than active teaching. There may be some who would disagree with this, but in my personal observations I've seen that children more readily accept things which they learn at a pace set by themselves according to their interest level.

My own daughter began to question the nature of death in relation to animals

graphics by John Krajewski



around the age of three, to which I answered with a very simple explanation of death and rebirth cycling. She now accepts reincarnation so naturally that the recent death of one of her human playmates in a house fire was accepted as stoically as such news would be accepted by a Buddhist monk. Her only regret was that she wouldn't see him again in this life, because he would come back as a baby in a different family and not live near her anymore. She will have turned seven years old by the time this article reaches print.

When children begin school, these differences in belief from mainstream christian philosophy can potentially cause large or small problems, for them or for us. For them, it's a matter of being "different" in any way from the rest of the children. How different they are depends on the religious climate in the area within which we live. A child making comments about astrological signs in a school filled with children of born-again christian parents may find aggressive opposition to simple ideas which the child has learned from parents. This can be upsetting and confusing to the child, to say the least.

In other areas where there is more of a cross-cultural mix, it is much easier for the child who may encounter the normal disagreements of various children who will all insist that whatever their parents

taught them is true and everything else not true. This sort of bantering between children is very normal whether it is over religion, local politics, or which entertainers are "the best". It is a normal part of growing up and learning that different people have different opinions about things.

There is a definite danger in attempting to teach a child too much at a very young age. I've recently spent some time living in a small Northern California town which has a large Jehovah's Witnesses population, and find myself sickened at the sight of a mother walking down the street with her smartly dressed and combed young son, both of them holding their "Watchtower" magazines before them in display for all who pass. "This child is being brainwashed", I think to myself. Mind control through religion.

Then I have to ask myself, am I doing such a thing to my own child in my own way? With a sigh of relief, I can honestly answer myself "No". With hand on heart, I can

honestly say that I have not shoveled my own ideas into my child's impressionable mind by force or scare tactics as are used by some of the more adamant religions. I have even felt a hint of dismay when she has reported conversations at school where she has proudly proclaimed, "We don't believe in that christian religion, we believe in the fairy religion". My child is learning my ways, but only by asking her own questions.

As our children get older, and especially when they become teenagers, they will learn from exposure to society that there are many different beliefs among people. They will form ideas of their own, and may well choose a different path than ours. This could be a different magical path, an agnostic disinterest, or even a serious interest in a religion that we do not approve of. I've asked myself what I would do if my child fell in with the "wrong" crowd at the delicate age of fifteen and joined a cult of jesus freaks. It's a frightening thought, and one I have no answer for as yet. The best we can do is to teach our children to think for themselves and give them enough love that they do not become prime targets for programming cults.

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## **We want our children to know the things we have learned, yet we want them to think for themselves.**

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This still leaves open the possibility that an impressionable child, possibly through peer group exposure, may take an interest in a serious religion such as Catholicism or the Anglican Church. I

have friends who find solace in these religions and I respect their right to choose their own path, as they respect mine. Could I respect a similar choice from my child? I think I could, but of course it hasn't been put to the test.

Meanwhile, the question remains, "How much shall we teach our children about the mysteries and magic?" It is a difficult one to answer. We want our children to know the things we have learned, yet we want them to think for themselves. We hope they will take an interest on their own initiative, but if they get caught up in the mundane concerns of growing up and coping with life's stages, as they are sure to do, we will be tempted to bring our spirituality into conversation to try to spark an interest and offer "helpful" guidance.

There is also the social issue to consider. Some of us can be quite open about our beliefs, others live in areas where it is much more sensible to keep a low profile. Will exposing

my rather effusive seven-year-old to “new age” philosophy, or even ritual, lead to misunderstandings at school, or even attention from social services?

A rather amusing story was related to me by a friend who was invited, along with his own seven-year-old daughter, to a Gnostic Mass. The child was very well behaved during the ceremony and seemed to pay close attention, but didn't have a lot to say about it afterwards. It took place on a weekend. The following Monday at school, her teacher asked what she had done over the weekend. The child answered that her Daddy had taken her to a play. When asked what it was all about, she replied that she wasn't sure but that there had been a very rude lady there who had taken all her clothes off. The teacher then calmly asked the child if she had enjoyed the play, to which she answered, “No, it was boring.” No more was said about the matter.

This situation occurred in a small English town where knowledge of the parent's pagan beliefs is accepted as a little eccentric, but harmless. The child is known to be well cared for and very polite, even for an English child. She shows no signs of being adversely affected by her father's beliefs or practices. If the child had seemed upset by what she had witnessed, questions might have been asked.

There are places where these same comments from a child could easily lead to serious attention from social service organizations. People who live in these places must give serious thought to what their children may be likely to say at school before they expose their children to information which would be locally considered to be of a controversial, or even threatening nature.

An extreme scenario comes to mind. In Nazi Germany, children were encouraged to turn in parents who were unsympathetic to, or actively working against, Nazi ideology. What would happen if a series of serious persecutions of occultists were to occur in a particular area in the manner of the infamous witch hunts? A child's maturity level and disposition toward speaking their mind without forethought should be taken into consideration in relation to potential local reaction toward public exposure of our

magical practices.

A less extreme scenario is one where a disinterested teenager may be embarrassed to bring friends home because the parents have “weird” interests and have decorated the house with pentagrams and gargoyles. To an adolescent with a strong focus on “normal” adolescent concerns in a material world, any form of non-conformity which will make parents stand out from the parents of peers is a potential point of conflict.

Some of our children will follow our examples, others will choose their own ways. Many will strike a balance between the two, learning some things from us and striking out into new territory of their own choosing. We will do them most justice if we teach by example, but allow them to come to us for information rather than try to force a particular set of beliefs onto them. Making every effort to keep an open mind to areas of the occult outside of our personal chosen paths will allow our children to experiment for themselves and find their own chosen paths, rather than be forced into a mold which could easily lead to complete rebellion.

As for myself, I expect that I will be haunted for the next ten years by the sight of that same Jehovah's Witness woman, outside the post office this morning with two sons instead of one, wearing full dress suits and jackets in the morning heat, which was in the high nineties. They were holding their magazines proudly for all to see, trying not to look uncomfortable as the sweat ran down their young foreheads. My daughter asked me what they were doing. I answered as simply as I could that they were a form of christianity which forced their children to stand in the heat in hot clothes to try to push their religion on other people. I also said, loudly enough to be heard by the children and their mother, that I considered it child abuse and would never do such a thing to her.

Our children are free spirits. They play in the park on hot Summer mornings, and they think their own thoughts. May we always remember to allow them to do so.



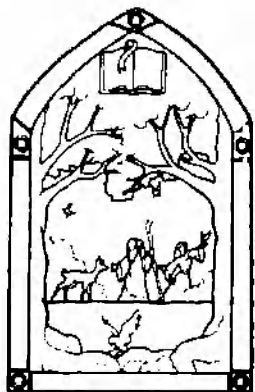


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# WORKING WITH CHILDREN

## RITUALS FOR THE MAGICKAL FAMILY

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by Althea Northage-Orr

### Rituals for Kids

Rituals for children can and ought to be a part of all family life, especially in Magickal families. Rituals serve an important function, from formal ones such as religious ceremonies to the more casual ones such as daily routines and family celebrations. They help us to order our days and give meaning to life. Good rituals take us through a process in which we can experience our personal universe in such a way as to create order from chaos, transformation after disruptions. They signal that one time has ended and another has begun; they heighten our awareness of who we are and where we are in our life's journey. For children, they provide a deep and essential connection to the wholeness of life. In a world in which everything is unpredictable and to be learned, rituals give them the security of knowing there is rhythm and order. Rituals teach them about their inner powers and special resources, and that they can change themselves and the world.

A love of and an affinity for ritual, like the ability to read, is best cultivated early on. A large part of my own instinctive grasp of the making of rituals comes from my Catholic Childhood, a childhood rich in memories of rituals lit by candles, vivid and

colorful vestments, masses of flowers, clouds of incense and the ever changing pageantry of the old ceremonies. These ceremonies imprinted me with a hunger for formal rituals.

Another sort of ritual I learned at my Mother and Father's knee. Both of my parents loved family ritual and created numerous ones from whimsical to serious. Mama, a Celt through and through, created numerous small and delightful rituals—any surprise piece of work or spontaneous gift (or theft of the last piece of cake) was attributed to Orr's Brownie. The ritual of placing lost teeth under the pillow for a quarter from the tooth faeries, May baskets of flowers to hang on door handles, and any and all holidays that gave one an excuse to honor family members—Valentine's Day, Mother or Father's Day, Birthdays—all of these were celebrated by us by making gifts and devising ceremonies.

My father loved gift giving and made it an art—Easter Candies and heart shaped boxes of chocolates, orchids for "his girls" on Easter morning, and, of course, Birthdays and Christmas. With him, not only the gift itself was important, but the how of its giving was even a surprise. My father made rituals of giving; one anniversary when he knew he and my mother would be in the Carribean, he dove into the ocean with a gold circle pin in his hand. Returning to the surface he called my mother over to the side of the boat, pretending he had found pirates' treasure. Rushing to see what she thought was a doubloon, my mother found instead my father's golden gift engraved with words of his love.

From my parents I learned many valuable things about family rituals—that the element of surprise and the unexpected needs to alternate with the richness of repetition; that ceremony makes any celebration more vital and more enjoyable; that the spirit of loving acknowledgement lends grace to any ritual. So every holiday had familiar elements we learned to look for and to

expect—like the reading of Luke's gospel story about the nativity by the newest young readers in the family after our Christmas dinner; the serving of wine by the oldest son at our Holy Thursday (passover) meal; and, the placing out of the plate of cookies and carrots for Santa and his reindeer. The unexpected was always the "wild card" of any event, and was a part to which we all loved to contribute.

How I pitied my friends, for whom Graduations, becoming a teenager, or any one of the numerous things which we celebrated with our spontaneous, made-up ceremonies, meant merely parties and family dinners with no ceremony to enliven it. And when, in my later years, I read about "rites of passage", I knew that whatever one might say about our culture as a whole, that my life had been blessed with many of them.

As magicians or members of the craft, and most of all as parents, we ought to consciously work to incorporate ritual into our children's lives. Rituals can be used to help them make transitions from one stage of development to the next more easily; to bring healing; and, to help them attune to the rhythms of family life and the seasons. They create a deep sense of life's order, a sense of security, now more than ever a necessity in a world that all too often seems on the brink of chaotic catastrophe.

Creating rituals for children is easy; they are full of imagination and wonder that we need only to channel. And the methods of ritual magick, aimed as they are at the Unconscious Mind—the child in all of us—lend themselves well to working with children. But here are some general principles: *Simulate the senses!* Children respond powerfully to color, scents, music and costume, so bring on the candles and paraphernalia, the more the better. Having children create their own ritual setting is particularly effective. They can arrange and decorate house and altar, finding stones, flowers and other treasures. Keep them moving throughout the ritual. Dance, clap and make ritual movements. Children not only have a hard time being still, but they also take in information best when they can use their bodies to do so. And researchers in the shamanic arts confirm that assuming body postures definitely causes State changes. Make a timid child become a lion, a warrior or take on a strong stance. Have children enact with their bodies.

*Choose stories and images that speak to your purpose.* Enact them as mystery plays (remember the Nativity Plays of childhood?) or tell stories as a means of inducing the trance-like State you want. Working on the level of intellect with children—giving directories or advice—doesn't work well

unless it is embodied in story.

For my son Justin's seven year old birthday, we did a ritual that focused on his growing independence and separation from the more symbiotic ties of early childhood. In the ritual, the four quarter officers each told him a story about a wolf cub (the wolf was his new totem) that dealt with learning a skill appropriate to that element and to the stage of greater interdependence that he was entering. Each story then ended with a simple statement of meaning such as "stand up for yourself" or "don't just follow others; use your judgement". The image of growth and separation was underscored by the movements within the ritual.

The ritual began with a surprise. We returned from his birthday dinner and walked in to find the Circle already convened, an event he was unprepared for. As his mother, I dressed him in his robe like a little child, then carried him in my arms to the circle's edge. There the priestess instructed me to "put your baby down, so that he might run as a young boy" and Justin was set down to walk into the circle on his own. Until the eucharist, I remained outside the circle watching, to underscore the imagery of growth. The message to Justin was that while I was to remain close by, he was free to enter the greater circle of boyhood and to explore the world on his own. The stories told in the ritual drew upon the familiar experiences of childhood: sibling conflict, play, schooling (in the wolf pack).

The magickal acts that form the center of all magickal work are particularly essential in working with children and need to be kept clear and obvious. For example, in a healing ritual after a trauma which has left a child feeling unclean or in some way contaminated (such as after sexual molestation), one could effectively use a ritual bath or cleansing with water from the altar. The effect could be intensified by then giving the child a new, beautiful robe signifying the renewal of the new, cleansed self. Adolescent rites of passage often utilize a ritual enactment of birth into the larger community, with participants using their bodies to form a birth canal and "birthing" the teenager.

The more the magickal act appeals to all five senses, the better it will work. Wrapping a child in a blanket to symbolize safety will work better than wrapping him or her in white light (although on the inner level we are indeed doing that); immersing a child in a warm, fragrant tub is better than passing the hands over the aura. In general, the younger the child, the more literal the actions ought to be. The adults can do the inner work; and guide the youngsters in their inner experiences; but the little ones need an outer display, as

children are very literal creatures.

Creating Altered States of Consciousness in children is very easy. Indeed, children under the age of seven are basically in a base-line state of theta, or hypnotic consciousness. We need only to make suggestions and children tend to shift to magickal consciousness. But two factors are important. The first is the role of repetition. Repetition establishes set signals to our unconscious mind—for example, putting on ritual clothes signals that we are shifting into our “magickal mode”. Many family rituals utilize this—the prayer before a meal is not just to give thanks; it also signals that it is time to shift from the busy concerns of the day to family time. Likewise the comfort of bedtime routines signals the time for unwinding into sleep. All good rituals use repetition to key us to shift states, and children love repetition. It gives them a sense that they can predict what will happen and to some degree control it.

The second factor in creating Altered States represents the opposite end of the spectrum. When we need to really trigger imprint availability, which is the case in all rites of passage, we need to use techniques that create a break with normal reality. Techniques that induce mild disorientation are used. The key here is “mild”. Too much disorientation is going to push a child into an unreachable place; just enough leaves them open, curious and full of wonder. One needs to carefully consider the child and what their particular edge might be. An extroverted child on the

brink of adolescence might benefit from several hours of being blindfolded or placed in a small, confined place. An introvert will probably shift into an altered state simply by being the focus of a group of people. Timid children must be handled gently; little adventurers must be challenged. Avoid over-stimulation but keep them from feeling too much familiarity unless the purpose of the ritual is to soothe and pacify. Typical technique includes mild sensory deprivation from blindfolds, darkness, trance hoods, movement such as spinning, twirling or leading about, odd sounds, unexpected noises, chanting; and unusual conditions such as isolation or the focused attention of a group, nudity, unusual garb, being up at an unusual time. The list is endless; the only caveat is to consider carefully the effect you are likely to create.

## Integrating Ritual Movements into Everyday Life

The importance of integrating ritual movements into normal life must not be overlooked. We have to create a bridge between the learnings and experiences of rituals and everyday experience. In the case of a child who is having a ritual to overcome fear or to access their power, one might charge an object for the child to carry with them or to hold at appropriate times. Water can be blessed, meditation candles prepared, talismans created, etc. Children tune into vibrational energies easily, so giving them concrete physical



objects will help the child recall their experience and access their newly found powers. Mantras, verses, pictures or bodily postures are also helpful. Anything that works with the body is likely to help them access their new learning.

When might one choose to work with rituals? Rites of passage are crucial in aiding children to achieve new levels of maturation with a minimum of trauma and in alignment with ones values. Obvious examples might be at any of the developmental stages: the seven year old stage of secondary separation, in which the child leaves the infant/toddler stage and moves into childhood with its greater emphasis on peer bonding; adolescence and young adulthood; religious initiations, when the child demonstrates the desire and need for them.

Transition rituals are appropriate for children whenever big changes are occurring. Going to a new school, moving to a new location or going away from home for the first time might be examples. And rituals of healing and adjustment are perhaps the most essential of all. A child wounded by the trauma of molestation, assault, the divorce of his/her parents, death in the family or any other occasion that shatters his/her normal world order can experience a ritual that helps them to assimilate and make meaning of the experience as an empowering event.

Finally, the daily rhythms of life can be established and enhanced by creating rituals around the seasonal changes and the rhythms of the day. The small but crucial rituals around bedtime, family celebration and self care, send clear messages to the unconscious that enhance self esteem and reduce anxiety. Once I remarked to a friend that my family loved to dress up for family holiday dinners. When he said he thought of that as a burdensome duty I was surprised. We always enjoyed our festive garb. Dressing up for family celebrations signals that we believe ourselves deserving of beauty and celebration; similarly, the time invested by a parent in putting a child to bed in a careful and thought-out fashion signals that the child is valued and loved.

Pythagoras says in The Golden Verses,  
“Nor suffer sleep to fall on thy soft lids  
till thrice thou hast each act of the day recalled,  
go through them first to last,  
and if they seem good—rejoice,  
if evil, reproach thyself.”

This is a ritual for ending the day that can be incorporated in the bedtime of children with good effect. My mother always took the time to help us “debrief” our day, to

look at the good and bad, and to dismiss both with a final prayer and a kiss. The importance of this ritual was dual. On the one hand, it taught me how to release the energy of the day so I could rest; it also taught me how to go to sleep at peace with my loved ones. No matter what sort of day we had had, it ended with a reconciliation. Like all good rituals, it left me with a sense that my world was intact at the end of whatever transformations the day had wrought. As magicians, we can amplify these effects even further. We can teach our children simple energetic exercises to release negative energy from their auras. We can teach them to adjust to changes on the psychic and spiritual levels.

Making rituals with our children teaches them to pay attention to their lives and to honor their experiences, good and bad. Recently I worked with several families who had suffered from having a child sexually molested. Out of the pain, shock and trauma something very powerful came.

First, I worked with the parents, bringing them together into a ritual wherein they could grieve and share their pain at their failure to protect their children. They moved through a psychological and energetic process together until they could all release the guilt of that failure. They moved into having compassion for their imperfections, and for their inability to be perfectly in control of the world. This allowed them to come to a sense of peace so that the children could be brought in and nurtured by the group. Children resonate to their parents so by forgiving themselves the parents created a psychic space wherein the children could forgive themselves as well.

A ritual cleansing for all participants was performed and an empowerment occurred as parents and children together recovered their sense of themselves as intact families, as individuals who could recover from and be made stronger by difficult experiences. Rather than allowing a painful experience to slide away into the unconscious to fester there, we transformed it into a triumphant recovery, a shaman's journey into shadow and back.

Families can and do create rituals endlessly. We only need to take our innate instincts and elaborate with the richness of our magical tradition. The results will startle and please you. Children respond to rituals so naturally and with such great pleasure that you will find yourself drawn to creating more and more of them. And if the goal of life—and magick—is to be awake, what could be better? For ritual is at the heart of awakening. It is the celebration of our consciousness of life in all of its transformations.

# A RITE OF RESPONSIBILITY

by Tath Zal

The child is herself a goddess; her years number four walking upon the face of the Mother. She knows to respect sacred space and magickal implements. She dances at fires. She can sing the "Goddess Song." A bright child, a precocious child, a pagan child. Her mother loves her; respects her; gives her room to grow; and, more importantly, gives her permission to be herself. Call her Joy.

To nurture this gifted child, this Child-Gift, such caring and freedom must remain a part of her universe, but child rearing is difficult nowadays. Extended families are seldom available to provide needed support and respite from the constant attention that adequate child rearing demands. Divorce, even death, separates care-givers from children; and the incidence of child abuse perpetrated by members of the general population is increasing as adults fall victim to their own abusive internal patterns brought about by increasing religious, societal and economic pressures. What is a good pagan mother to do?

One proposal is to co-opt a Christian concept (after all, most of their practices were originally ours) and find an individual who is willing to act as a "goddessmother" to the child. Such an individual would be responsible for assisting in the religious (read here: "pagan") upbringing of the child, as well as undertaking the responsibility and commitment of raising the child should the parent(s) die, or, for some reason, no longer wish to provide for Hlr.

It is this proposal which I, who have never had a child, have undertaken to make a reality for myself and for the child, Joy, the child of a very close friend, my goddessdaughter. It was not undertaken lightly; the commitments and responsibilities are real, and, if ever required, will be made manifest. The bond is strong. The ritual follows for those of you inclined to make this a reality in your own lives.

## THE RITUAL

A circle is cast; thrice woven, thrice bound. The wards are placed at each of the quarters. In this tradition, Earth/Mother wards North, Fire/Father wards East, Air/Child wards South, Water/Unity wards West. The Middle Pillar connects the dark and the light, the upper and the lower spheres. The Temple is filled with our energy and we claim our oneness with all others. The Space is prepared.

The Four Aspects are summoned to witness this rite, to serve as a binding of intent, of Will. The evocations go forth:

Dhyanna, Mother, Earth  
Join us here, before us and within us  
Be witness to our actions here  
To that with which we bind ourselves  
In perfect love and trust.

Maggah, Father, Fire  
Join us here, before us and within us  
Be witness to our actions here  
To that with which we bind ourselves  
In perfect strength and power.

Khiyatta, Child, Air  
Join us here, before us and within us  
Be witness to our actions here  
To that with which we bind ourselves  
In perfect mind and heart.

Enochi, Unity, Water  
Join us here, before us and within us  
Be witness to our actions here  
To that with which we bind ourselves  
In perfect joy and peace.

"I pledge this in full awareness of my actions and with pure and focused intent. This is my Will made manifest. I, Tath Zal, do hereby name myself Goddessmother to Joy, a child of my spirit. Joy, is it your Will to be my Goddessdaughter?"

The space has been prepared and the witnesses summoned. Let the binding begin:

"In the presence of all witnesses here assembled, I, Tath Zal, do bind myself by the ties of my body, my life, my consciousness and my Higher Self to this child, Joy, a child not of my body, but of my spirit.

"As need and the future shall dictate, I dedicate myself and my resources, both spiritual and material, to her personal process of Becoming; to assist in her spiritual awakening and development; to support her mother in those areas of Joy's spiritual and physical development and training as seem appropriate; and, to assume full responsibility for Joy herself should ever the need arise.

The answer is hers to give, and once given, the binding is complete. We have created a new relationship between ourselves, Joy and I. Her mother and I exchange glances. What have we done? At one level, we know exactly what we have been about here. At another level, the "knowing" is just now beginning. It will be an interesting path to follow, regardless. Blessed be the pathmakers, for they shall know new worlds.

We have taken a further step in the definition of "family of choice", those who we love and with whom we choose to spend our lives. I will most likely never have a child of my body, but through choosing my "family" and the types of relationships that I will have with them, I have become a mother after all. To the Great Goddess who resides within all, I give thanks for this opportunity.



# Children, Magick, and Realism

by Michael Sontag

The issue of "Children in the Magickal Community" has recently been addressed in many articles and books stressing all of the wonderful benefits of raising your child to follow the magickal path. Seldom considered are the potential problems that may arise. For a moment, let us put aside our idealism and deal with the realities we must face in raising our children.

When making decisions pertaining to the raising of our children, our first priority must be making the choices that will be

psychologically healthiest for the child. By indoctrinating a child with beliefs that are generally considered unacceptable by our society, we are putting him in a very precarious situation. A child's belief in following the magickal path is not likely to be supported by other authority figures and it is quite probable that these beliefs will cause him to be ridiculed by his peers. This kind of rejection can be very damaging to a child. As adults we have learned to deal with those who do not accept our beliefs, but for a child this can be very difficult. To be accepted by those around him is a child's number one priority, and placing a child in a position where he will not be accepted can be very harmful psychologically.

Another problem is dealing with the issue of morality. The moral codes that guide the magickal community are quite different from those followed by society in general, and they are impossible for a child to understand. No child is able to comprehend "Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" or "And ye harm none, do as ye will". These moral codes necessitate a certain degree of enlightenment to be properly used.

An example of this problem appeared on a recent daytime talk show. The show featured a nineteen year old girl who had had seventy-five sex partners. She did not practice safe sex with any of them, and had already contracted gonorrhea. Also appearing on the program was the girl's mother, a professor of metaphysics, who supported her daughter's actions on the basis that she was letting her daughter follow her True Will. The source of the daughter's confusion is that she is not able to understand the moral guidelines that she has been given by her mother. When the mother has told her daughter to simply "follow her True Will", the daughter has understood this to mean "do whatever you please". The morals of the magickal community are simply not able to be





understood by children, or by most adults for that matter!

When dealing with the effects of children in the magickal community, we must look not only at the effects on the children, but the effects on the community as well. The downfall of any religion is when emphasis shifts from personal growth to gaining converts. Bringing our children into the community seems harmless enough, but it is the first step towards creating the problems faced by most established religions. By bringing people onto the magickal path, as opposed to them finding the path themselves, we run the risk of finding ourselves dealing with an increasingly apathetic magickal community. We need only look at the Catholic Church to see the problems that an apathetic community can cause. As we deal with, and spend more time with members who are not participating wholeheartedly we will be wasting time that should be spent on personal growth.

The question still remains, "What can we do for our children?" The answer to this is simple. We must help our children develop the skills they will need to follow their own path to spirituality. Our children must be given a love for mankind and nature, they must be taught an openness to all beliefs, and we must instill within them the curiosity and imagination that they will need to guide them on their own spiritual paths.

This is not to say that we must hide our beliefs from our own children. We must be ready to answer questions that our children might have, stressing the fact that importance must be placed on finding the path that is best for the individual.

It is true that we have a great deal of wisdom that we can, and should, pass on to our next generation. However, this wisdom can be shared outside of the magickal path. We can share this wisdom within the context of any belief system or religion that our children may choose to follow. This will enable our children to fully explore their own spirituality and it saves them from the problems that may arise from their direct involvement in the magickal community. I see this as being the best way to help our next generation develop to its full potential.

## LIKE A PEBBLE DROPPED INTO A POND

by Mishlen

The word "lineage" is derived from the Latin meaning "to stand behind", and is a completely accurate visualization of the process: My teacher stands behind me, his teacher stands behind HIM. This is a literal truth when one is communicating through the astral planes.

There are many types of lineages: social, familial, spiritual and magickal. Our children are taught what we know and then go on, weaving our DNA about the world. Our thoughts and desires are spread like lightning, as quickly as telephones and books give way to computer technology.

But there are other, older forms of lineage. In the present is the phenomena of "direct transmission", used in tantric Buddhism, in Amerindian Shamanism, in Nigerian tribalism. One gains immediate access to the teacher's mind and spirit. There is created a complete trust, unattainable by any other means, for the two KNOW each other, inside and out. There is nothing left to hide. The relationship thus established is a relationship which is closer than that of any lover; closer than any relationship they will ever have. And what of the past?

The teachers of your teacher, their teachers, and so on... That which we call lineage, begins with the undivided will to be different, first.

"Lineage is ornamentation" says Norbu Rimpoche. But this ornamentation also carries the seed, the current, the living fire of illumination, the lightness of being. To touch that fire is to touch all fires, everywhere. All lineages are to be respected; and all lineages are false. What the first one creates, is a path. As time goes on and others join and follow that path, it broadens; and its trails lead us through the veil of time. Within timelessness, all are together, linked soul to soul by a chain of pure Will. To choose a lineage is to choose a spiritual Family that will always be with you, and to which you will always belong.

Which, getting back to practicality, is why they are so important. They are all the vessels of wisdom; they pour their nectar of experience into your heart; and you learn their lives as well as your own.

Give reverence to your ancestors: they are wise, and the wise know how much there is to learn.

# AND THE WHEEL TURNS: An Alchemical Perspective

by *Dexter Magnus Edmonds*

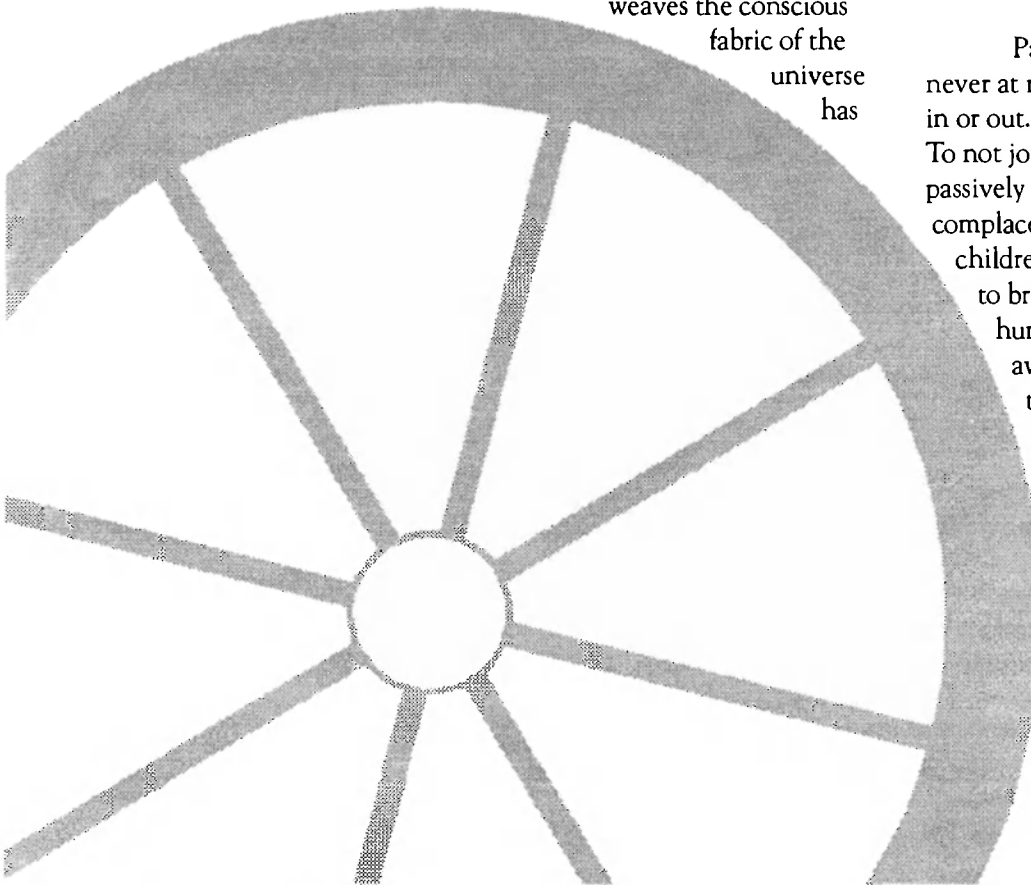
Wheel, n.

1. A disk or ring joined to a hub by spokes and designed to turn around a central axis.
2. Moving or energizing forces
3. A steering device

—Webster's II

The next generation is of direct importance to the science of alchemy and the mastery of oneness. The wheel that

weaves the conscious fabric of the universe has



connected us all together so as to create! the "great Alchemical Formula".

You, me, and the next generation each play an important part in the One Source's divine equation for evolution. Our beloved offspring "will" surely be one step closer to the outcome of this great universal design.

As we continue the great work (an accumulative process), we support them; just as Abra-Melin, Dr. Dee, St. Germain, Aleister Crowley, and countless others have given enormously to us and our evolved enlightenment. This learning, sharing, growing and creating will continue as part of the transmutation process until divine evolution produces the quantum mutation in humanity that undoes the "abyss". (Reference to A. Crowley.)

And our work must be great, no matter how simple or small we might think our actions to be. Joining the great work means breaking our bonds of passivity.

Passivity is an illusion! Energy is never at rest. It goes forward and backward, in or out. However, it is never motionless. To not join does not necessarily mean you are passively in the middle. An attitude of complacency is not in the best interest of our children. The coming millenium promises to bring about great changes for humankind. It is our job as magickally awakened persons to aid this transmutation process with our loving and relentless energy. If we attempt nothing, the balance of forces could shift, bringing about a catastrophic change. We must join in and be part of a better tomorrow, because destiny is not written in stone, and energy, whether positive or negative, is never tranquil.

# WELCOME TO THE HUNDRED ACRE WOOD

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by *Lisa Dugan Manor*

Children have much to contribute in the way of innocent awe and powerful belief during ritual. Unfortunately, we adults have an annoying habit of forgetting our own Inner Child for form, mechanics, and theology. How much more do we forget the needs of children attending our magickal rites? More often than not, if they are not shuttled off to a different room to be supervised by the unfortunate of the month, they shuffle and murmur their way through the mechanics of a ceremony in which they have little interest or understanding.

In most traditions, children and animals can pass in and out of temple space unhindered, but the adults involved tend to find the distraction overwhelming. Don't think that children don't sense the unspoken disapproval and resentment of group members, or feel the rejection of being sent away, particularly sensitive children who have natural magickal abilities.

Depending on the dynamics of the group involved, the challenge of including children can be approached in several ways. First and foremost, as parents it is critical to find a group that is "child friendly". Let's face it: Very few non-parents can withstand the natural acting out of an exuberant child, and will let their disapproval be known one way or another. (I've had many opportunities to dispel the apparent myth that all children

have an off switch that their parents are just too lazy or insensitive to the "adults" around them to use!) It only takes one disapproving voice to start an amazingly powerful negative reaction, even in usually tolerant individuals.

If the subject of children in ritual brings any resistance, the best course may be to start looking for a different group. Each group has its own purpose and personality, and not all groups can accommodate the flexibility necessary to deal with small ones. The adults in such a group aren't wrong, or intolerant child-haters...but the potential conflict can be deadly to whatever positive work you are trying to accomplish. Until you find others who share your dedication to parenting, or singles who take as much delight in children as you do, you would be better off solitary. Concentrating on creating a family tradition, and fostering a daily connection to deity and the world around you, will bring much more positive results for you and your children. (And knowing that you would rather include them than associate with people who don't, will do wonders for fragile child-egos.)

Whether solitary or with a "child friendly" group, including children is always a challenge. The mechanics of constructing sacred space alone can be a long and (to a child) dry process, with little to engage their imagination. What is symbolic and meaningful to the adult imagination can be completely lost on a child. So how can we, as caring adults, bridge the gap between the needs of the children and the adults in our rituals?

The first, possibly most effective technique is simply to become children ourselves! The mind is the crucible of magick, and the symbols and rituals we construct are intended to reach the inner child, the hidden place in all adults where we still believe in faeries and miracles. Why not take it a step further, and tap into our memories to create an environment where that inner child can manifest?

One group I have worked with in

Indianapolis<sup>1</sup> does this every month with themed Esbats. The themes have ranged from a Pooh ritual, where we each faced our personal "horrible heffalumps", to a Lord of the Rings ritual that included gazing into the "mirror of Galadriel" to visualize our heart's desire (a wonderful lesson in scrying). The power raised in these rituals is enhanced by the heightened ability to throw off the mundane, adult world. And the children hear, or read, passages they are familiar with and stories that engage their imaginations. It becomes a magickal realm for adult and child alike.

An approach that can be used separately, or in concert with the themed approach, is to have a group member who is good at storytelling lead the children through a guided visualization while the other adults set up sacred space. This has a two-fold purpose. First, it will help the children calm down and center themselves in preparation for ritual. Secondly, if the visualization can be tied into the main ritual, the children have a chance to engage the material on their own level, thus aiding their ability to participate later.

Perhaps, during the rite of healing, the children can go within the injured body part or inside the body of the sick person, imagining what the sickness might look like, and fighting it with rays of light. Then, as energy is raised in the circle, they have an image to work with and can add their energy to the healing. Or, if a themed ritual is planned, the children can enter the magickal realm through visualization, while the leaders set up sacred space. Imagine being welcomed into the circle with a kiss and the words, "Welcome to the Hundred Acre Wood!" Who could resist that kind of greeting into the realm between the worlds? What wonderful magicks could we envision there!

The creative parent who is a practitioner of magic can devise myriads of approaches that can serve as a bridge between adult and child. These ideas are simple starting points which I hope can lead to new determination to embrace the child in all of us, and those small ones we find in our care. As we come before the gods with the wonder of a child, and experience nature and ritual through their eyes, the world around us begins to sparkle again. The possibilities are limitless in the Hundred Acre Wood...even for grown ups.

(1) The Thalia Clan Neo-Pagan Community; Indianapolis, IN. For information, contact High Priestess Cecylina Brightsword at (317) 579-3083 (voice-mail), or Clan Chief Dagonet Brightsword at Internet mail address: dagonet@indy.net.

# A Parent's Concerns

by Ann Robbers

Raising children in today's world is a challenge. It is even more of a challenge when your belief system differs from the commonly accepted "norm". I am a single mom and have been practicing magick for about four years.

Since we attend several gatherings a year, I am often asked "What do you tell the children; how do they handle talking about the events, or magick, outside of the community?" I don't teach my children to keep secrets. However, I have explained to them that some things can be misunderstood, so they need to choose what they say, and who they say it to, carefully. I also tell them to watch their listener, and they can learn to tell how what they are saying is being received. After time, you learn who you can talk to, and who you can't.

I believe if I taught my children that practicing magick was a big secret, and they shouldn't talk about it, then I'm giving them the message that what I am doing, what we are doing actually, is bad, or somehow wrong. I would rather give them the idea that although my ideas and practices may be different from many other's, they are not "bad". I am trying to teach them tolerance and respect for other people's paths, for there are many different ways to be. It's not a black and white world we live in; rather it's made up of many shades of gray.

While trying to be open and honest with my children, it is inevitable that they may say the wrong thing at the wrong time. However, just like questions about sex in front of Grandma, if it's not something I can deal with right away, I let them know that this isn't an appropriate time, but we will talk later. And we do.

All in all, I want my children to learn that they have choices; that they should listen and question, not just accept; and, that they should respect other people and their paths. If I can raise my children to think for themselves, and to value all of our differences, I'll feel I've done a good job. Not only is raising children today a challenge, it's an adventure!

# They Said WHAT!??

## Communication in the Pagan Community

by J. Barrett Wolf

I'm sure you've heard it before..."So-and-so is bad-mouthing me to other members of the community. I hate it when he/she does that!..."

This is usually followed by a blue cloud of expletives and a protracted recounting of what really happened and why your friend is the innocent victim of the mean-spirited So-and-so's wrath.

Most of us have been on both ends of this equation. What was said by way of explanation gets back to the third party in the form of an attack. Or someone says, in their best well-meaning voice... "Romulus<sup>1</sup> told Remus that you were just such a bitch-goddess, and I wouldn't take that if I were you."

For most of us who strive for clear, open communication, this whole experience is one loooooong exercise in frustration. Either we want to shut the hell up forever or we feel obligated to explain/apologize for what we said or how we said it.

The scary thing in this dynamic is that it pushes us not toward open, clear communication, but toward the kind of half-truths and omissions that obscure the magical and spiritual power relationships are built on.

We are responsible for what we say.

That is why dialogue is so important. We can talk, listen, respond and challenge each other to get at the truth. Sometimes, this results in truths that weren't even in the conscious minds of either party - a higher truth arrived at through clear communication. When we give credence to the words that come to us from third parties, or hear them with prejudice, we are presuming to know exactly what was said and in what context.

If someone says "You know, he really acted like a fucked-up jerk about that night I spent with two women and a giraffe," they are speaking in the context of a specific incident. When a third party reports that someone said I was fucked-up, the context is lost and I don't know what was really meant by the words - or even if those were the same words that were used.

We cannot trust that what comes back to us via stories is not just one massive game of telephone. Investing in these stories, or making decisions about their veracity is, at best, venturing into the land of assumption.

For a long time, I have heard fellow pagans say they don't judge others by what they hear. Direct experience teaches us who is honest and who is trustworthy. This is especially obvious when your own experience of a person goes against what you have been told about them. Sometimes these two different experiences do not seem to converge. "Wow," you say, "My experience of Brigit is nothing like so-and-so's. How can that be?"

It can be because each of us brings out different responses and traits in each other. It can be because romance and friendship are on very different planes. It can be because the context of the interaction is different. This is why what we hear about others can vary so widely, and what others hear about us can make so little sense and sound so malicious to our own defensive ears.

One way to handle this is to ask ourselves if we would feel the same way if we hadn't heard what was said. Would it change

our position? Would we be more open, understanding and accepting? More difficult is to look within and see if we can hear what was said in a context that makes it less an attack and more of a comment or expression of someone else's experience.

I believe that there are few in the community who speak with actual malice. Unfortunately, much that is said from pain and confusion commutes back to us as if the sayer was looking to do harm. For those of us who believe the three-fold law, it would be foolish to say such things - they would only return to us in kind. More's the chance that, without the proper sense of context, someone re-interpreted what was said.

Interpreting what we hear directly is difficult enough. Many times the same words spoken to two different people will be taken differently. When two people speak and understand the same words, in the same way, they have created what I call coincident communication. This is that wonderful space when what you say, even the "shorthand" phrases, get across to the other person and they understand the way you mean them.

To know this is to understand that without such clarity, it is easy to lose the essence of what was said. Much care should be used before reporting back to your friends that so-and-so said such-and-such.

I have avoided the word gossip because it comes loaded with negative connotations. I don't think many of us feel that we are doing ill by letting a friend know what we heard. But the rules that govern gossip probably apply here. It might be better if we tended to our own communication and left the third parties to theirs. It is one thing to be asked for advice and council; it is another to presume that we can interpret the interactions of two (or more) others well enough to help them by reporting what we think we heard.

As an added bonus, I suppose that fewer conversations would have to begin with an obligatory apology.

(1) I use mythological names for all examples. Any resemblance...blah, blah, blah...purely coincidental.



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# CHILDREN: THE NEXT GENERATION

by Holly Teague

Most of us have created our magical worlds from scratch, picking up whatever we could find that sounded plausible at the time from wherever we could locate it. For those of us lucky enough to feel that we have found the right path for ourselves, it is easy to feel that this is the best path for our children.



This may not be the case; then again it may; still again, it may be a little of ours and little of what the child picks up on their own.

Such is the case with myself and my 4 1/2 year old daughter. I want her to grow up in a magical world filled with unconditional love and acceptance. With the workings of Sheya, my path, and my concepts of deity, I have found much of this. Through my own hard work on this path I have found many of the things conventional religions could not provide and at times were against. Such as acceptance without judgement, encouragement to be my own person, and that I can be strong, independent and assertive without losing my femininity. Knowing these things has given me the ability to live more fully and to love life and who I am, even when I'm at my worst. I want this for my child as well.

So, if Sheya has brought me to this wonderful place in my life, it can work for my child also, right? Well, my experience goes something like this.

Recently, I began to do temple with my daughter a few days a week. She has always shown an interest in magic, circles, dancing around fires and a talent for "seeing" energetic workings. So off to the woods we go. I'm figuring since I'm working with my own inner child aspect that this should be a cinch. I put up the temple, I set the quarters, I called in the aspect. My daughter sat still and quiet. I asked her what color she saw in the north, I only pointed since she knows traditional color/direction correlations. She answered "green" and that was the last "correct" answer that I got. She began taking stabs at answers, always missing what I wanted to hear. She got frustrated, I got frustrated, I even chastised her for "not trying very hard". I did let her know that I was not angry at her, and I also realized that some of the concepts that I asked her to grasp were a bit too advanced for a four year old.

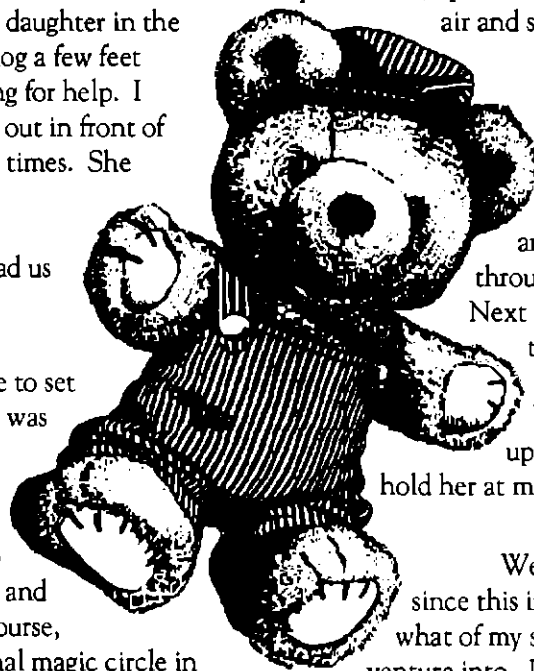
Two days later we are back in the woods and to my surprise (NOT!) she

doesn't want to do temple with me. I asked her why and she said it was because she "couldn't get the colors right". Okay, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this one out. My approach to this one was: "We did temple mommy's way last time, but how about we do temple your way?" She was very enthused about the prospect of us doing it her way. I also knew that she would want me to tell her what to do and how to do it "her way". So, drop the dogma and remember K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Stupid). I put my daughter in the center of the clearing and I sat down on a log a few feet away. She stood for a moment before asking for help. I prompted her to face north, stick her hand out in front of her, point her finger and turn around three times. She would turn 1/2 to 3/4 and look at me for instruction. I kept her going for a full 3 revolutions, this was fairly animated and had us both giggling.

With the circle in place, it was time to set the wards. Again, she asked for help. She was already facing north, so I had her stick her hands out in front of her, color the space green and shout "North!" She repeated this at each quarter. When she got back to the north, she threw her hands into the air and burst forth with "Magic Circle." This, of course, signifying that she now had a fully functional magic circle in place.

Now it was my turn. I got to bring in the child/consciousness aspect that I had been working with. With that done, my daughter decided that she was going into the well cooled fire pit and be the fire for the aspect, Khiyatta, and myself to dance around. Each of us took turns being the fire. This was interesting for the aspect, since Khiyatta is associated with air. When we finished with that, my daughter found a long, thin branch with lots of green leaves at the end. She decided that she would be a magical tree for the aspect and myself to dance around. Did I mention she enjoys dancing? Needless to say, this temple experience was filled with laughter, giggling, running around, silliness...and an underlying cohesion with my adult sensibilities.

When it was all over, I released the aspect from the temple and my daughter came up behind me and said "Good-bye, Khiyatta." Waving to the south. Then it was time for the magician in training to banish the circle. She again asked for help. Facing north, I had her reach out into the color she had placed there and erase it with her hands, ending it with "Good-bye, North!" She repeated this at each quarter and, upon completion threw her hands into the air and shouted "Good-bye, Magic Circle!"



It was over. My daughter's very first intentional commission of a magical act had been completed. She grabbed my hand and dragged me laughing and giggling through the woods at a formidable run. Next time I think I may try to introduce the concept of grounding after circle to her, but not too much. Just because I may not be able to keep up with her doesn't mean I should hold her at my pace or direction.

We have done temple many times since this initial adventure and I'm learning what of my stuff is not appropriate for her to venture into. I'm also learning to listen to her and help us both incorporate her stuff into what we are doing.

My lesson from this experience showed me that I need to let go of my own dogma when it comes to "teaching" my child the "wonders of magic". For the most wonderful things she will learn will come from her own exploration and my dogma can only hinder her. I can only offer her my structure as a guideline and a reference; not as a be all, end all, only way to

**Let [our children] create their own ways with our gentle guidance; the best lessons learned are the ones that are experienced from the heart.**

believe, only one true way. Doesn't that sound like something most of us have fought against for such a long time? Let's not recreate it, rename it and curse our children with it. Let them create their own ways with our gentle guidance; the best lessons learned are the ones that are experienced from the heart.



# Pagan Parenting: My Perspective

by Donna Stanford-Blake

The theme of this issue brought to light some of my deeper feelings regarding parenting the next generation. The relevancy of placing the burden of the future of Paganism on my children's shoulders being the main one. I watch my housemate and friends rearing their offspring. And observe the interactions within the community - both Pagan and not. I pondered and reached my own conclusions on the way I rear my children. Other's views may differ and that is how it should be. We are each unique and our methods of child rearing should reflect that. Unless obvious harm is being done, of course. It is this difference that is essential in any society to bring balance and maintain diversity in our world.

In many Pagan publications I read, the underlying consensus seems to be "we" (meaning Pagans) know the "right" way to believe and if everyone would just believe and do what "we" do, the world would be a fine place to live. Besides the fact that there is no one thing any group of Pagans could agree on, this sounds very much like the rabid, far-right Christians everyone is so terrified of. No ONE way is the right way. Isn't this mentality the reason most people sought alternative spirituality in the first place?

So when I think of how I should help create the next Magickal generation, I

laugh! I can only teach my children by example. I do not expect my children to follow in my foot steps. This is MY path. They will find their own. I can only shine my light and show them that there is never only one answer to anything. Diversity is not only a natural part of our world - it is a necessity.

My son doesn't believe in God or Goddess. He finds any religion confining and just a label people use to identify each other. He believes we should all just create our own religions. The Way of Shawn. If I suggest that this is a basis of my own beliefs, he points to the fact that I refer to myself as Pagan. Well, he is, after all, a teenager! And he is right. Tomorrow his beliefs may be entirely different, but he is finding his own way. That is the important point, as far as I am concerned.

Although my daughter is only four, she has been exposed to a variety of different paths. Christian - she loves Sunday School; Jewish - she can't understand why we don't have a menorah; Pagan - Mommy, when can we go to a festival again? She doesn't think of any path as being better or worse. They just are. I hope she can keep some of this openness as she grows. I certainly will not be the one to tell her differently.

So when I think of the next generation, I do not think of it in terms of Pagan or Magick, but in terms of individuals, each finding their own unique path through this world - no matter what it may be. The destination is the same, although the road may appear different. My goal as a parent, Pagan or otherwise, is to provide an example in love, acceptance, and spiritual growth. After all, my children are not truly mine, they are the universe's.

Will my children be part of the next generation of Pagans? Only they can decide. But I know, whatever their choice, they already are MAGICK.

# The Spell of Hekate:

**Being a work delivered by herself  
to a circle of those who love her.**

by *Philos Moon*

The Samhain circle is dark but not entirely silent. A single large drum plays, and deer toe rattles are heard.

The Priest \ess says:

"Hecate, Hekaray, Hekate, Hekat,  
Heq, Hekeet, Hequit, Hekit, Hah  
Keet Ah."

The gathered circle sings  
"Ancient Queen of Wisdom,  
Healing One, Changing One  
Dark Moon, Come to us."

The Priest \ess says:



"From out of space and time,  
I call you;  
From the depths and from the center,  
I call you;  
and from the deep places of the earth,  
I call you,  
Lady of the Triple Spiral,  
of the Crossroads,  
Of the Fertile Darkness,  
and the Sickle Moon  
Come be here now!"

"Hekate, from hel  
You who smash all stubborn things,  
Strong to smash all stubborn things,  
Hark! Hark! Her hounds are baying,  
Hark, her hounds are calling,  
at this circle where 3 roads meet,  
She is here."

The SHE speaks:

"You who gather again to turn the  
wheel,

"You who are indeed of my people, I  
hear your call.

"I am greatly pleased with the work  
you do here, and I say to you, awaken fully to  
this work, and know that what you do here  
connects with the deepest work of your lives.

"I bid you then, Come willingly into  
this circle with all that you are, and that you  
are not, and are yet to become.

"It has been said that in these days you  
must reopen our temples of old, and this is  
truth.

"But I say to you build to me no  
temples: I will have few and those hidden;  
for I choose  
the hidden places of this world,  
I choose the edges,  
and I choose the depths,

I choose the crossroads.

"Your hidden places, your edges,  
your depths, your crossroads.  
And where you are, There I will be.

"Call me then,  
in the dark places of your life,  
Listen for me at the edges of your life,  
Honor me  
at the crossroads of your life.  
For my work is in the fertile  
darkness that brings change,  
and the circle of your life  
shall be my temple.

"Embrace for me your strength  
and your weakness,  
your fear and your power,  
your joy and your pain,  
your dreams and your loss,  
and that which you will yet to lose.  
Know that growing wisdom is present in your life,  
right here,  
right now.  
And know that Mine is the wisdom that  
completes the circle of life.

"Seek your own True Will, and  
To me give the teaching of your children,  
the healing of your community,  
and your planet;  
To me, the caring of your sick,  
the tending of the dying;  
To me, your pleasure and your pain,  
and to me the witnessing of all change.  
For these shall be my rites in the daily life of  
humanity.

"And If it be your Will,  
Call to me upon the dark of the moon,  
and leave me gifts at the crossroads,  
Dark fruit and dark wine  
Burn to me juniper, cedar and frankincense.  
Dance to me, feast or die,  
Chant, love or give birth.

But, what I love best are  
the offerings of your own awakening."

Thus ends this spell of Hekate.



# The Spiritual Necessity of Hierarchy

by Donald Michael Kraig

For several years there has been a growing feeling among some people that the cause of many of the problems in the world—war, pollution, greed, etc.—are at least partly due to the fact that this planet has been, and is, controlled by hierarchies. When used in this context the word “hierarchy” is a usually a code-word that means “patriarchal, male-dominated society and its social structures” (much as the word “restricted” was a code word for “no Jews allowed” and “separate but equal” was used to mean “segregated”). As a result of this belief, there is a strong and growing movement among some occultists to break down hierarchies in the occult community and within working ceremonial magic, Pagan and other groups. On some levels this is a positive movement, but on others it is a self-deception which ignores societal realities and certain spiritual necessities.

I am sure that there are those who are ready to throw bricks at me for the above statements and consider my comments to be nothing more than the ravings of an old-aeon conservative. (Actually, I think of myself as an optimistic realist.) Recently a person wrote me a letter stating all of the bad things the patriarchal hierarchy had caused, including wars, poverty, the demeaning of women, etc. I believe that on many points the writer of that letter was absolutely correct.

At the same time, however, the writer forgot to mention that the hierarchical structure has also allowed the development of magnificent art, music, architecture, highly-developed sciences (including allopathic medicine) and even the computer that the writer used to compose the letter. Certainly we should reject the forces within hierarchies that led to such things as the Inquisition, the Children’s Crusade, and the cultural devolution of both the hard sciences and liberal arts that occurred in Europe during the so-called Dark Ages. On the other hand, shouldn’t we seek to find the value(s) in the structure of hierarchies which allowed the development of the genius of Bach, Beethoven, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Christopher Wren, Frank Lloyd Wright, Einstein, Buckminster Fuller and many others? To simply throw out hierarchies—especially when in some instances they are either a natural part of societal structure (look at the behavior of numerous mammalian species and their hierarchical development), or a spiritual necessity—may not be the ideal thing to do.

I think it is also valid to ask what the relationship is between hierarchies and the good and bad associated with them. Whether or not the ruling hierarchies caused negative and positive occurrences in the history of the world, exacerbated them or through inaction allowed them to happen, is not what this article is about—I don’t want to make this a social study of society. This article will focus on hierarchies in occult groups.

## THE BAD SIDE OF HIERARCHIES

One of the things I frequently discuss in my lectures and writings is the idea represented by the acronym (from Dr. T. Leary, I believe): TIFYQA—Think For Yourself; Question Authority. Even Dion Fortune wrote that there is no room for authority in occultism. I believe that what she meant was that we should not treat an authority as if he or she were the only fount of knowledge and link to the Godhead.

Unfortunately, some people do exactly that. You'd think that the head of their group was some superhuman bodhisattva! About a year ago, one woman in Sacramento told me, "From now on I'm going to do anything... [the leader of her magical group] says." I know of another case where the leader of a group in San Diego told her followers whom to marry and divorce, and they followed her commands.

As another example of occultists fighting the urge of followers to deify them, I urge readers to look at the beginning of Aleister Crowley's *Book 4* (also published as part of *Magick*) where his amanuensis tells the reader, "...others have said, 'Believe me!' He [Crowley] says 'Don't believe me!'... He wants an independent and self-reliant body of students to follow out their own methods of research. If he can save them time and trouble by giving them a few useful 'tips,' his work will have been done to his own satisfaction." Even if Crowley wasn't able to live up to those words—and from my studies of him it seems clear that he liked adulation—his written intent is exemplary.

I don't know if what I have described as the abuse of power is the result of hierarchical structures. I do think that the hierarchical structure of some groups sets up the opportunity for abuse of power. On the part of the leader, it is an abuse because he or she has used the power of leadership not to guide and direct, but to control and manipulate. On the part of the followers, it is an abuse of their own power because they give it to another rather than using it in order to strengthen and empower themselves. It is this negative, symbiotic relationship which exemplifies the most negative aspects of hierarchies. This type of behavior can also be seen in the relationship between Hitler and the Nazis, Mussolini and the Italian fascists, political groups and their ideologue leaders, some religious leaders and their followers, etc. Certainly this type of hierarchy should be recognized, identified, decried and opposed.

## THE NATURAL SIDE OF HIERARCHIES

While similar negative aspects of hierarchies exist in some occult groups, in most of them there is a different situation. Some people are willing to do the work—finding places to do ritual, designing and/or participating in rituals, purchasing supplies, contacting group members, printing rituals for use, being a contact for other groups and covens, etc. Other people are content to come to the rituals (and to some of the classes the leader [or representative of the leader] may give—if they don't conflict with Star Trek–TNG, The

X-Files or Babylon 5).

This is a natural hierarchy. It exists in most groups, even those that claim to be non-hierarchical. The larger the group, the more this natural hierarchy becomes apparent. To break down this hierarchy would force people who are capable of leading into a position of not leading. It would also force those who just want to follow into what for them is the uncomfortable position of trying to lead.

I think it is wise to have people do what they are good at. Concomitantly, I think it unwise to make people do what they are not good at. (Although I do think it is a good idea to have both types of people learn about "the other side" and at least become comfortable with it.) Let leaders lead and followers follow. At the same time, allow any to change status as he or she desires. As I said, this hierarchy is natural in many groups. And, as anti-PC as it sounds, I think this natural hierarchy should be enhanced.

There is one aspect of this which I believe must be controlled and eliminated. Specifically, I don't think that the calcification and closing of the hierarchy should be encouraged, nor would I involve myself with such a group. By that I mean that those who follow should not only be allowed to lead when they are ready to do so, but their increased participation should be encouraged from the moment they become part of the group. Likewise, someone who has actively participated and helped to lead a group should be allowed to step down and become a follower if that is his or her desire. In this way, the hierarchy is not closed to change. Perhaps it is the nature of closed hierarchies which is directly related to the abuses of power mentioned earlier.

## THE USEFULNESS OF SPIRITUAL HIERARCHIES

There is another hierarchy found in occult groups which is also positive. This is the spiritual hierarchy of power which comes from some external source (call it the Source, the Source of Power, the Goddess, deity, Ain Sof, Chaos or whatever) and flows through each and every member of the particular group. (Yes, I realize that some believe that all power comes from within the individual. I leave that discussion to another time.)

But this spiritual hierarchy is not a simple Source-to-Follower or "A-to-B" design. Otherwise, there would be no difference in the spiritual and magical abilities of each group

member. It is obvious to anyone who has ever been a member of an occult group that people vary widely in their talents and abilities. Helping people on a spiritual path develop to the utmost of their capabilities is the rightful duty of a group leader, whether he or she is called Grand Master/Mistress, High Priestess/Priest, Emperor, Hierophant or by another name.

Such a position is not one of being all-powerful. Rather it is a position of service and responsibility to the other members of the group. The duty of the leader should include helping each member to improve on his or her path. Thus, although the hierarchy goes from A-to-B, the leader, L, is also in the equation.

Perhaps the best way to describe the spiritual hierarchy in an occult group is "A-to-LB." That is, the hierarchy comes from the source of the group's power to the member, but he or she may not be fully able to accept, understand and work the path without the advice, teaching and guidance of the leader.

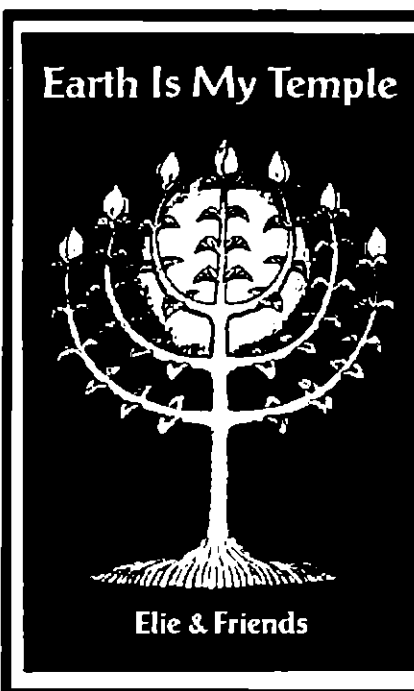
Nor should this imply that the formula for the leader is a direct "A-to-L." Actually, it is "A-to-LB1B2B3B..." What this means is that when a person accepts the responsibility of being a group leader, part of his or her spiritual growth and power is directly dependent upon his or her success in aiding the other group members. Thus, although there is a hierarchical structure, the leader and members are intradependent upon each other rather than having an "A-to-L-to-B" structure.

"A-to-L-to-B" defines religions where a priesthood acts as an intermediary between source and member or businesses where you have to go through a mid-level manager before you can meet with someone in power. In an "A-to-LB" group, the leader helps members fully manifest the effulgence from the source. Further, as each member becomes more and more aware of his or her power, that member should also be allowed to help others find the manifestation within themselves. In this way, the members who desire it can move up to the leadership level, up the hierarchy.

## CONCLUSION

Although it may not be PC, I believe it is self-deceptive for people to claim that they are building a hierarchy-free organization. Hierarchies naturally develop in any group. You can call a group leader a "facilitator" instead of High Priestess/Priest, but that person still functions as a leader. Likewise, you can call a person who only shows up at rituals a "non-active participant," but he or she is still a follower. Organizations need both, and the natural hierarchy that develops because people are different is inevitable and useful.

When people deny reality, what they deny is free to exist. Hierarchies should not be feared and hated. Nor should their negative aspects be ignored. I believe that any group should objectively and subjectively examine its hierarchical structure, work to get rid of what is bad, and keep what is good.



## Earth Is My Temple

by Elie and friends

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**Earth Is my Temple** is a refreshing addition to the growing list of earth religion music available to seekers. This tape fills a much-needed gap by bringing in old and new traditions of the Hebrew Tribes. The songs are beautiful and of good technical quality. Kudos to Elie and Friends for their gift of music and inspiration.  
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# Deconstructing the Art of Magic

by Dr. Richard Kaczynski

*Think.*

*If you line up all the late, great teachers of history and asked them to put their most important lesson into one word, it would be **think**. The barriers of time, race, sex and culture would all melt into a glorious moment of consensus, with Buddha and Socrates dancing arm in arm with your kindergarten teacher. Know thyself. I think, therefore I am. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.*

*Welcome, then, to the first in a series of articles—a column, if you like—designed to make you think. If you know the answers, ask yourself if they aren't really just excuses. It may broaden your perspectives. Then again, you may conclude that I need to relearn my magical ABC's (or Aleph Beth Gimels). It doesn't matter so long as I get you to think.*

*Thought is everything. Obey your head.*

---

The territory known best by magicians is that piece of occult real estate called the magic circle. It is the twilight zone between personal space and outer space, microcosm and macrocosm, within which the forces of the universe are manipulated. It is the impenetrable rampart against malevolent forces, patrolled by the guardians of the four

wachtowers. And it's the fishbowl that collects the energy built up during a ritual. Magic? You're soaking in it.

Sound familiar?

Imagine yourself in that space, safe and secure, surrounded by your cosmic rent-a-cops, standing at your altar like you've done countless times before. What direction are you facing? What direction do all good magicians face? It doesn't matter whether the answer is east, the direction of the rising sun; the northern province of the Goddess; or even Boleskine, ancestral home of Thelemites everywhere. What matters is that you have an answer.

And that answer requires another question: Is the direction one's altar faces really so important? Does it always have to point in the same direction? If magicians can burn different incenses, use different colored altar cloths or call different names depending on the nature of their working, then why can't they point their altars in the most appropriate direction? West for dream working or creativity, north for prosperity.

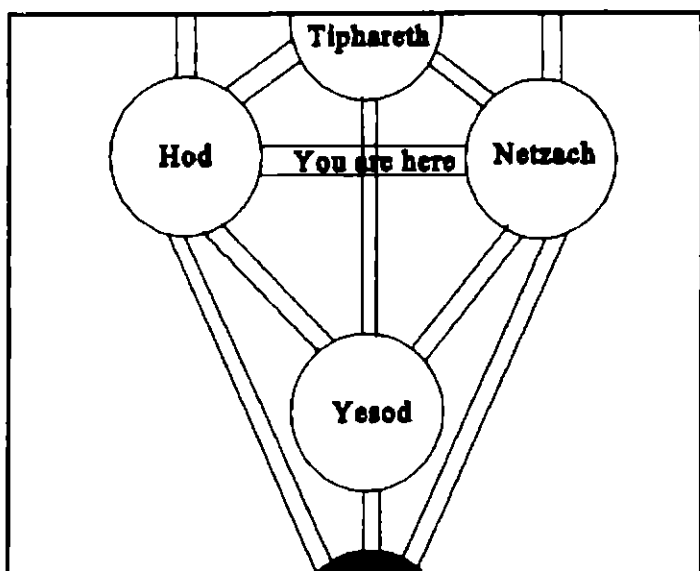
Generations of teachers have warned that breaking this sacred rule of direction will result in falling into the World of Shells, being sucked up by ravenous astral leeches, or some equally ignominious demise. It sounds like parents telling their children to eat their veggies or the boogey man will get them. It sounds like excuses which limit the range of possibilities. How tragic to think of magicians who have occupied this circular real estate, some for decades, without ever looking in the back yard.

And what zoning commissioner said this real estate has only four windows, one for each of the four elements? After all, the **Sepher Yetzirah** describes creation as unfolding from three elements—air, water and fire—for each of the three mother letters. And the Chinese give five elements—metal, wood, fire, water and earth. Despite these exceptions, most cultures break the cosmic

forces into four directions.

Social scientists consider these cross-cultural patterns to indicate a biological predisposition. We think in four directions because our bodies are built that way: eyes in the front of our heads, nothing in the back, and an arm to either side. It's natural. Could you keep perfect 120 degree angles straight for triangular space? It would be easier if you had three arms spaced equally around your body.

This, however, is only one explanation. Perhaps the popularity of four directions and four elements reflects a universal truth—a concept with which social scientists aren't too keen. Or maybe it's because, in geometry, two axes (North-South and East-West) are the minimum necessary to describe a plane. Whether biology, truth or parsimony, it all boils down to one basic question: *Do there have to be four directions, or is this just a contrivance?*



Accepting that, for whatever reason, four directions are the easiest to work with, who decides which elements go with which direction? The logic is typically some variation of the following: East is attributed to air because that's where we get the first rays of daylight. South is fire because the sun is in the south at its hottest. West is water because rain tends to come in from the west. And north is earth because moss and lichen tend to grow on the north side of trees and rocks. That's the typical arrangement magicians know and love.

Not so fast. True, this is the system used in the lesser and greater banishing rituals of the pentagram. But Crowley writes that, in these Golden Dawn rituals, the magician is symbolically standing at the intersection of the paths of Peh

and Samekh, facing Tiphareth. This implies that Tiphareth=Air, Netzach=Fire, Yesod=Water and Hod=Earth. But, according to the Golden Dawn grade system, Malkuth=Earth, Yesod=Air, Hod=Water and Netzach=Fire; Tiphareth has no elemental attribution. [Never mind that the Jews didn't assign elements to the Tree of Life this way, nor that the scheme doesn't jive with the Sephirothic planetary attributions.] Even at this level, the idea of a magician playing *Twister!* on the Tree of Life doesn't quite fit.

Things get really strange when one moves to the hexagram rituals. These rituals deal with planetary energy, and the four elements are attributed according to the cardinal signs as they appear on the vernal equinox: East=♃/Fire, North=♋/Water, West=♊/Air and South=♌/Earth. [Don't even get me started on why elemental energies are being used in a ritual based on planetary energy.] The silly thing is that the sun hasn't risen in Aries on the vernal equinox in over 2,000 years. Assuming we're in the Age of Aquarius, then East=♈/Air, North=♉/Earth, West=♏/Fire and South=♍/Water.

But if you're a Thelemite, Liber Reguli turns you on your head, using the Kerubic signs as viewed from the underside of the zodiacal wheel. Thus, East=♌/Earth, South=♏/Fire, West=♍/Water and North=♈/Air. It can be summarized as follows:

Direction	Pentagram	Hexagram	Astronomy	Reguli
East	Air	Fire	Air	Earth
South	Fire	Earth	Water	Fire
West	Water	Air	Fire	Water
North	Earth	Water	Earth	Air

Now here's a good one. Does one rearrange the weapons on one's altar to mirror these changes? Teachers are curiously silent on this point. The whole idea of attributions begins to look very arbitrary.

We can then posit two new systems—equally arbitrary and equally logical—in addition to those discussed [inventing even more could be a great party game]:

*System 1:* The Golden Dawn hexagram ritual, which says East=Fire, etc., makes sense if you're doing the ritual on March 20. But what if it's November 10 and the sun is in Scorpio? East is then water, because that's the element the sun is rising in. And on May 1, when the sun is in Taurus,



east is earth. In essence, the elemental attributions change every 30 days to reflect the passing of the year.

*System 2:* If east is based on the sun rising in 0° ♃ then "east" is not an absolute direction but a point of reference. A month after the vernal equinox, one would turn 30 degrees to the left, because that's where 0° ♃ would be. Six months later, "east" is in the west. In short, there are 365 different "east," one for each day of the year.

These systems all make sense, and, interestingly enough, work in their respective traditions. So what does that say about these attributions? It's all relative.

One incident in particular set me to thinking about these ideas. It was the Summerhawk festival of '94, and we had rain the whole weekend. Hadn't seen the sun in days. My camp mate wanted to banish, and asked me which way was east. I shrugged my shoulders and asked, "Does it matter?" And I've been thinking about it ever since.

Magic is practiced with very lax rules. We use astrological symbols which are sadly out of step with the actual constellations. Magicians orient themselves to the east, the direction of the rising sun...but, depending on the time of year, the sun varies more than 23 degrees north or south of that mark. Some traditions set their altars in the north—but is it magnetic north, or true north? And if you're off a few degrees, does the system fail? What are the tolerance limits for being off? Are there any limits at all?

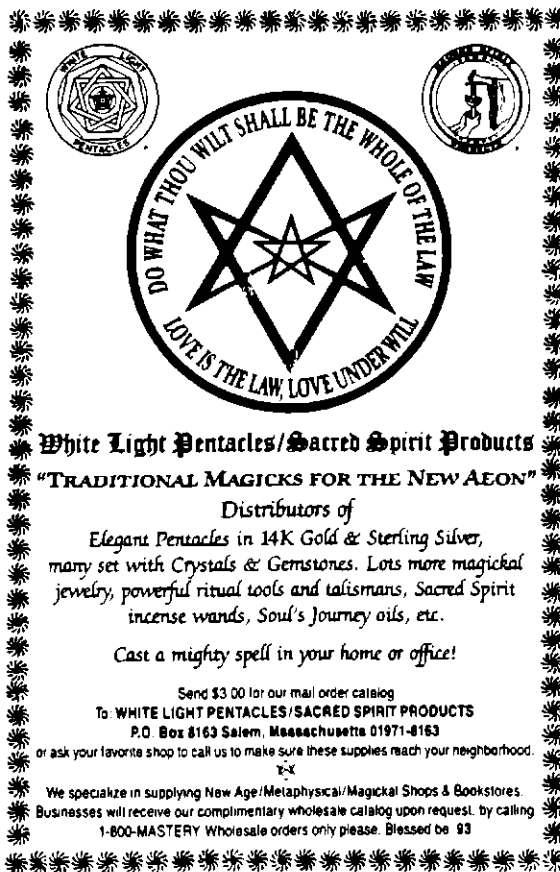
The answer depends on where you think magic gets its power. If it comes from outside of you, then it may very well require you to align yourself to geomagnetic forces and ley lines. But if the magic comes from within, then do what feels right. I prefer the self-empowered view.

No, the magician doesn't stand on the paths of Samekh and Peh, or on the earth or the sun. These are all frames of reference, and magicians can stand anywhere they damn well please, even on their heads. So long as the concepts represented by the four elements can be compartmentalized in psychological space, the exact attributions or directions don't matter. They are merely tools of convenience, like the "masks of god" idea. Jesus and Athena and Kali and Wotan are all different faces of the same supreme being. None of them are "wrong," but there is a larger principle behind them. Thus, the fundamentalist who says "Jesus is the one true God" is no less correct than the unitarian who believes Jesus to be but one face of God

sent to one people at one point in time, with all other faces of God as seen around the world equally glorious. One of them just sees the bigger picture.

Similarly, there is a plethora of elemental systems, most of which say that direction matters. But for all of these systems to work, then the truth behind the Veil of Isis has to be that it doesn't really matter. This may not sit right with all people, but only one exception shows it's not a law.

Hello. I'm the exception to the rule.



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# WITCHDOM: A PATHWORKER'S VIEW

by Esmeralda

In Doreen Valiente's excellent book *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, she refers to a vague place, also known as the Summerland, where we can all gather and celebrate in a kind of grand astral coven. I quote from a description of Witchdom she gives via "a voice from the past:"

"There is a part of the Inner Planes, the Other World, which is called Witchdom. There you may learn much, if you can contact it. There are spells and chants, dances and music and such woods and streams as delight the hearts of witches. Witchdom has a temple, in that all sacred places on this earth have their astral counterparts. Nothing is lost, but much is stored deep. Witches today waste much time on unnecessary matters. You think these things are important, but they are trivialities. Look to Witchdom for your answers...Dip into the Pool of Memory and find treasure. Do not be in a hurry. Find few people and good. When the full moon is out, you can come close to Witchdom. The rays of the moon have power, when they bathe the earth with its light. It is the window, in more ways than one. You too can see through the window."

This description contained phrases that set off a chain of recognition in my mind. I'm sure many Crafters have had the experience of being in the midst of a well planned ritual and suddenly getting carried off course by surprisingly sure insights of how the ritual is really supposed to go. The unexpected sidetrack always leads somewhere appropriate. Or there are times, especially at Sabbats, when we have vivid dreams where

we are in the company of other Witches, known or unknown, and wake up with a chant, phrase or other gleaned treasure echoing in our heads. Or around the bonfire as the energy peaks, we obtain a glimpse of the subtle bonds that weave us all together, and a thrill of bliss unlike any other transports us briefly to an altered state of awareness. These are all times when we have been in Witchdom.

Although "Witchdom" is not the best title for this meeting ground, I will retain its use. Perhaps someone else can come up with a more suitable name for this elusive garden which I am trying to stake out in greater clarity here. In charting out this territory, I refer to the highest and most effective cosmic map available—the Tree of Life, otherwise known as the Holy Qabala.

Although many Witches have a distinct aversion to the Qabala, I have noticed a recent gradual increase in its usage. I can understand how a Witch can be put off by both the "high magick" terms entwined with the Tree as well as its apparently patriarchal tone. These are only superficial impressions and, if a patient, open and flexible approach is applied, it will prove worthy of the effort.

In olden days, Witches would sometimes work with Magicians but the relationship was often rather patronizing on the Magician's part, since Magicians were more literate and upper class while Witches were normally herbalists who practiced wisdom through intuition and lore—which, by the way, made them no less powerful! Those days are gone now, but the innate tendency of Witches to shrink from "high magick" as well as the tendency of Magicians to look down scornfully upon "low magick" unfortunately survives.

At risk of breaking down these outdated barriers, I propose the following theory as a key to unlocking the gates of "Witchdom" (which, of course, we all want to do!). Here follows a one-paragraph crash course on the Tree of Life.

The Tree consists of spheres sacred to the influences of the planets. These spheres are connected by paths on which we may track different planes and levels of our lives. The bottom sphere is Malkuth, representing Saturn, earth and physical form. The top sphere is Kether, generally recognized as the highest and most incomprehensible pure white light. Of course, this is an over-simplification. The spheres and the paths that weave among the Spheres between Malkuth and Kether are the branches of the Tree on which life moves.

The path leading directly upward from Malkuth takes us to the sphere of the Moon. Note that this sphere, Yesod, is the low astral plane, called "the treasurehouse of images"—then re-read the quote in the opening paragraph.

This sphere is Witchdom.

To verify this further, let's climb another branch up the Tree. Yesod is at the bottom of a triangle formed with the spheres of Hod and Netzach above it, also known as Mercury and Venus, or the Lord of Books and Mistress of Magick. We can look at this triangle as the sacred space within which our Lord and Lady are invoked—or the common ground on which Magician and Witch can meet. The triangle is such a well-known magickal symbol that an entire treatise could be written on its meaning alone—so interpretations will be left open.

Returning to "Witchdom" as the sphere of Yesod—recently I shared in an experimental working of the 32nd path, which connects Malkuth with Yesod. In doing this, I became aware of how treading this path on the "inner planes" is just like the way we bring novices into the Craft or introduce newcomers into our circle. The triangle of Yesod, Hod and Netzach correspond to various degrees of initiation. Most Qabalists who understand the Craft see the Craft operating within the spheres of this triangle. Again, I leave this idea open to discussion and would welcome any comments.

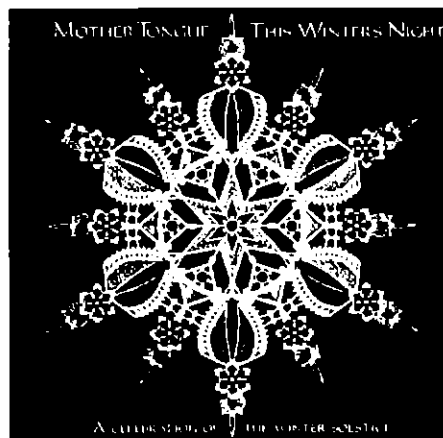
(This is not to say that a Witch can never venture any further up the Tree than the spheres of Hod and Netzach, or that the Craft cannot encompass areas above these spheres!)

Witchdom is described as a place where things are stored, we can dip into it and bring back treasures. This describes the sphere of Yesod perfectly. It is a kind of repository of the collective unconscious and when we visit

there, we also leave impressions behind. You can imagine the richness and wildness of what exists as the collective astral counterpart of Witch's "Summerland" built upon layers upon layers of Craft sediment accumulating in Yesod. Valiente confesses not to fully understand a lot about this place called Witchdom and the influence of the moon (a confession I find somewhat puzzling!) and cutely speculates that it must be connected with the Moslems' idea of paradise, the "Happy Hunting Ground" of the Red Indian and even coyly suggests that these "many mansions" might exist in other dimensions. Is our Witchdom the same place as another person's Valhalla?

Hopefully, this article will open up some lines of communication so that Witches may better understand the circle where we so merry meet—and Magicians may better come to terms with their brothers and sisters of the Craft! So Mote It Be!

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# On Starting a Ritual Group

## Part Three: Dangers, Pitfalls & Just Rewards

by Antero Alli

Thus begins the last in a three-part series exploring various processes of instigating and maintaining a ritual group. As mentioned in the previous two parts, no particular ritual dogma or philosophy will be suggested or condoned beyond what the reader already brings to his and her own ritual knowledge and practice. Instead, the writer shares with you some of the fruits of labors past and his premonitions about where they might lead when applied and tested.

*Applied and tested.* Any ritual knowledge or technology must be first applied and tested before judicious assessment can be passed regarding its integrity. Sometimes what looks workable in print falls apart in action; the reverse can also be true. My intent is to encourage whatever works in action and leave the ponderous task of sequestering meaning until after the fact. Do the ritual first; then talk, think and write about it later.

The actions inherent to this final third part are primarily psychological and involve more physically passive acts such as perception, judgement and dis-identification. More overtly physical acts will be introduced along the way to implement the overall psychological objective of maintaining sanity amidst the sometimes difficult emotional

states inherent to “archetypal inflation.”

What I mean by archetypal inflation is a necessary and preliminary phase of self-transformation involving that moment of becoming—identifying with and merging into—whatever force of nature, god, or goddess the ritualist seeks to invoke in ceremony. It is necessary and preliminary to experience the energies—of whatever force(s) are to be evoked—so that one’s knowledge of these forces may proceed from direct, intuitive response rather than preconceptions or personal ideations. What becomes inflated is, in a word, “ego”, defined hereafter as “self-concept”, i.e., what we think about the Self (not necessarily the same as what the Self is).

In a moment of archetypal inflation, ego (or self-concept) is flooded with unknown sensations, impressions and feelings from the heretofore “subconscious” aspects of its larger nature, the Self. One grows aware of being much more than one previously imagined or conceived possible. A sense of expansion occurs on the plane of existence itself. One is faced with new needs for reorienting and redefining oneself according to this influx of new information and energy, as well as the ways it acts on the environment of others. One thing changes and everything changes.

## The Ritual Intent of “Initiation”

The previous paragraphs describe a process of initiation, one of the more important functions ritual can serve in any culture, subculture or microculture. It seems to me that archetypal inflation is both preliminary and necessary to real initiation, by its instigation of an altered state of consciousness and those personal adjustments it compels for reorienting the being to its environment.

However, as mentioned in parts one and two of this series, before such an initiation can be of much use, there must first be enough “self” to undergo and register these changes. It’s almost as if the ritual purpose of developing an ego is to eventually offer, sacrifice and otherwise give it up for something higher or at least, “other.” Not once or twice but over and over and over again; *ad infinitum*.

As ritual practice continues, one discovers many additional levels and definitions of initiation other than what has been presented here so far. Another dimension of initiatic process involves confrontation with “shadow” aspects of oneself.

These include those heretofore unrealized, suppressed and often unacceptable elements of one’s larger nature which are “projected” onto others until one is prepared to carry that burden oneself.

The shadow side of archetypal inflation makes itself known when the ritualist forgets to create time for dis-identifying with the force(s), gods or goddesses evoked after that ritual is actually over. The resulting confusion can sometimes be detected in the behavior of those who walk away from the ritual still “shot up with themselves” thinking they are that force, that god or that goddess. No blame. In its preliminary phases, this “amnesia of the mundane” is a harmless indulgence expressing an innocent wish to join the realm of the gods in everyday life, all the time. However, over greater durations and repeat occurrences, certain disquieting symptoms begin to surface, reminding one of such saturnine realities as schedules, commitments, and other limitations natural to life on earth. One is not a god all the time.

On a more caustic note, I suggest that we are not human beings put on this earth to have spiritual experiences, but spiritual beings learning to become more human. To think otherwise may be to entertain a subconscious death wish by the naive longing to leave the physical plane as a constant consort to the gods. Identification with disembodied metaphysical principles tends to, over time, materialize the reality of metaphysical disembodiment. *Also known as physical death.*

## On Dismantling The “Death Complex”

This “death complex”, as described in the previous paragraph, tends to emerge as archetypal inflation becomes a goal or the fundamental reason or intent for performing a given ritual. Even though archetypal inflation is necessary to initiatic process, it acts as a preliminary function—never a goal—to the more long-term agenda of spiritual enlightenment...the willful, conscious embodiment of spirituality in the human condition.

An essential skill in any effective ritual toolbox is the ability to discharge whatever forces—and their incumbent charges—worked in a given ceremony. To discharge means to consciously send those energies back to their respective source(s) while restoring

one’s sense of mundane reality, i.e., one is standing on the ground being nobody but oneself.

Numerous are the ways to accomplish this important task yet all must somehow incorporate a movement or shift into nonbeing, or no-form (if only to begin dissolving personal identification and attachment to whatever force(s), gods and/or goddesses were summoned to work the ritual). Without this intentional dissolution of attachment, one unwittingly sets up “accidental” cycles of dissolution of the most dreary and literal nature. If you don’t clean up after your ritual mess, Mama Cosmos will, but She may be too busy to honor the details of your personal style and agenda. I believe this choice to dissolve attachment consciously after each ritual, and its inherent archetypal inflation, also reflects the larger choice for life over death.

I don’t think the process of no-form can be taught. I believe it too personal and idiosyncratic to address every individual’s needs and culturally-conditioned resistances to being—in essence—nothing, a nobody. As I see it, we live in a void-ignorant celebrity-hype youth culture which posits an unspoken taboo against being a “nobody”. To achieve an ongoing rapport or intimacy with the concept-free zones of “the void”, everybody must work their own pathways to its potential state of being—that formless substance of their true

nature. Buddhist Zazen sitting practice remains instrumental to my own emptying, as does a certain stubbornness for not being anybody, which includes never having to believe my own "P.R." Having honest friends also helps. Yet, these are not methods or behaviors I can in good conscience recommend to all. No-form seems too damn personal for that kind of generalization to take effect; it's a universal condition with infinite variety.

## The Ritual Use of No-Form

Structurally, I suggest the ritualist create time for entering a no-form state, not just after each ritual engagement with archetypal forces, but also before stepping into the circle itself, primarily as a way of assuring greater receptivity to the forces at play. In addition to creating time, I suggest the ritualist also develop a physical posture or stance reserved exclusively for the experience of no-form. This way the living animal body can be informed, trained and, more importantly, included in this ritualization of transitions between states, forces and entire ceremonies themselves. Every time you enter this physical position, the body registers the change into no-form

not as a threat to its distinction but as "the time and place where emptying occurs." With practice, the body eventually learns to support these changes—which is saying a lot when you think about how much the uninformed, uninvolved body resists change to begin with.

By implementing the active value of no-form before and after each ritual, an act of respect is also served to oneself and the forces that be. Besides acting as an integrity-enhancer for both ritual and ritualists alike, this respect brings greater dignity to the proceedings at hand while minimizing the ego tendency to continue identifying with principles evoked for a ritual long after that ritual has, in fact, ended.

To break this "trance of identification", we must be willing to see into its causes. The reason for ego-identification in the first place is *emotional*. The archetypal influx of new heat and new light gives ego a taste of power,

self-importance (status) and meaning...all comprising legitimate emotional needs. However, when ritual is performed for emotional reasons alone, it tends toward chaos, dispersion and eventual disintegration. Why is this? Having given this some thought, it seems to me that the larger-than-ego transpersonal forces require a more flexible, resilient vehicle than ego to continue providing expression for their larger-than-life mythic forces. Thus, the question of intent is once more all-important. Ritual groups with ego-intent alone are not "bad" ritual groups, but short-lived ritual groups. Ritual groups meeting for reasons that include ego, but also embrace transpersonal causes for being, tend to show longer life. The question to be asked is: What is a transpersonal cause?

## The Function of a Transpersonal Cause

A transpersonal cause is any forward-moving direction of obvious benefit to all concerned and ideally, others outside the group and the planet, as well. Within that larger cause, you can have all the personal and emotional

reasons for doing ritual yet, without it, the ritual group is a temporary life form at best.

**A transpersonal cause is any forward-moving direction of obvious benefit to all concerned and ideally, others outside the group and the planet, as well**

One example of a transpersonal cause that has worked for me in the past was the agreement to produce a documentary video of

the ritual work that would be shown to others, thus benefitting their knowledge of the work, as well as our own. Another example might be to somehow include the community at large in the ritual work through the convention of a lecture-demonstration showing the group and the work in action. A less publicly-oriented transpersonal cause (although community-related events are always public) is for the group to collectively select a universal theme—like "initiation"—to develop over a period of time through the variety brought forth by each individual's subjective processes.

The function of a transpersonal cause serves to provide a container large and broad enough to maintain the expression of those transpersonal forces which do not depend on our control or comprehension to function but

nevertheless govern our existences. The just reward of instigating and struggling to maintain such a ritual group is the living sanctuary and refuge from a world gone mad with greed and sickness, which provides a supportive environment for those willing to work for something larger than themselves.

If this sounds utopian, it is. Utopia begins with moments. Moments unfolding in the hearts of individuals impassioned to work together and produce interactions that nurture new traditions, new rituals and new art forms for sustaining the emerging cultures on the fringes of mainstream and media madness. In this way, ritual can be a powerful tool not just for opening the individual to higher states of consciousness—"the realm of the gods"—but also to build the necessary support within the ritual group—through transpersonal causes—that provide the necessary support network for the rebirth and maintenance of the living, breathing soul.

Antero Alli is the director of ParaTheatrical ReSearch and author of ALL RITES REVERSED; Ritual Technology for Self-Initiation plus five other rebellious manifestos. His documentary video, "ARCHAIC COMMUNITY", is now available (\$35, pstpd) as is his free katalog of books, tapes and mail-order services. Please write him directly at PO Box 161, Port Townsend, WA 98368 or leave a message on his 24-hr. INFO-line at (206) 781-5691.

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# Neophyte's Niche

## Resisting Resistance

by Donna Stanford-Blake

Brain-storming for topics, I turned to my esteemed editor and asked for a suggestion. Pausing for a moment, he looked at me, smiled, "Resistance", he suggested. Groan. He has that wonderful knack of hitting the spot that needs to be pushed - even if it hurts. "O.K, O.K", I agreed. After all, I thought, it is definitely a topic I'm familiar with!

What is "resistance"? Why do we do it? How can it be overcome? These are questions that have been part of my personal growth for the last year...or so.

I wrote the first two paragraphs three months ago. The deadline has come...and gone. But at least I am writing again. The universe has an amusing knack of illustrating the themes of my articles with real life experiences (as if I didn't have enough of them already!). So I will answer my own questions using the last few months as my research laboratory.

The dictionary defines "resistance" as the act of withstanding; opposing; struggling against; the quality of not yielding to force. I particularly relate to the "struggling against" part of the definition. But how does this fit in with magical/spiritual development?

Any growth involves change. Change involves pushing against old barriers and beliefs. Just as a seedling must push aside the soil to emerge into the sun, we must push away our old concepts of reality to emerge

into the Light. There are usually layers and layers of beliefs that form the person we think we are. Magick is a method which enables us to dissolve these layers so we can emerge into the light and bloom.

It sounds so beautifully easy.

On the other hand, resistance is what we feel when we attempt to dissolve our beliefs. You push forward - something pushes back. What? The protector of your belief system. The ego. It is where resistance originates. Our ego mistakenly identifies with our beliefs, and makes the further blunder of assuming that it (the ego) is the self. From this perspective, the loss of our beliefs means a loss of self; annihilation of all that we are, or so the ego would lead us to believe. Bear in mind that our ego is not an evil part of us opposing our growth. It is just a frightened, confused, misinformed defense mechanism fighting for survival. Also bear in mind that it is very clever, devious, and is involved in (what it perceives as) a life and death struggle. In other words - it fights dirty.

Knowing this basic structure makes it easier to understand why some things are so difficult to accomplish. Any major change of behavior will be met with resistance. You contemplate quitting smoking. Your ego screams. A piece of you is threatened. Think of it as someone attempting to sever your arm with a chainsaw. EEEYOW! No wonder you immediately feel the urge to light up 'just one more'. Of course this analogy is an oversimplification of the process. But it does help to illustrate what we all feel as we confront change. FEAR.

The noun is "resistance". The verb is "fear". It manifests as a feeling of unease, dissatisfaction, restlessness, anger, sadness, sorrow, grief, impending doom, depression, hunger, sexual frustration, etc., etc. (Add your own feeling here.) You get the picture. Resistance does not feel good. The idea is to get you to stop changing. Stop threatening the life of the ego. Don't rock the boat. Maintain status quo.



Yet, people do change. They stop smoking, lose weight, become successful - dissolve old beliefs. Yes, even you can become the person you truly are! How? One step at a time.

The crucial thing to remember is that your ego is only a small part of the whole YOU. It is only a small alarm system. An early warning that beliefs are being threatened. The real you, the totality of everything you are, is gigantic in comparison. If we were to see the difference in the physical, it would be as ludicrous as an elephant fearing a mouse. Yet elephants do fear mice (or so I'm told) and we listen to our egos. With a little experience, the siren wail of emotions your ego triggers can become an indicator that you are on the right track. Instead of stopping and sitting, stagnant, hoping the pain will go away, you will move forward through the resistance - dissolving the pain and fear. You not only won't die, you will be stronger and one layer closer to the sun.

Well, it sounds great on paper, but how does it work? I will share some things that have helped me. Use these only as a guide. Since everyone is unique, you will develop your own effective techniques.

First I would like to address affirmations. Don't use them. They have been popularized by the New Age movement as a wonderful, miraculous tool to change negative beliefs. Other than being exceedingly boring to do as in: Write the following every day twenty times each—"I, Donna, am a success", "You, Donna, are a success", "She, Donna, is a success." They don't work. Yes, if you do manage to do them regularly you may be able to implant a new belief into your system. Although it is "positive", it is nevertheless a belief. Another layer that will need to be removed to discover the true Self. Affirmations only apply a temporary band-aid - at best. At the least - they further the mucking up of your belief system, increasing the resistance to change. They are not a tool but a hindrance.

Writing affirmations may be useless, but I find journal writing to be a wonderful tool. Yes, journals. They do work. Let me repeat what we all should know: A person on a magickal path or any path, should keep a written record of their thoughts, feelings, events, rituals, etc. Not only is this a method of record keeping and noting progress, but it provides a means to see patterns in behavior. An initiation is approaching - how do you feel? Look back. How did you feel last time? Is it similar or different? Is it a fear based emotion? When did you feel this before? Be an inner detective. Then act on what you discover. Ask yourself questions, answer them, look at the answers. Any "ah-ha's"? Can you take any

action to dissolve the fear or is the recognition of it enough?

I enjoy reading old entries. Often I find patterns when I'm not consciously looking for them. Writing obsessively about the men in my life filled pages of my journals - some went back several years. I thought I wrote about my life. I did, but it seemed every other word was "he". It shocked me to see how I had given over my life to my obsession with men. But there it was plainly written in my own hand. Usually it happened when I needed to take control of my life and act for myself. Getting a job, going to school, etc. Instead I would give my power to the man in my life at the time. I traced this pattern of resistance to my early adolescence. This realization changed my life. I now use my resistance as MY alarm. If I notice too many "he's" in my journal, I know it is time to stop and look at what I am avoiding.

Gentle self-questioning and honesty are the keys to unraveling patterns. Beating yourself up only creates guilt, adds to resistance, and enables the ego to continue to rule your life.

Another method for uncovering hidden resistance is to listen to your inner dialogue. What do you say to yourself? My favorite nickname for myself is "stupid". Not very nice. But it provides a key about how I view myself. Not surprisingly, negative inner dialogue will increase in direct proportion to the degree of growth and change you are engaged in. Another mask for the ego.

Try writing the dialogue down. Or talk to yourself in a mirror. Hear the words, but listen for the emotion behind them. More than likely you will discover fear. You are listening to your ego. Since you know that the ego is chattering to protect itself, you now have the choice to give it power by listening or turn from it and tune in to your Self. It takes practice but you will be rewarded with hearing the calm, clear, still voice. You have taken another step and reclaimed a portion of your true Self.

A word of warning. One of my ego's favorite tricks is to masquerade as my still small inner voice. Listen carefully. Does it speak of fear and negatives? Does it tell you not to do something, to just give up? It's the ego. Tell it to shut up and go away or you'll call the elephant.

Sometimes, despite all your best work, you still become mired, unable to move. Path working triggers all ego's alarms because you are slowly, systematically killing it

(or so it feels). The internal army is called out. You are stuck. The wall is there - you feel it. You are helpless. Life is awful. The universe sucks. Why the hell are you practicing Magick anyway? Life was so much easier before. Sound familiar? The voice of the ego - the sound of resistance.

Unfortunately, when resistance is the worst, when tools are needed the most, is when we want to do nothing. Are you escaping? Avoiding your journal? Skipping your daily practice? Avoiding your teacher? Sleeping? Over eating? Drinking too much? Bitching, complaining, being the VICTIM? We have all been there - shudder - and no one wants to experience it again. It is all a part of growth. But what do you do when you can't do anything?

Fervent praying to the deity of your choice is one option. No - really, I'm serious. Ask for help. You are communicating with your higher self - making a connection. It is surprising what happens when you stop struggling, ask for help and then ACT on what you receive. You still need to respond. This is not giving up. It is going to a greater source of power and receiving a jolt to jar you out of your rut. Tell your elephant to step on the mouse.

Help will appear in the strangest ways. A friend will start telling you about a similar problem and you receive the solution to your own. Your teacher shows up with an open ear. A book is given to you. Slowly the steps are taken and you find yourself on the other side - dancing. Sigh - you made it!

Sometimes more mundane methods are necessary. A good therapist can be of immense value. Especially if you are in a deep depression. This is not admitting defeat. It is the first step in recognizing you are stuck in resistance. This takes courage - as does all spiritual growth. The pay off is definitely worth it.

If you have used alcohol, drugs, or food to stay stuck, join a support group or start one. I know of many Pagan or non-higher power groups available. Finding out you are not alone and listening to others' success stories may be the nudge you need to step through the wall.

Pay attention to your physical body. Is it tense, achy, painful? Treat yourself to a massage. Eat right. Take care of yourself. A sick body enables you to stay stuck.

Movement is the key. If you stop moving, do something, anything, to start moving again. Even if you seem to be going backward - go. Maybe you are only getting

a running start.

Above all, keep doing Magick. Practice your path. It is the work that causes resistance and it will be the work that pushes you through. Discipline in the face of resistance is difficult. Sometimes it seems impossible. This should be a signal to you that the ego is subtly sabotaging your growth. Remember who is boss and get to work!

If you are in a magickal group, temple, or coven, make use of these fellow journeyers. We all have encountered resistance. We all will again. Maybe you could construct a ritual, send energy or just listen. Sometimes, in our darkest periods, we seem hopelessly alone. It is just another trick of the ego to maintain control.

Resistance is not a sign we are doing something wrong. It is a sign we are growing. Just as in weight training, the more resistance we encounter the stronger we become. Magick does seem to make life uncomfortable and painful. Before Magick you never challenged your beliefs. You had no concept of finding your true Self. You listened to the mouse.

My realization that life contains pain and pain is necessary to live and grow came recently. It shocked and infuriated me. I never believed the "no pain, no gain" mentality. I operated from avoidance of pain. If it hurt, run away! Surprisingly (to me at least), my life was miserable. I was stuck with my head buried in the sand. I could not move because I had constructed my life on falsehoods and my ego fought me when I tried to change my beliefs. This caused pain, which I ran from. The vicious circle was broken slowly by asking for help and taking one step at a time. But my greatest revelation was that pain is O.K. It is both an indicator of growth and stagnation. No, life is not constant pain. But pain may be the red flag that indicates something needs to be done. Running away isn't it - trust me.

Is the rest of your life going to be constant pushing through resistance? Well...No. At least not all the time. Going through and coming out the other side is such a feeling of accomplishment. You feel bigger, as though a part of you has been restored. Or you may feel lighter as though you could fly. Life flows smoother. Things - click! - together. Happiness feels like a state of being instead of a state of mind. Life makes sense. Laugh, dance, enjoy!

And in the morning keep repeating, "resistance is my friend, resistance is my friend."

# MESHIKAN

## Part 3: The Abyss

by Norman Jope

Is every star a "thistle in the desert" or a  
blemish on a single flower of blackness?

SUSPENDED DOWNWARDS  
OVER SUN

THE CITY  
WITH ITS CONCRETE PLUMES

- a place of burning carcass cars, of chipboard  
balconies,

of rats and glued-up nostrils, used syringes,  
broken bottles,  
cats' cadavers, 'phones off hooks that dangle,  
smeared with  
excrement; of litter fires, contaminated  
blood, the webbed  
insignias on glass, the condom running  
over in the rain

whose mirrors are

the plate of broiled asparagus, the bottle in  
the bucket,

gleaming cufflinks, anchored yachts, the  
shoes he polished every  
night; the Vodaphone, the Jag with  
padded seats,

the matching mynah birds, a mirror full of  
snow, the long and winding straw-

the mirrors  
that are  
melted  
powdered hammered  
smelted pounded shattered  
pulped dismantled pulverised obliterated  
broken blasted murdered  
chewed dismantled  
and excreted

where the skyline is inverted over voids of  
granite

whose is  
this Acropolis  
but yours?

the city is a  
NOTHING

is cumulus inscribed  
with lightning prongs

and I and you its dust

who became the ashes  
that our absence wears-

as night descends  
the coral catches fire

in the quarters of imbalance

The ghosts of cancelled lives are floating  
here, suspended where no further waste is  
possible. The human dead bequeath their  
flight-logs, played-back tapes that add to the  
Akashic music; gently and precisely caught  
upon the void as moth-flight passages on  
clouds of talc. They are vindicated by our  
lives... as the stone containers of our fear and  
degradation are redeemed by their  
dismemberment. The blocks of every camp,  
of every prison, barracks, torture-house or  
human abattoir are a dust suspended in this  
chasm, fine as ferric oxide and the lessons  
told to tape-heads.

All memory is atomised. The dust-grain  
holograms contain the worlds for which they  
died. The spires of Meshikan reach up...

are scattered in a universe of pollen

are webbed across the planetary surface

wired yet secret

robed yet ready

# ORPHANS MINE

by Greg Moorcroft

Here I gather round me  
the family that is myself  
Goddess-given Powers  
named here, claimed now

## I The Dancer

Root of my body  
suckles the Earth to nourish my spirit  
Scarlet in sinful perception  
Woman worshipper -  
resonant orgasmic celebrant  
Blushed and trembling freak of non-nature  
Whirling in the rhythms of love -  
Skewed on this earthly journey -  
Outcast no more!  
I twirl you animate me

## II The Child

Beautiful laughing innocent  
delights in a fresh world  
from too far outside  
Shivers in wonder of Creation  
abandoned to cruel Chaos  
Playful joyous open-hearted drone  
Naive trust in Earth's goodness -  
how betrayed by chosen parents?  
Player of games of life and love -  
Outcast no more!  
I nurture you open me

## III The Guardian

Concealer of anger! of loneliness!  
fear! self-doubting Creation!

Fireproofs my will - freezes reaction  
Dangerous insular ignorance  
Bringer of numbed shallow breath  
Fear of the pain that shatters  
Masker of the hollow!  
Superficial false detachments -  
programs for defense  
now obsolete, now harmful  
Well-meaning misguided Shadow Master -  
Outcast no more!  
I absolve you empower me

## IV The Lover

Generous volcano expects nothing -  
harsh unrequited needs  
Strong dependable nurturer -  
selfish spoiled brat  
Reaching out for naked contact -  
withdrawn in skeptical guarded despair  
Openly loving, joyously beautiful -  
too lonely vulnerable egocentric burnt  
Creator of life through conscious Love -  
Outcast no more!  
I adore you delight me

## V The Singer

Speaker of Truth  
Resonant power - free human voice  
fears to share his gifts  
Strength of "I am" and "I want"  
fears to be, fears to claim  
Illumines the unnameable yet  
fears to release liberating tears  
Destroyer of secrets  
hides in darkness, in surface breath  
Crafter of words and meaning -  
Storyteller of my life and love -  
Outcast no more!  
I echo you resonate me

## VI The Seer

Transforms in sight  
Present by choice -  
hidden in future past  
Projector of energy, worker of magic  
turns away from Life's needs  
Whose perspective is Creation itself -  
often stuck, egocentric  
in linear here and now  
Genius of light and imagination -  
Outcast no more!  
I reflect you illuminate me

## VII The Knower

Crown of my Being  
imbibes the Cosmos to nourish my body  
Shares wisdom with me -  
too often denies the truth of myself  
Universal love, ego-free -  
cynical self-serving  
Divine strength in present awareness -  
weak in the leer of temptation  
Grateful servant, arrogant skeptical  
dedicant  
Mystic, magician, artist, priest -  
Outcast no more!  
I admire you inspire me

Able in response -  
the Circle closes opening all  
Shadows embraced can explode  
into life-giving Light

# The Psychomagickal Hypothesis:

## A New Look At Magick's Effect On The Psyche, Part I

by Larry Cooper

### THE PSYCHOMAGICKAL THESIS

*Every magickal operation involves a psychomagickal process.* This process involves not only the traditionally accepted stimulating mnemonic effect of energy, symbols, and movements and sound on the higher centers of consciousness but also the stimulation from dormancy of hitherto repressed psychological pain. This pain lies atop the very levels of consciousness magickal operations are designed to stimulate to the surface. Therefore, for a magickal operation to be effective, it must be accompanied by due attention paid to the emotional effect of that operation, be that effect immediately apparent or slowly unfolding over a period of time.

In order to understand this thesis it is necessary to understand the three elements of which it is comprised: the psychological (Part I), the magickal (Part II) and the psychomagickal—the interrelationship between the two (Part III).

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL

Approaching the psychological aspect, it is necessary to understand the following: the nature of Psychological pain, primarily as it is engendered in childhood; the defense mechanism of repression, the automatic and universal response to that pain; and the effect

of repression on our ability to experience life and ourselves with our whole being—involving our connected mind/body.

### The Nature Of Psychological Pain

Psychological pain is caused when basic primal needs go unmet. This begins in childhood. We are born pure, innocent, all-knowing and as little bundles of primal need. We need touching, suckling, security, gentleness and as we grow older, encouragement to know that we are worthy beings. In short—we need love. When these needs go unmet, psychological or emotional pain is the result. This pain is simply the natural result of emotional and physical deprivation. A child needs to be touched. If he/she is, the need is satisfied and the growth of an integrated person capable of experiencing wholly, can continue. If he/she is not touched, the need increases and increases. This continues until the pain of the deprivation is so extreme it threatens the integrity of the organism—it's very life.

### Repression

If this were to happen to a baby or child of any other species, it would most certainly die. Human beings have, however, a glorious defense mechanism mediated by that greatest of all evolutionary structures, the cerebral cortex. We have evolved into a species with a cortex so powerful it can mediate painful stimuli at a level below conscious awareness. The defense mechanism is repression. It is the ability to shunt painful experience away from the conscious mind and into the unconscious mind. This makes it possible for human beings to actually avoid having to experience certain events and truths that are impacting on their lives. It is the dubious but life saving ability to not experience oneself.

This scenario of repression happens, in childhood, whenever a fundamental need goes unmet continuously. The above example deals with the need to be touched. The need

to be secure, that is, to feel not alone is also primary. As children we all need to feel that we are in the company of another human being, a caretaker, that is really there. If we are not being properly loved or if we seem to be, but the parent him/herself is very repressed and not experiencing him or herself, there is really no integral human being there, and the child can sense it. The result is a profound feeling of aloneness which must be repressed lest the child die. Animals in captivity who are not properly cared for by their parents die of emotional/physiological deprivation. They have not the ability to repress the pain, and so react naturally to a reality that makes living untenable—they die.

## The Effect of Repression

So then, repression seems to be the savior of human sanity, and, it would seem, human integrity. But what are the long-term effects of repression on the quality of life? How does repression effect consciousness and our ability to experience ourselves and life? And what role does it play in our quest for our higher selves and the expression of our “Holy Guardian Angel”?

**Definition of Consciousness and Experience:** To answer these questions, we must try to elaborate the nature of consciousness and experience. This is no small task as Man has been arguing about these concepts for centuries. Then we will take up a fuller description of the nature of repression, how it impoverishes life and what the symptoms of that impoverishment are.

A good way to illustrate the nature of consciousness is to consider the nature of a magical skill I have dubbed the “Mediation” of Energy Through the Body. Mediation is the ability to receive, integrate and transmit magical energy, prana or conscious mind stuff (see magical section). It requires and is partially made possible through the skills of concentration and visualization. In a skill level comparison, you could say that mediation is the synthesis of concentration and visualization. But it is also much more. Mediation...is the magick; it is our contact with spirit. In order to mediate energy, the magician must become a conduit for the transmission of that energy. The conduit can be thought of as a symbolic physical representation of consciousness itself; it can be viewed as a tube that connects our mind to our body. Consciousness is a connecting tube.

When that tube is unobstructed, our body and mind have access to one another; we can experience the feeling that accompanies a thought and we can know what we are feeling. This is connected consciousness. A high state of consciousness, in the sense of self awareness, and a minimum

of repressed psychological material renders the conduit clean and clear. How well the magician mediates energy depends on the quality of his conduit; it must be clear of all obstruction and absolutely pure to function properly.

*Consciousness makes experience possible.* An experiential process is one in which our self, our mind/body is open to, or feels the meaning and/or fact of an event that we are a part of or that is a part of us. For this to happen, the conduit that connects our mind and body must be unobstructed. Our mind and body must have access to each other.

*A body feeling the meaning of a thought is experience.* For example, when we are forced to feel the meaning of the thought that “Mom or Dad has just died”, it involves the mind/body experience of sorrow. Without the body component there would be no sorrow. How often is it that upon being told of the death of a parent, a person feels nothing but numbness? In that person, the connecting tube is blocked—experience is blocked.

Feeling the presence and meaning of the energy within oneself is also an experience, one that is of utmost importance to magicians. But if one cannot feel the meaning of a thought, one cannot feel the presence and meaning of energy; only a system that can experience itself can experience the world. The ability to experience one’s self must be present and that ability is the felt interconnection of mind and body.

The foundation, then, for experience, is simply consciousness, the connection between brain and body. This is the true nature and basis of experience. When we can accomplish this within ourselves, we can experience the external universe.

The debate over the philosophical question of “Mind/Body” goes on and on. The question is usually put this way: Is the mind (soul) a separate phenomena from the physical brain or is the mind simply the brain. In the following paragraphs, I put forth a way of thinking about Mind and Body which is more in keeping with the current revelations of Quantum Physics and which adds new insights to the nature of experience.

Most thinkers after Descartes have chosen to locate consciousness in the brain. Descartes declared that the brain and mind (consciousness) were related but separate phenomena. Three hundred years later Gilbert Ryle in his “Ghost in the Machine” pointed out the inadequacies of Descartes’ position. Ryle doubted the value of speculating about an “incorporeal soul” (here taken to mean the mind),

and declared, that instead, we should consider the mind as simply the brain. In this one statement Ryle disposed of Descartes' distinction and began an era of confusion about mind and brain from which, even now, we are barely emerging.

Where Descartes went wrong and where other thinkers go wrong is in their conception of the meaning of the word *body* when comparing it to *mind* (or consciousness). Descartes' conception was that the mind involved a qualitatively different process from the body. (Here, the word *body* may be taken to mean the physical brain alone.) And this is the problem. What happens if we expand the use of the word *body* to encompass the rest of the soma (physical body)? We can define the brain part of the body as the "Brain-Body"; the somatic part of the body as the "Soma-Body"; and the sum of the two, as the "Whole-Body".

With these expanded uses of the word *body*, we can now define consciousness or *Mind*, as distinct from *Brain*, as the interaction between the "Brain-Body" and the "Soma-Body". It is the connection between the two. We are back to consciousness as a connecting tube between brain and body, a conduit for the transmission of information. This information can be personal or transpersonal. The easy transmission (resulting from connection) of personal information results in self awareness and an ability to be very experiential. It also makes it possible to feel the meaning of a thought and to know what one is feeling. The transmission of transpersonal information such as prana or specific macrocosmic energies result in the accomplishment of healing and magick.

Mind or Consciousness is thus defined in a new way, satisfying Descartes' idea that the brain and consciousness are separate phenomena, but still only using the concept of body—without recourse to an "incorporeal soul", which should satisfy Gilbert Ryle.

So, we agree with Descartes that mind is a different process from body (brain alone); it is body ("Brain-Body") interacting with body ("Soma-Body"). Since the two bodies taken together equal the "Whole-Body", it can be said that mind is body—wave is particle—body is mind.

This conclusion is also shared by sections of the medical community. Research into the immune system has led to the discovery of certain nerve fibers that enervate cells of the immune system. Certain medical researchers have concluded from this that the brain and body are connected in ways never before suspected. They are saying that mind is body. It is believed that these "brain-body"—"soma-body" connections help explain how certain emotions and feelings

can have an effect on the body and particularly the specialized cells of the immune system.

And isn't this where quantum theory is taking us, reducing all dualities to unities and all unities to dualities? Particles are waves, waves are particles; mind is body, body is mind.

I have said that for the easy transmission of information to take place the conduit of consciousness must be unobstructed. For most of us, of the human race, however, the conduit is obstructed. It is obstructed with the blocks of repression, the process of inhibiting painful emotional experience. These blocks may be thought of as quanta of neurological repression. They function to inhibit painful experience in the only way they can—by severing portions of the connected interaction between "Brain-Body" and "Soma-Body". But here's the rub: when you sever the connection, even partially, you diminish consciousness.

**Fuller Description of Repression and its Effects on Consciousness:** We are now ready to answer the questions asked before as to the effect of repression on consciousness, experience and the attainment of our higher selves. Simply put, repressed pain clogs the conduit of consciousness. Since this conduit is responsible for experience, repressed pain clogs experience. This happens because of the nature of repression: to repress a pain, to extend the metaphor, means to render part of the conduit of consciousness non-conductive, i.e., for a person to become non-experiential of that particular pain.

Repression does this by inserting obstacles into the fluid connection between mind and body. The insertion of obstacles is, of course, a metaphor for a systemic process which is initiated when the brain shunts a painful thought from consciousness to unconsciousness. The agent of repression is the brain, but the object of repression is the mind-body connection. In other words, repression subverts the mind-body connection. And the result of repression is an experience of consciousness in which into the tube goes only the sensation of the soma-body but not the thought of the brain-body, or the thought of the brain-body but not the sensation of the soma-body. The former is experienced as a disconnected feeling as when we get anxious or uneasy and do not know why; the latter is experienced as a disconnected thought as when we think about something sad but do not feel sad.

For every shunted thought (caused by pain) there is a quanta of repression. This is the obstacle; it is the presence of a disconnected thought or disconnected sensation reverberating forever around the mind/body system. In a

sense the obstacle is an anti-obstacle: it is not something present, it is something absent (the thought part or sensation part of a feeling). In other words, the shunting of painful thoughts from consciousness to unconsciousness, by itself, does not define repression. This is because consciousness is not a place, it's a process. And while the shunting of painful thoughts from one place to another does occur, it is the effect of that shunting on the mind/body conduit—the insertion of the obstacle—that really defines repression. This makes avoiding the experiencing (feeling) of painful stimuli (sorrow, aloneness, etc.) possible.

Imagine this process of repression happening over and over again as indeed it does in childhood. Each instance is an insertion of another obstacle into the fabric of consciousness. Soon there is so much pain and so many obstacles the conduit is almost totally blocked. We don't feel our store of pain, but it is there just the same. It inhibits our ability to experience even non-painful stimuli like joy and love. This is because Mother Nature throws the baby out with the bath water; it is not possible to give up our ability to feel pain and retain our ability to feel joy.

Our cortex goes to work very early (probably at birth or before) repressing painful material; it not only disconnects us from painful stimuli but from a self that feels pain, and by extrapolation, a self that feels. This must happen because to feel anything we must first feel what there is to feel, what one has to feel that one has not been feeling—what is on top. This is not unlike the computer principle of FIFO (First In First Out) in which the data input first must be output first. If you are open to feeling anything (joy), you are open to feeling everything, and you must feel your pain first. That is what came first. This is why the cortex splits us from the self that feels; one feeling is all feelings. To insure that we do not feel our pain we must be defended against feeling everything.

**The Impoverishment of Experience Caused by Repression:** Since repression profoundly diminishes fluid consciousness and impoverishes our ability to experience ourselves, life is lived far less fully than it could be.

Repression causes us to lose our ability to experience our fire and our connection to Nature. All of us are cosmically connected to one-another and to Nature by virtue of the oneness of all things. We become aware of this connection when we experience it as part of ourselves. But we have lost the ability to have such an experience, and so, experience life in isolation as isolation; thus ourselves, continuing the legacy bequeathed to us by our parents—aloneness.

While the overwhelming evidence, both psychological

and scientific, points to the oneness of nature, we, who are the reflective microcosm of nature, feel so despairingly separate and alone. These feelings reflect an inner reality that is drastically different from the nature of the reality we ascribe to the universe—to the universe we ascribe oneness while accepting isolation for ourselves.

Why such a disparity? Why do we not experience our connection to life and to each other? Because we do not experience our connection to ourselves. Repression has made this so. When we hurt, we are unaware of it, and when joy is present we do not let ourselves experience it, lest, by virtue of its contrast to what we are used to (sorrow), it triggers that very sorrow. We do not feel. We are disconnected from ourselves, no longer even able to make an instinctual decision, like to fight or take flight, without thinking about it.

We have lost our spontaneity, no longer responding to feelings—affective and somatic cues from within. We no longer experience a feeling, have an inner knowing and respond accordingly as one connected process. We spend our lives in a somnambulistic trance, reacting mostly to external cues. We respond to what people in high or low places tell us we should respond to; or we have internal reactions and fool ourselves into thinking that those reactions are feelings.

Some of these internal reactions and the real feelings they symbolize are as follows: guilt (fear of loss of love), jealousy (feelings of unworthiness), race hatred (generalized displaced anger and bitterness about never being good enough to be loved—this, a feeling, not a reality), and category hatred (specific displaced anger and hatred toward a symbol—policeman, teacher, etc.—of some primary person in our lives, like mother or father). These are all reactions not feelings; they are precipitants of old sorrow and pain that has been buried for a long time but forever pushes for expression.

These have been a few examples of the experientially crippling effects repression has on our lives. Repression causes us to give ourselves up. Our system sacrifices its integrity to our defenses in order to protect us from what lies below. The price is emotional death.

Whether we know it or not, most of us live in this kind of impoverishment to one degree or another.

*This concludes Part I of this article. It will be continued in the next issue of Mezlim.*



# LETTERS

my very dear friends,

i thank you for the sample issue you forwarded—and have many comments on articles therein [Ed. note: Mezzim, Vol. V, iss. 3, *The Magickal Arts of Healing*]. i must first however note some curiosity with regards to your editorial policy: my sole and only disagreement with it would be the decision of androgyny, for reasons well expounded on by such Lesbian feminist Witches as Sonia Johnson and Mary Daly. The concept does not eliminate gender bias, but enshrines it in pretending to merge, yet ever dividing, gender formations.

i would stress “integrity” replacing androgyny, which calls attention to the division instead of stressing the similarities as it allegedly purports to do. The concept of “integrity” representing an innate wholeness which contradicts complementary gender theory (which is heterosexist) was described by Lesbian ethicist Professor Janice G. Raymond in Her book, *A Passion for Friends*.

The concept of androgyny may well have seemed once in the Spirit of the deity Hermaphrodite, but the concept of integrity trains the mind far better to realise androgyny's professed goals of an end to gender bias while far better calling attention to the means—the Logos or Will symbolised by the Rainbow Wand—and may far better show Hermaphrodite's promise of moving between and beyond the Worlds of engenderment and biological or spiritual essentialism. The concept of androgyny has very well been twisted into what Andrea Dworkin or John Stoltenberg, who previously saluted its conceptualisation, would easily recognise as being on hetero-relational terrain.

Beyond that minor semantic squabble (of potentially severe politico-magickal ramifications), i found your journal to be quite fascinating and must comment on some articles therein. i salute your health plan editorial and would encourage your readers to work magick and lobby for the passage of a plan that preserves our rights to continued alternative health care. One minor quarrel with Annette Hinshaw's article—what all magick really depends on is a system of beliefs or the suspension of disbelief. Magick works when we will it to, with such maps only necessary for the purpose of facilitating visualisation.

We must forever remember that any such map is not a genuine portrait of Realities, which may not be mapped, but a means of illustrating one facet of a Reality, by suspending all other considerations. Since Realities consist of the stuff of beliefs, our daily practice Re-Creates the Reality we think we live in. i make this point for politico-magickal intent: Realities are malleable. We must forever remember that what our maps must correlate and integrate with is not consensus reality, but rather the sensual perception of our medium as derived from input of more than thirty (hardly six or less) human senses as individuals.

Ms. Hinshaw may very well have said as much HerSelf, but i felt it necessary to filter Her Words through my mind—since, in order to make any new system of magick work for me, my personal and political intervention in the text is required, so that i may correspond with it in a dialectical fashion. i shall have to write Her to continue this discussion, since the planet is at stake.

Re: the column by Jaq Hawkins, i have much to say. First, it is my humble opinion that whosoever may have the terminal or chronic condition has far more power to heal His or HerSelf than any consulting Witch. Perhaps one reason Mr. Hawkins has neither seen nor heard of many Witches attempting to heal such an illness has more to do with

the fact that minds can only be changed when those minds opt finally to let themselves be changed.

Consider, for instance, that cancer theoretically should not exist. It is always the subject who causes the disease to finally remit. It is not that Witches underestimate their very own powers, so much as that the subject underestimates his or her power. We know very well intuitively that we can beat a cold, and so when a healing spell transmits its energies, our minds permit its healing to work. It is far more difficult to counter the psychological impact of prognostications of death by medical “authorities”, which tend to be self-fulfilling when the subject unfortunately believes them. If only they read Donald Michael Kraig...

With absolutely no mention of the gay community, Kenneth Deigh has brilliantly noted why so many Bisexual and Gay men have become attracted to shamanism. i must say, however, that this is one time that i wish gender had been interjected into the discussion. Any readers interested in shamanism need to know that shamanism works because it blurs every distinction, eliminating division. “Integration” is the key word, reflecting my previous comments on the question of the politico-magickal ramifications of Mercury's caduceus and the concept of androgyny.

The column by Lisa Peschel, however, was by far the most challenging. It seems to me that those Witches who did not want Lisa to heal are probably the sort who want nobody to hex. The reason a Witch who can't hex can't heal is obvious—they swallow deterministic (and therefore fraudulent) ideas about karma. We must remember that our present day notions re: karma were born in a patriarchal Hindu world replacing the previously matrifocal, and were twisted from previous “right on” ideas in order to formulate an apology for the political order.

To heal is to hex and to hex is to heal. There does not exist any difference. We Witches cause no harm to the rapist when we bind him. On the contrary, we heal him—and, yes, it is without his permission. He would not give his permission. However, we do not need his permission anymore than we need permission to heal any loved one in a coma. Those who cry most for help cannot articulate that demand. We Witches set out to heal our Mother, the planet Earth—but did our Mother once articulate any desire whatsoever to be healed? i have always thought that “Wicca 101” classes were really designed to push one set of dogma down a student’s throat, anyway.

To move on from this topic, permit me to conclude by noting that dogmatism results in ossification, that intuition is our primary guide, and that—as the late Crone Audre Lorde argued in Her poem “Power”—“the difference between rhetoric and poetry is killing yourself instead of your children”. If karma truly does exist, then i will accept its load in saving lives from man-made disease and violence. Indeed, every healing should theoretically result in “bad” karma—since every pathogen and cancerous cell, like each and every single quark and lepton, is a sentient child of the Goddess—we have to hex in order to heal. If anyone refuses to believe bad karma results from killing germs, check out all the super bugs that antibiotics have created which plague us today.

Dexter Magnus Edmonds was a joy to read—as he reminded me so much of the liberation theologians i read, and still admire today. That i am a Witch and reject my previous Christianity changes not the fact that it was the Rev. Frei Berto’s conceptualisation of the Christ as immanence that ultimately led me to Wicca, where we see the Goddess as immanence. Edmonds is absolutely right that all who do magick are healers—excluding only such unprincipled magickians as Adolf Hitler.

The Taoist in me must agree with Edmonds’ argument that we do not “do” healing. “Tao does not do; but nothing is not done.” When dealing with energies it is almost always best to let them Be, to let them flow, so they may “do” their work in accordance with Natural Law. Edmonds deserves special credit for noting that passage from the Bible (which is a Book of Shadows) which demonstrates how the transformation of Realities requires the faith of a critical mass. It pleases me that he notes the many dialectical relationships.

i’m saddened that Jennifer Toone had such an awful time with the worst among us in college. i think she would find a much better crowd at the Pagan Student Association of UMass at Amherst—but i personally have never once associated with them all throughout my stay there.

Even at UMass, i will admit, i have heard discussion of “psychic attack” and the lot—but i know this, no “vampire” has ever tried to feed off me, no manipulator has tried to brain blast me, no sociopath has tried to curse me. These students all mentioned, it should be noted, are hardly representative of the college pagan community, nor can they harm anyone who does not give them authority to do so. Furthermore, Paganism can indeed lend itself to large groups—witness the Druids. As for what we can do to prevent all of these abuses—come out of the broom closet and Be!

Julian Vayne’s article was especially fun—and, while i must admit that i have not seen colors in text, auras, or music since my less disciplined LSD days, i must agree with Julian’s color correspondences. My studies of Thelemic texts have finally begun to renew my capacity for such Vision, in dreams. We should not, however, generalise about the music. Adventures in psychometry have revealed to me that the colors in sound may be less produced by the genre than the performers own psyche. From Pink

Floyd, for instance, i used to see rainbows—reflecting the contribution of several artists integrating jazz, heavy metal, folk, the blues and even classical music. Listen to the lyrics—they too have colors and even have flavors as well. i have always enjoyed the many flavors of jazz and “psychedelic” rock. Text reveals much the same. Read Pure Lust by Mary Daly—colors shift back and forth between the pages like bolts of electricity, neon bright!

Rebecca Hart echoed several sentiments that i, Being a Word Witch and deconstructionist, simply get a thrill from. However, for my part, i find the dissemination of information of utmost importance. Secrecy has little value for this Public Pagan and out of the closet Queer. My belief is that the survival of the biosphere requires far more people learning how to shift paradigms. Of course, her Book of Shadows is not mine, and my faith is far more politicised—out of necessity—due to my status as a person oppressed in hetero-reality.

Forgive me the length of this letter. It was really meant as a letter to you, so that you may know my failure to subscribe in no way reflects on your magazine—as i find it incredibly wonderful. Thank you for Being and Goddess Bless all of you. Blessed Be!

Sincerely,  
Owen Broadhurst

Dear Owen,

Thank you for your in-depth response. Your feedback is much appreciated. It’s good to see that there are readers who pay attention and have their own views.

There is, however, one point you made that I feel the need to respond to.

While I understand that we live

in a world that politicises language, I do not see that this justifies the etymological contortions that have become so popular and politically correct. Words are meant to convey the meaning inherent in their structure.

A case in point: The word *androgyny*. This is a perfectly reasonable word, conveying a meaning inherent in its linguistic roots: The union of qualities attributed to male/andro and female/gyno human beings. While the word *integrity* is a perfectly fine word, it conveys none of this specific content, being a much more general term.

Furthermore, I do not understand how you feel that a word which expresses a union of two sexes within a single body can be said to exist on "hetero-relational terrain."

Personally, I do not believe the word contains any pretense - one way or the other. It very simply expresses a state of being, through reference to Hermaphrodite; a deified concept which in turn certainly expressed a union of the apparent duality of the sexes.

In any case, it seems that, while our use of language may differ, our basic agendas are quite similar.

Blessings and salutations,  
Kenneth Deigh

P.S. Our theme for Beltane '95 is Sexual Orientation in the Magickal Community. I hope to see you there.

To the Editor:

...ON FAD PAGANS

This problem is much more wide spread than I believe is given credit. It is not confined to only Paganism, but is rampant in all faiths. These people you speak of can slip into the groups in question, and some are only recognized by the more experienced members.

These Fad Pagans are like school children who can memorize lessons but fail to grasp the concepts, even though they have passed the tests. I see no easy answers for Paganism, especially because we are so disorganized, with so many varied traditions.

My fear is that, if we all came together and created rules, it would not be long until the lovely culture(s) we call Paganism became an elitist society inflated with its own importance. Our religion(s) would begin to imitate those we so despise.

True Pagans do not recruit from unsuspecting passersby; we do not witness at people like Christians. It is not our place to fill a Quota. Like attracts like; those who really hear the old music will find their way eventually. The rest will get bored, join The 700 Club and write a book about their experience in a so-called sex cult or something.

If a person is doing something wrong, unlawful, or dangerous which they say they are doing in the name of Paganism and you know of it, it is up to you to stop it or report it, or even to warn innocents involved.

We do not destroy the environment or people to pursue magic; the environment is the magic and so are the people. If you can teach that, then maybe we have a chance. Otherwise we may have to go underground again and witness another of the Burning Times.

Take no prisoners,  
Stephanie

To the Editors:

After reading Jennifer Toone's article "The Fad of Paganism" in your Lughnasadh issue, I felt compelled to write and share a few of my thoughts. Let me say first that I agree with Ms. Toone's observations, but I think she is being too

hard on the college community. To be fair, I think it is worth noting that all these negative "types" of pseudo-Pagans or Pagan Wannabes are just as common, if not more so, OUTSIDE of the college community.


Her article basically accuses college students of being misfits, outcasts whose only desire is to become powerful and/or shock their parents. To read her article, it would seem unlikely that these students have minds of their own—they are totally led about by more "powerful" peers, and the idea that they have to fart in the face of society at large because they are in college and that is expected of them. It has not been my experience that college students are quite that brainless.

The comment was also made that "Paganism has become the favorite personal definition for many people who are in no way called to the Pagan path." I find it a bit distasteful that Ms. Toone has taken it upon herself to judge whether these Pagans she knew in college were truly "called" to the path.

If a person picks up a book and begins to learn Japanese, they may well be enthusiastic, and they may well be confused. They may even attempt to speak the language before they are ready and embarrass themselves by using incorrect grammar when speaking to a Japanese person. But one would never say that because of their embarrassing faux pas that they are not "called" to speak Japanese. They just have to read and practice more. Now I am fully aware that Japanese is a language and Wicca is a faith, but I still feel the analogy fits.


During my 18+ years of studying Wicca and magick, I have met an incredible number of people who are just as Ms. Toone describes in her article. Social outcasts who think Wicca will give them an identity, people who believe that they can become great wizards (whenever a guy tells me he is a "warlock", I run away screaming), "users"  
— cont. on page 49

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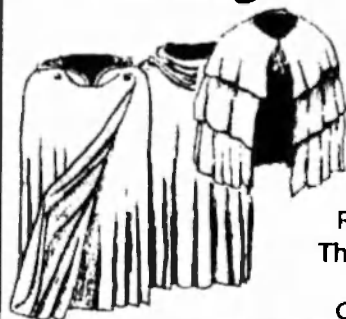
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– cont. from page 47

who use the teachings of Wicca for emotional or financial gain, control freaks, etc. Most of these were NOT college students.

Rather than simply casting aspersions on these types of people, let's instead look at what aspects of Wicca (both as it is practiced and in its literature) FOSTER these skewed visions of what the path is really about. Here we have no one to blame but ourselves (speaking naturally in a very broad sense). We have Pagan authority figures taking public names like "Paul Dragonrider" and wearing the most outrageous clothing on talk shows. We have people writing books on the "dangers of psychic attack". We have a faith which, by its very nature, is constantly changing and evolving; a faith in which it is considered perfectly acceptable to "create your own tradition." What are searching young minds SUPPOSED to think about us?

Many people, especially younger ones, get their first ideas about magick from Dungeons & Dragons and Fantasy novels. Their enjoyment and enthusiasm for these forms of entertainment often lead to a search for REAL magickal knowledge, and that leads them to Wicca.

Problem is, they bring with them inappropriate terminology and baggage from these fantasy creations, and that colours and distorts their understanding of magick, not to mention reality. They feel that because they were an 8th level "magic user" in D&D, then they bring these "8th level" abilities to their Wiccan practice. Of course we know that this is not true, but they don't; and what is lacking is an experienced personal teacher to help them separate what is real from what is not.

Ms. Toone mentioned the Mercedes Lackey books. Back when I was a "Neophyte", it was the Marion Zimmer Bradley Darkover novels that

prompted her readers to form their own groups based on the Free Amazons and so forth.

Having said this, I want to tempt the Wrath of All by saying "Yeah, so what's the big deal?" Neophyte Pagans, actually PROTO-Neophytes, often go through stages such as Ms. Toone described: claiming powers they don't really have, trying to "teach" others, being all belligerent towards more mainstream faiths, and so forth. Does this mean that they are total idiots and are not "called" to the Pagan path for real? I don't think so. Most of us (however loathe we may be to admit it) have passed through immature stages in our journey on the Path. We got through it OK, and they will too.

It takes people, whether student or adult, a long time to find good books, or better yet, a real Teacher. This time in their lives is sort of a "trial by fire." Sure, they may run into pompous control freaks or a priest or priestess who tries to get them into the sack, but these contacts are important because, if they make it through unscathed (or else injured but wiser), they have had a valuable object lesson in what Paganism is NOT. And the ones that DO come through this trial by fire are the very ones who ARE "called" to the Path. They have to be, else why would they continue to seek the truth in the face of such ridiculous posturing?

It is true, as Ms. Toone mentions, that Wicca and other Pagan paths are not "proselytizing faiths." However, one can understand the enthusiasm of young people who have just been introduced to a faith that apparently sets no limits on what they can do and become. Of course they are going to want to turn others on to what has made them so happy!

Ms. Toone is young, and I am an experienced 32 year old. I would like to tell her that this trend she writes about is not "new," nor is it something to be feared. It has been going on ever since

Paganism was introduced to this country by Ray Buckland in the early Sixties, and it will still be going on when she is a grey-haired Crone. If this path was easy, it would hardly be worth it. If we didn't meet with obstacles along the way, how would we learn what is proper and what is not? If we didn't meet people who we disagreed with so absolutely, then we would never have a framework to build our own ideas and beliefs on. If we never made mistakes, how would we grow?

I don't think the people and situations Ms. Toone mentions should be considered as a threat to the Pagan path as a whole, nor do I believe that they should be considered an "abuse." These are strong words, spoken by a young woman who loves her Path, and is concerned for its followers, or potential followers, and that is commendable. Her article performed a valuable service, even though I seem to disagree with her at every turn.

What is required here to deal with this type of abuse of power and distortion of the facts is NOT a blanket condemnation of people who may be merely enthusiastic, young or misguided. What is required is for MORE authors and other Pagan folk to speak of the abuses of power that CAN occur in a path such as ours, and write and speak more about what to look out for, and how to avoid the very pitfalls Ms. Toone discusses.

Unfortunately, there are a few Pagan pundits who do not wish information of this type to be put forth to the public. They feel that if we admit that there are covens and leaders out there who DO use sex as a form of magickal coercion, that some covens DO use drugs, that some Pagans ARE control freaks, that some covens DO engage in group sexual practices, then we will "give Paganism a bad name."

I had a very well-respected Pagan author once tell me that I should not mention (in the context of what to

AVOID, mind you) covens who use drugs because he had heard another very well-known Pagan say that the DEA was spying on the Pagan community to see if we were involved in organized drug dealing and abuse. Never mind that the DEA's assumption was absurd and utterly unfounded—it was still better NOT to mention drugs “for the good of the path”.

I am sorry, but I disagree. My duty is not to dance around the DEA and be politically correct; my duty is to tell potential Pagans about situations they may not be comfortable with, and to encourage them to do a thorough search before committing to a particular coven.

Until more books and magazines tackle the darker side of our Pagan path, then more and more people, young and old, are at risk of being taken in by people who would abuse the very power we hold so sacred. For this very reason, I commend Ms. Toone's article. It is important to bring tales of improper Pagan behavior to the public, but it is NOT necessary to stereotype college students in the way she did. I have known dozens of “collegiate Pagans,” and most were thoughtful and sincere. Paganism is a strong, ethical religious path, and it will take more than the wrong actions of those people she mentioned to put a chink in its armor.

Yours in the Light,  
Lisa Peschel

Dear N'Chi,

I wanted to write to express my excitement over discovering your magazine, and my even greater excitement over finding that it is based in Cincinnati. I have found the articles to be very relevant and I enjoy the diversity of the authors.

I have been learning the art of ceremonial magic via correspondence and would like to become involved in the local magickal community. Any information you could provide on local groups or other ways to get involved would be greatly appreciated.

Congratulations on an excellent publication and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Sontag  
Obsignator

---

Greetings to all of the folk of  
MEZLIM:

My pagan name is Deianera. I'm not Wiccan; my faith is based upon the ancient ways of both sides of my family, which are Scottish and Japanese. As far apart as both cultures seem, spiritually they can have a lot in common.

I was introduced to your

publication by my good friend, Darien Hamilton. I am a recent transplant to Ohio, having previously lived in California. There is nothing in California that compares with your magazine.

I am especially grateful to J. Toone, author of “The Fad of Paganism” in your Lughnasadh '94 Issue. Haven't most of us witnessed the spiritual mockeries she tells of in her article? The sad tales she has to tell are the main reason that, by necessity, I have been solitary most of my magical life. California, especially, can seem like a huge dirt magnet for spiritually abusive people—heavy on the kind who are after your money.

I hope to add a little advice on the article's subject matter, in response to its last paragraph: Please, all of you, refuse, once you know of it, to cover up anybody's spiritual abuse. If warnings are given concerning dangerous pagans, don't ignore it—substantiate and, if you can, publish the information and warn others. If we can't expose troublemakers and protect our own, who can, in truth, or will? We must be responsible for ourselves, lest all of the rantings against us from other faiths seem, on the outside, deserved. We have a long way to go before we gain full acceptance in the mundane world, and being able to clean our own house is the best way to start.

Thank You and Blessed Be,  
Deianera

## Writer's Guidelines

Are you interested in writing for Mezlim? We are seeking submissions of articles, artwork and photography in a Magickal vein. See page 52 for upcoming issue themes.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 4500 words, or more. All submissions should be typed, black ink on white paper. **Please enclose a cover letter which includes your contact information and the name under which you wish to be published.** We request that we be informed if your submission has been printed previously in another magazine, or if it is being simultaneously submitted to any other publisher. Submissions on 3.5" Macintosh compatible diskettes are GREATLY appreciated. Please use text file format.

# REVIEWS

## **This Winter's Night**

by MotherTongue

\$10.00 cassette; \$15.00 CD

EarthSpirit

P.O. Box 365

Medford, MA 02155

reviewed by Donna Stanford-Blake

If Samhain is here, can Yule be far behind? Although the latest release (due in stores by mid-October) from MotherTongue is not specifically a holiday offering, the atmosphere evoked is decidedly Yule-like.

From the first song, *Carol of the Bells*, a pagan version of one of my favorite Christmas carols, MotherTongue crafts an exciting, masterful collection of wintry music. I could very easily go through the whole work, song by song, but it should be sampled to appreciate the full scope of the music offered.

Original music, such as Charlie Murphy's *Light is Returning*, to old French, Gaelic, and English inspired tunes combine in a way that accurately reflects the spirit of modern paganism. Brilliant solos by Sarah Stockwell Arthen, Deidre Pulgram Arthen, Phaedrus and Geneva ni Seobhan add sparkle to Colin Rowntree-Ashleigh's masterful arrangements.

Of special note is *The First Song*, a piece spoken over magical background music - written and performed by Andras Corban Arthen, a wonderful explanation of the first Yule. I can see this becoming part of my family holiday tradition.

*This Winter's Night* further illustrates MotherTongue's ability to give voice to the spirit of the Pagan community. A beautiful selection for the holidays and all winter long.

## **Tao Te Ching: A New English Version**

by Stephen Mitchell

\$15.00 hardcover

Harper CollinsPublishers

reviewed by Grendle

My response to having just prowled through my new copy of the *Tao Te Ching* is simply: Finally! A plain language version of one of the most important books of all time!

While I have nothing against reading classics in their original form, the *Tao Te Ching* is more than a classic, and it deserves to be clearly grasped in all its powerful simplicity.

Mitchell's translation successfully negotiates the long trek from Lao-Tzu and sixth century B.C.E. China, to modern western culture. One clear sign of this is that, when speaking of the master in the text, the pronoun is as often female as it is male. While there is no gender distinction offered in the original Chinese text, it is interesting that this is the first english version (of which I am aware) which expresses mastery in terms of both sexes, rather than the traditional male only.

While the wisdom of Lao-Tzu's words is quite enough in itself, there is also a section of notes in the back, where the different chapters are discussed and elaborated upon. Even this discourse is handled in a relaxed and informal fashion.

Finally, I offer this quote from the book:

"When they lose their sense of awe,  
people turn to religion.  
When they no longer trust themselves,  
they begin to depend upon authority.

Therefore the Master steps back  
so that people won't be confused.  
He teaches without teaching,  
so that people will have nothing to learn."

What more is there to say?

# IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **MEZLIM**

## *Sacred Dance: Magickal Movement for All*

Have you ever moved to the sound of drums, the voice of crickets, the moon or the sacred rhythms of your own body? There is an old saying: "If you can speak, you can sing. If you can walk, you can dance." This is especially true in our community of Priest/esses and god/desses. We are all in this dance together. Please share with us your thoughts, experiences, rituals and memories of how we can use movement in sacred ways.

We are currently seeking submissions of articles, artwork, photography, poetry and prose on this topic. For more information, see Writer's Guidelines on page 50.

Deadline for submissions: **December 1, 1994.**

The theme for the Beltane 1995 issue will be:  
*Sexual Orientation in the Magickal Community* Deadline: **March 1, 1995.**

## **MEZLIM** BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

### Mezla Vol. V, No. 1 Samhain '89

\$4. "The Transitional Issue" Articles by: R. A. Gilbert; Laurali; & Louis Maronie.

### Mezlim Vol. I, No. 1 Candlemas '90

\$4. Articles by: Bill Siebert; Don Kraig; Sam Webster; Fra. PVN; Gary Hoke; & R. A. Gilbert.

### Mezlim Vol. I, No. 2 Beltane '90

\$4. Spell of R.H. Khuit & other rituals. Articles by: Peter Carroll; Don Kraig; & Fra. PVN.

### Mezlim Vol. I, No. 3 Lammas '90

\$6. Opening of Temple Enoch; Interview w/ Rob't Anton Wilson. Articles by: Don Michael Kraig; Antero Alli; Dennis Murphy; & A.I.W.A.F.

### Mezlim Vol. I, No. 4 Samhain '90

\$6. Sex & Magick Issue. Articles by: Fra. Belarion, D. M. Kraig; Antero Alli; Bill Siebert; Zara; & more.

### Mezlim Vol. I, No. 5 Candlemas '91

\$6. "The State of Magick Today" Articles by: Diane Tabor; Sam Webster; A.I.W.A.F. & more.

### Mezlim Vol. II, No. 1 Beltane '91

\$6. Articles by: D. M. Kraig; Purusas 252; Laura Jennings-Yorke; Antero Alli & more.

### Mezlim Vol. II, No. 2 Lammas '91

\$6. Articles by: D. M. Kraig; Esmereida Drake; Jaq. D. Hawkins; Tara Webster; D. Rose Hartmann; Sam Webster; Ian Corrigan; & more.

### Mezlim Vol. II, No. 3 Samhain '91

\$6. "The Student/Teacher" Articles by: D. M. Kraig; Sam Webster; Niki Bado; Antero Alli; Otter; Sabra & more.

### Mezlim Vol. III, No. 1 Candlemas '92

\$6. "Magickal Body Art" Articles by: B. Barak; Antero Alli; Crow; Tath Zal; Sabra & more.

### Mezlim Vol. III, No. 2 Beltane '92

\$6. "Pagan Gatherings" Articles by: Ranger Rick; Richard Keenan, PhD.; J. P. Damarru & more.

### Mezlim Vol. III, No. 3 Lammas '92

\$6. "Sacred Prostitute" Articles by: D. Rose Hartmann; Jaq D. Hawkins; KIA; Donna Stanford-Blake & Louis Martinie.

### Mezlim Vol. III, No. 4 Samhain '92

\$6. "Death & Transformation" Articles by: Oz; Sabra; R. Greywalker; E. E. Rehmus; Mishlen; & Cynthia Entzel.

### Mezlim Vol. IV, No. 1 Candlemas '93

\$6. "Initiation" Articles by: Phaedron; Sabra; Chic & Tabbi Cicero; Richard Kaczynski; & Jacob Rabinowitz.

### Mezlim Vol. IV, No. 2 Beltane '93

\$6. "Priest & Priestess" Articles by: Sam Webster; Nema; Sabra; KIA; Richard Kaczynski; & Jacob Rabinowitz.

### Mezlim Vol. IV, No. 3 Lughnasadh '93

\$6. "Relationships" Articles by: J. Perry Damarru, Tath Zal, Maeve, KIA, Paul Joseph Rovelli, Donna Stanford-Blake & Chic Cicero.

### Mezlim Vol. IV, No. 4 Samhain '93

\$6. "Folk Magick" Articles by: Nikki Bado, Maeve, Sabra, Mark Stavish, M.A., Mishlen, Donald Michael Kraig & Julian Vayne.

### Mezlim Vol. V, No. 1 Imbolc '94

\$6. "Bridging the Gap Between the Magickal and the Mundane" Articles by: Donald Michael Kraig, Mark Stavish, Tath Zal, Antero Alli & Julian Vayne.

### Mezlim Vol. V, No. 2 Beltane '94

\$5.95. "Sacrament Use and Abuse in the Magickal Community" Articles by: Donald Michael Kraig, Sam Webster & Bekki Shining Bearheart.

### Mezlim Vol. V, No. 3 Lughnasadh '94

\$5.95. "The Magickal Arts of Healing" Articles by: Donald Michael Kraig, Annette Hinshaw, Julian Vayne & Antero Alli.

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**NEW MOON RISING** - Bi-monthly magazine of magick, wicca and related fields, complete with mail order catalog centerfold. Good selection of articles, editorials and letters. Lots of material tied to the wheel of the year. \$3.50 per issue or \$14 for 1 year from Mystic Moon, 8818 Troy St., Spring Valley, CA 91977.

We regret to announce that both **ABRASAX** and **TIDES** (previously published as **Harvest**) have recently ceased publication. Both were valuable members of the magickal/pagan publication family and we will miss their continued presence.

# CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads are being accepted for future issues of MEZLIM. Classified ads are 50 cents per word per issue. There is a \$6 (15 word) minimum for ads, and payment in U. S. funds by U. S. check or international money order should accompany your ad. Please include your phone number and address for our files. If you are not already a subscriber and would like a copy of the issue in which your ad will appear, add \$6.

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
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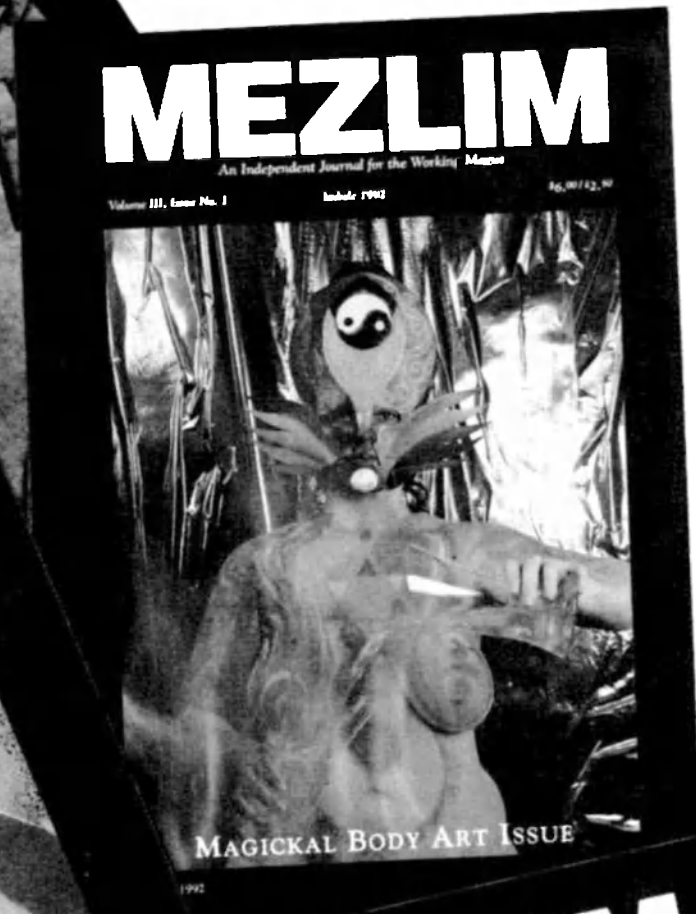
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