

# MEZLIM

PRACTICAL MAGICK FOR TODAY

Volume V, Issue No. 3

Lughnasadh 1994

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THE MAGICKAL ARTS  
OF HEALING

# MEZLIM

*Practical Magick for Today!*

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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 tofi!*). 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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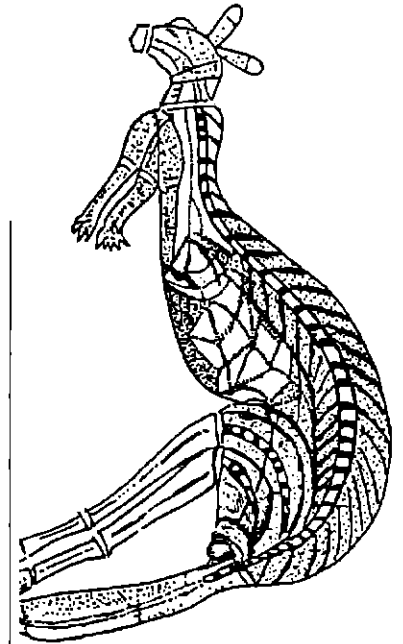
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# MEZLIM

LUGHNASADH 1994

Volume V:3

# CONTENTS



0

Editor's Forum  
Kenneth Deigh

1

Maps For Healing  
Annette Hinshaw

6

Magickal Healing  
and the Pathology of  
Disease  
Donald Michael Kraig

8

Mitakye Oyasin  
Sharon Jones

10

Testing Limitations  
Jaq D. Hawkins

12

Rediscovering  
Shamanism  
Kenneth Deigh

15

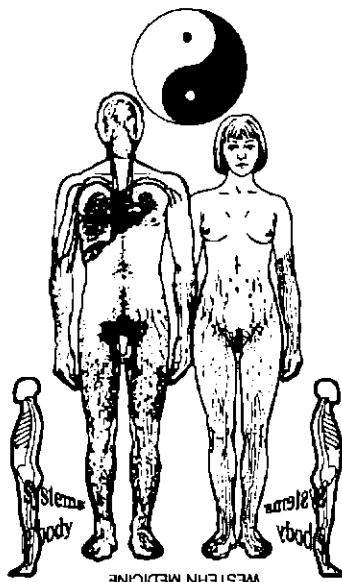
One View on the  
Ethics of Healing  
Lisa Peschel

19

The Magickal Arts  
of Healing  
Paul Joseph Rovelli

21

Searching for the  
Miracle Cure  
Wilde Cristian



23

An Alchemist's  
Views on Healing  
Dexter Magnus Edmonds

25

The Fad of  
Paganism: Abuses  
in the College  
Environment  
Jennifer Toone

28

The Practice of  
Magick  
Julian Wayne

31

Meshikan  
Part II The Desert  
Norman Jope

32

On Starting a Ritual  
Group, Part II  
Antero Alli

36

Neophyte's Niche:  
The Art of Stillness  
Donna Stanford-Blake

39

Magick and  
Scientific  
Psychology  
David G. Shoemaker

41

Words and Power in  
Magic  
Rebecca A. Hart

45

Letters

47

Reviews

# A HEALTH PLAN FOR A BRAVE NEW WORLD

With all the discussion about total coverage for all the people, all the time, you'd think they might actually take into consideration some of the less expensive alternatives to lab tests, more drugs and better surgery.

For instance, preventative health care that focuses on building healthier bodies, minds and spirits. Rather like the old chinese concept of medicine, where the physician got paid as long as his patient stayed healthy.

Can you imagine a health care plan that covers things like a weekly therapeutic massage, herbal supplements, acupuncture and nutritional counseling? Perhaps it's not as off the deep end as it sounds at first. If national health care is truly economically driven, eventually it will have to shift its focus to less expensive modalities than those traditionally included in the western medical model.

Take a look at medicine in Europe. Herbalism, homeopathy and massage are widely considered to be

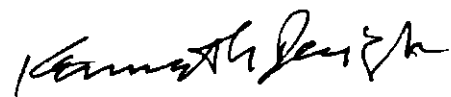
on par with the long standing American favorites: The drug 'em and cut 'em school of pharmaceutical and surgical medicine.

In China, there is a distinct division between eastern and western, or traditional and modern medicine. Both are taught and practiced, but there is little interaction between the two schools of thought. Patients seem to choose the kind of medicine they feel to be most effective for their specific ailment. Most trauma cases, acute infections and surgeries, for instance, are usually referred to doctors trained in modern methods. Cancers, chronic infections, neurological disorders and common aches and pains find their way most often to traditional doctors.

As magickians, our worldview is probably more in concert with that of the traditional chinese doctor or the european homeopathic physician. But how much has our actual belief system been affected by the pervasive idea that the Doctor in the White Coat is infallible? Perhaps one of the greatest challenges we have, both as healers and as those who go to alternative healers, is belief. Even the men in the white coats know of the power of the placebo effect, which has been on their side for quite some time.

Now it's our turn.

Good health to you!



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# MAPS FOR HEALING

by Annette Hinshaw

## Maps of Reality

Our minds are unable to comprehend all of reality at once. Only in rare and extraordinary circumstances do we attain, briefly, hints of how rich and full our world is. In our everyday experience, we work with only small portions of reality at a time. We have to develop simplified maps, or models, of how we think reality works in order to keep our working information about the world simple enough to be able to operate.

These maps are based on our experiences and on what we learn from other people. We tend to develop slightly different maps, some of which may seem to overlap or contradict each other, to deal with different areas of our lives. How effectively we operate in life is directly related to how well the particular maps we use correlate and integrate with deep reality.

All magic depends on having a coherent and consistent map of the portion of reality which we wish to manipulate. Please note that for such a map to work, it need not be complete, nor need it be fully consistent with other maps of reality which are available to us.

The only criterion for the validity of any map, or map element, is that it works satisfactorily when we operate from it. For example, the Ptolemaic model of astronomy works as well as the Copernican model. Prior

to space travel, the only reason for preferring the Copernican system is that it is mathematically simpler to use.

## Maps for Healing

This article offers two such maps or models which can be used for magical, or non-medical, modes of healing. In my experience, these maps can be adapted to work for healing humans, animals, plants, and also objects or devices which you are able to represent to yourself as being alive. The first of these maps works especially well for long-distance healing, and the second is better for self-healing or work with a subject which is in your immediate presence.

In addition to healing illnesses, I have successfully used these maps for experiments such as asking flies to stop bothering me, encouraging immovable bolts to move, and bringing dead computers back to life. As with any magic, my results have varied from failure to successes so stunning they're almost scary. I tend to take a "try it and see what happens" attitude. I am not disappointed when a healing fails to start my car, but I always give it try. Sometimes it works.

The maps for healing that I offer here are primarily a focus for structuring your magical healing work. They are open structures. You can readily integrate your own favorite techniques into them. You can use them to direct focused energy or spells and other workings. You can use them with any tool that activates your own healing powers or the self-healing powers of others.

Whether these models are literally and objectively true is irrelevant. We are not qualified to make that kind of judgment because our minds cannot encompass enough of reality at one time to tell. As the image in the camera's eye changes when we change the focal length of the lens, so do our perceptions alter when we change the portion of reality on which we focus. Let us begin with our widest angle lens.

# The Universe as a Single Energy Body

Think of the universe as a single, highly interconnected body of related energies. For those of you with a scientific bent, modern physics has proved, by experiments which validate an idea called Bell's Theorem, that every place in the universe is directly and immediately connected to every other place. In the words of the theorem, reality is non-local. Our perceptions of distance and space are in some sense an illusion, which is, incidentally, a basic principle of magic.

Trying to construct a visual image of a universe in which galaxies are merely organs of a single body is disorienting and difficult. You may find that a kinesthetic image, recognizing a feeling of interconnectedness among all things, may be easier. You probably have experience with that feeling already, at least at the level of your connecting to the Earth.

The human body is a good analogue for comprehending this concept. Every portion of our bodies is in direct and constant communication with every other portion, and in several ways. Our blood and lymph systems move oxygen, nutrients, and biochemical signals throughout the body.

Our nervous system and its command center, the brain, issue and receive a constant stream of electrochemical communication. Such physical structures mirror similar circulation and communication systems in the subtle, non-material bodies which make up a total human being.

When we increase the magnification of our lens, we can also recognize our bodies as global communities, composed of millions of self-contained, more or less autonomous members, some of which, such as cancer cells, may threaten the operation of the whole by their local activities. Even each cell of our body can be seen as a community of entities, which include, among many other parts, mitochondria which are both essential for each cell's life and are, in some fashion we do not fully understand, alien tissue within our bodies.

As we step back to increase our view in the other direction, we may think of the Earth as Gaia, a single consciousness in which we are one form of cell. As we continue with our "wheels within wheels," we can move from our planet to our solar system, to the Milky Way, to clusters of galaxies, and see each new level as a single body composed of smaller parts. For all we know, there are larger structures still which we lack the instruments to recognize.

Once you bring this unity and interconnectedness into a comprehensible model, it is a small step to accept that all you have to do to send a healing to another being is to focus on that being. You need not have an exact location or even a clear image of the being, although both of those help in focusing your mind and energy.

As all beings are directly connected to you, you can reach out through this universal interconnection—think of it as a metaphysical junction box. Accessing this "junction box" is similar in feel to the way you change the focus of your eyes to look at something far away or in front of your nose. Send healing energies along an imaginary line to the connection point, and specify an output address, the subject for your healing. You will be able to feel your direct connection to your subject.

Your efforts will be more effective if you request access to your subject before you release your healing.

This is true even if your subject is an object or device. If you cannot get the formal consent of your subject, ask at your imaginary connecting point before you send energy beyond that point. You will be able to tell when your healing is unwelcome, and, where your help is desired, the courtesy of asking will enhance the effectiveness of your work.

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**As we step back to increase our view in the other direction, we may think of the Earth as Gaia, a single consciousness in which we are one form of cell.**

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## The Body Has a Mind of Its Own

Most people think of the "mind" as being "resident" in the brain. However, there is a lot of evidence of a "bodymind" which exists throughout the body and which has a certain autonomy from the "conscious" portion of our everyday experience. All of us have had the experience of deciding to do something like lose weight and then finding that some inner force seems to oppose our conscious decision.

Some psychologists suggest that perhaps 80 percent of our decisions to act are made below the level of our conscious awareness.

There are several representations for this phenomenon, the most familiar of which is the idea of an "unconscious" mind, or, to use a term often used in the pagan community, the "younger self." This portion of our Self is notoriously difficult to communicate with, as it is primarily non-rational and operates in holistic and emotional images rather than by words or logic. It is also the principal energy source for our manipulating the world by magic, and it is our connection to the universal mind sometimes called the "akashic records." Magical procedures use vivid images and symbols as well as sensory devices such as music, motion, and scent to try to activate and focus the powers of this non-rational portion of our total mind.

An easy device for using the "bodymind" model for healing is to think of the Self, including the body, as a community of semi-autonomous, somewhat self-conscious "parts" which control specific processes in our bodies and emotional systems. For example, I spoke directly to my sinuses to convince them to drain whenever I desire them to. It took me about two weeks and several hours to teach them, but now I can open clogged sinuses at will. I have also asked wounds to stop bleeding and induced veins in my forehead to dilate to get rid of tension headaches.

You can establish communication with the bodymind as a whole as well. The trick is to relax and ask it, or a particular part you wish to communicate with, to choose some signal from your body to mean "yes" or "no." Signals vary. You may have a visual flash of light, hear a ringing in your ears, or have a muscle twitch spasmodically. If you are speaking to a part of another person's body, specify that the signal must be visible to you, and suggest something like involuntary finger twitching.

Validate whatever signal you get the same way you validate the answers of a pendulum for purposes of divination. Once you and your body, or a part of your body, agree on a set of signals, you can ask questions both for knowledge—what the body needs to do its job—or to enlist your body's active cooperation in healing or for a project like overcoming a physical addition.

Speaking to a body part requires patience and repetition, because communication processes for this level of mind are not linguistic. However, when we think of these parts as having their own individuality and pride in their jobs, we can use words and emotionally charged images to

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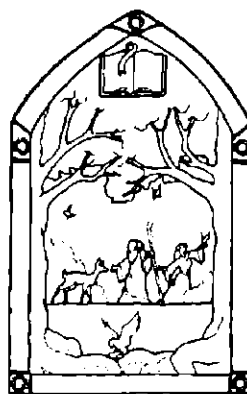
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activate the chemical communications within our body which do speak to them. The "translation" process is automatic. For example, visualizing white blood cells as knights in armor who do battle to destroy cancer cells or disease organisms is now a standard technique for activating the human immune system.

In a similar fashion, you can also represent your own psyche as a community of autonomous entities, and speak directly to any parts which may be troublesome. I have had several conversations with my own anger which resulted in self-healing.

The trick when speaking to your own psyche or to the psyche of another person is to allow ample time to "listen" to the answers which emerge. Ask questions of the "part" you desire to communicate with and wait patiently for an answer to rise to the surface of the mind. Don't be discouraged if your first efforts seem to be failures. The process is subtle. However, if you persist, you may be amazed at your results. Writing a conversation as part of journaling works best for me.

The bodymind model is excellent for self-healing, and it also works in healing other people who are in your presence. Direct your healing to the part of the person which can activate his or her own capacities for self-healing. Many magical healing processes already do this, by laying hands or other objects and substances on the body parts which are in trouble. You can also use the bodymind model from a distance by directing your efforts to the appropriate part of the other person's bodymind.

The most important single component for successfully using the bodymind model for healing is to interact with the "parts" of the bodymind or psyche with respect. Give them dignity and offer the right to choose whether they will accept your direction or cooperate with your desires. Acknowledge the importance of the function they provide to the total system, even if you think of that function as harmful, and enlist their help in finding a more healthful outlet for the "part's" efforts.

You may be amazed at what happens when you treat such "parts" with humility and respect, and you will avoid imposing healing where the cure is worse than the injury. In many bodymind systems, circumstances which seem unhealthy to those of us outside actually fulfill an important purpose. We all know, for example, of people who gain great spiritual knowledge from the experience of illness or pain. We also know people who need illness to protect them from other life experiences with which they feel unable to cope.

## Final Remarks

These two maps for magical healing are presented in only skeleton form. They are meant for you to experiment with, to fill out with your own experiences as you explore new ways of accomplishing healing for yourself and others. These models are by no means the only useful healing maps available. The chakra system of energy pathways and nodes in the human body, for example, is well-documented and has been successfully used for centuries.

If you wish to do healing, accept from the beginning that your effectiveness will vary widely. Such studies as have been done on non-medical modes of healing suggest that full "cures" are unusual. They are well-documented in places like Lourdes, where there are substantiated cases of such dramatic events as bones knitting overnight. However, such "cures" are called "miracles" because they are so infrequent.

Most of the magical healing that we do is more subtle in its effect. We make things better over time, rather than produce instant dramatic changes. We can ameliorate pain and speed healing of wounds. We can stimulate the body's immune system and influence changes in the physical body by clearing pathways and removing congestion in the subtle bodies. We can channel universal life energy into our own bodies or those of others to provide additional vitality and reserves of energy for healing.

Unless our egos require the drama of "miracles," this subtle encouragement of natural processes is the way healing should be. Our modern society has become so accustomed to chemical and other interventions which disrupt the body and provide nearly instant relief from a wide variety of ills, that we have forgotten how recently such "cures" have appeared in human history.

Let us, as magical healers, recognize that, as with all magic, the course of working with slow, natural processes is not only the easiest, but is often the best way to accomplish what we desire. The point of healing is to bring our bodies and spirits to the natural levels of wholeness which we call "health." For that, everyday, garden variety "miracles" are sufficient.

Comments and questions may be addressed to:

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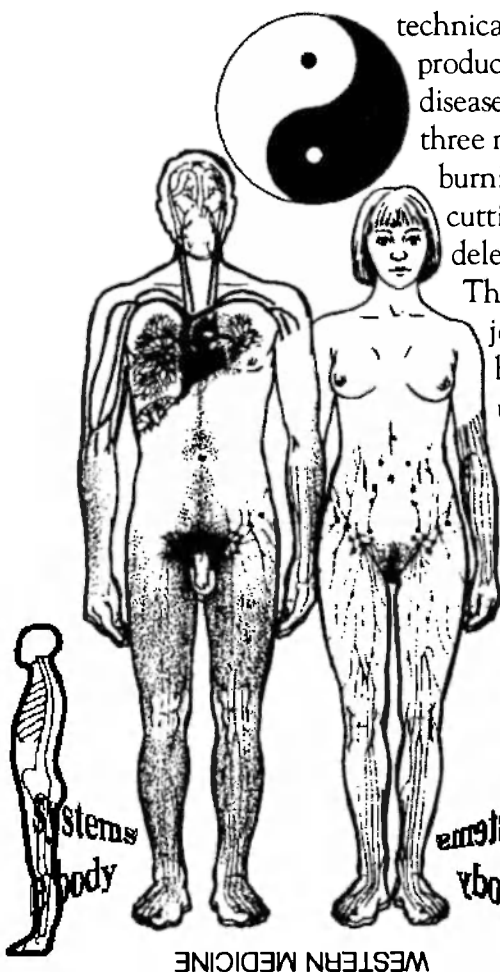
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Mezlim

Lughnasadh '94

# Magickal Healing and the Pathology of Disease

by Donald Michael Kraig



Modern, Western-style medicine, technically known as *allopathy*, has produced some remarkable cures for diseases and ailments even though its three major modes of treatment, burning (including radiation), cutting and poisoning may have deleterious effects on the patient. The dark humor found in the joke, “the surgery was a success but the patient died,” is, unfortunately, true far too often.

The American Medical Association warns that a sure sign of a quack is that he or she has one treatment for a multiplicity of diseases and ailments. I agree with this, and I find it odd that they do not apply it to themselves when they use a very small number of poisons (commonly

called antibiotics) intended to kill the nasty germs which caused the disease. And while I am thankful that such treatments are available, I abhor their overuse. This overuse is leading to a possible biodisaster as more and more diseases become resistant to the wonder drugs. Already there are forms of TB and STDs which physicians are having difficulty treating. Recently, in England, a mutant disease, sounding like something from a science fiction movie, has been eating victims’ skin at an unbelievably rapid rate. Several people have died and others have had to have limbs amputated. As of this writing there is no cure.

But the focus of this article is not on decrying the problems with allopathy. Rather, its intent is to help avoid one of the common errors of Western medicine. Specifically, I want to suggest how magickal healing may be improved by working with a disease over time rather than, like many allopaths, ignoring the pathology of common diseases.

Pathology, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is the “scientific study of the nature of disease and its causes, processes, development, and consequences.” While certain branches of allopathy certainly deal with causes, how the ailment develops over time—from contracting the disease through the time that the body is free of the disease—is frequently ignored.

## A BAD ATTITUDE AND SMELLY FEET

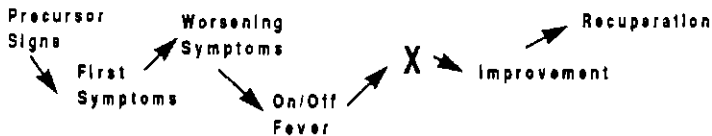
I believe that I am a fairly easy-going person. Like anyone, however, I can get testy. When I was younger and living with my parents, I would, on occasion, yell at my mother. She would

ask me if I was “coming down with something.”

“No! I’m not coming down with something!” I would yell back angrily. But within a day I would be suffering from a cold or flu. I have also noticed that my feet will have a peculiar odor when I am about to get ill (and no cracks, please!)

In short, there are signs that a disease has attacked my body before it presents its well-known manifestations. When the disease strikes, depending upon its severity, I may have periods of fever as my body marshals its strength to fight off the evil germs. Finally, there is a point when I start to feel better which leads to a period of recuperation.

So, then, the pathology of a disease might look like this:



In short, the disease and its effects on the body change over time. In many cases, allopathy ignores this.

Fifteen years ago, while I lived north of San Diego, California, I began a multi-year study (and later I assisted my teacher) of the Oriental healing arts. I find numerous similarities between traditional Oriental medicine and magickal healing. As a result of this training and the similarities between the systems, I believe that we can learn a great deal about medicine from the ancients. Specifically, that in magickal healing we should be aware of disease pathology and give appropriate treatment in addition to (not in place of) Western medicine.

For example, when precursor signs of disease are detected, the immediate and thorough application of healing energy, with a focus on enhancing the body’s natural immune system, can be tried. When the first symptoms appear you could change this to focus on enhancing the immune system and sending positive energy to help in the microscopic war that has already begun.

When the symptoms get worse, the body will be having trouble cleansing itself of destroyed bacteria or viruses. Working magick to help cleanse the body can be beneficial at this point.

DISEASE PATHOLOGY AND MAGICKAL TREATMENT ORIENTATION	
SYMPTOM	TREATMENT
Precursor Signs	Healing energy to enhance immune system
First Symptoms	Enhance immune systems and positive energy
Worsening Systems	Cleansing energy
On-and-off Fever	Falling: Add energy Rising: Energy to help discharge toxins Stable: Discharge toxins
Healing Crisis	No action
Improvement	Enhance immune system and positive energy
Recovery	Send positive energy Help discharge toxins

By the time a fever develops, the healer must be very careful. The fever is the body’s way of killing disease. To send energy to the client may be like adding fuel to the flames. Increasing the fever is not to be desired.

By the same token, since the fever is a natural way of killing disease, to eliminate the fever actually delays the fever’s destruction of the disease. I suggest, therefore, that a magickal healer needs to keep close tabs on a client at this point. If the fever is falling, the healer can add energy. Conversely, if the fever is rising or stable, the healer might focus on helping the body to cleanse and discharge toxins. Of course, a high fever can be very dangerous and a physician should be consulted.

Eventually, point “X” in the first chart above is reached. This is the point called a healing crisis. Full-blown war between the body and the invading disease is taking place and there can be rapid fluctuations in the disease’s pathology. As a result, it is my opinion that the

magickal healer should not do any healing during the crisis.

When the improvement stage begins, sending energy for the physical plane, along with cleansing and detoxing energy can be very beneficial and reduce the time required for both this and the final stage, recuperation.

There are numerous books available about healing, using everything from herbs to acupuncture, from massage to magick. I particularly recommend Do-It Yourself Shiatsu by Ohashi, and The Art of True Healing by Regardie. It is hoped that the idea of working with disease pathology in order to achieve the greatest success will improve your healing abilities.

## Mitakye Oyasin

by Sharon Jones

Where my hands touch may green things grow  
As my fingers weave a Web of Love  
To join my energies in the Flow  
That Honors All My Relations.

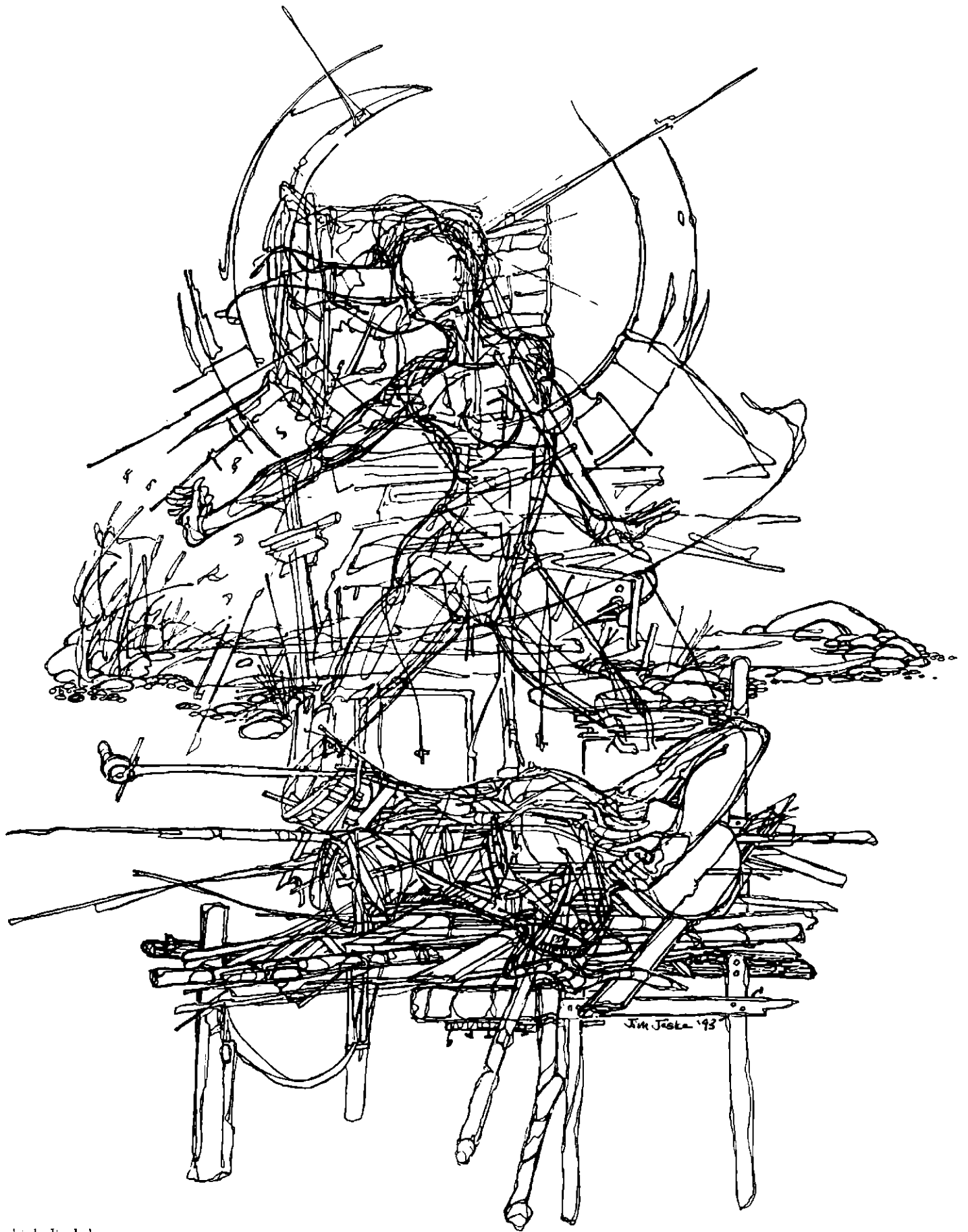
Where my feet root in Mother Earth  
With hands upstretched to Father Sky  
May the Balance created ease Rebirth  
And Honor All My Relations.

So now we dance the Sacred Hoop  
Of Fir and Feather, Scale & Skin  
That our Spirits reunite the Loop  
To Honor All My Relations.

This Message sweet yet so profound  
Must now Reclaim this Ancient Ground  
That Life Force is in All Things found  
Mitakye Oyasin.



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graphic by Jim Jeske

# Testing Limitations

by Jaq D. Hawkins

When one thinks of magical healing, it is not unusual to immediately think of Wiccans. The Wiccan traditions often focus on healing rituals, for individual ills or for the planet, and do not hesitate to point that out to the general public as part of their public relations work.

Magicians of all sorts are also capable of performing healing rituals. Healing is as old as time itself. For many years the Christian religions have pointed to examples in the Bible and have performed healings through various methods, even going so far as to stage pre-arranged 'healings' in revival tents to gain the confidence of their audiences.

Some may argue that this is entirely a 'confidence game', but in some cases the staged 'healings' have led to genuine results among the members of the audience who believed in the power of their religion to heal them. A psychologist would say that this is a result of the power of the mind over the body. This is at least partially true, yet there is evidence to suggest that the magic of healing another person is inherent in every human being regardless of their personal beliefs.

How a person goes about channeling this ability into practical use can vary from concentration through ritual to calling upon an outside force to work through them, or even to concentrating their own personal energy through their hands or a medium such

as a gemstone to the person in need of assistance. The results are the same. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

Particular individuals are occasionally credited with a special talent for healing. Whether this is because of an inherent talent in the person, or simply a matter of that person having discovered how to direct a natural ability, is something which is largely open to opinion at present. My personal view is that, at least to a large extent, the art of healing can be learned just like any other magical practice.

In my magical experience, the group healings I have witnessed or participated in have been among Wiccans. Ceremonial magicians seem to generally focus on self-transformation or changes to be made in the material world. These group healings have always been to help a person who is suffering from some minor illness, such as a particularly bad viral infection. I have seen notices in Pagan newsletters asking for good thoughts and rituals to be sent toward individuals with more serious illnesses, but I have yet to see anyone seriously tackle terminal or debilitating conditions. Why is that?

True, one hears rumors of individuals attempting to use magic to help a loved one with such a condition on occasion, generally followed by a heartfelt obituary. I'm going to wade into this one way over my head and ask why we don't hear about success stories.

One hears through the media about spontaneous remissions of cancer which baffle doctors. The inevitable trip to my local library which this subject has incited has led to confirmation of what I have heard in occasional rumors over many years. Looking under "healing" in the subject index, two volumes found their way into my hands. Love, Medicine and Miracles by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D. (Harper & Row, New York, 1986), is written by a physician who has observed over many years of practice that patients with positive attitudes are far more likely to recover from serious illnesses than those who have given up. This would seem

self-evident, but bears direct reading of case histories.

Healing and the Mind by Bill Myers (Doubleday, New York, 1979), is written by a journalist who interviews several people, especially physicians, about the phenomenon of the mind's effect on the healing process. One of the notable messages in this book is the difference between curing and healing. A physician can only cure the body to a limited extent. It is the body which heals itself with the help of the physician, who creates the best possible conditions for the body to do so.

It seems that as magicians, we should be able to influence such a phenomenon in our own way. Medical treatments should be

followed as far as they are able to help, but we should be able to give our loved ones some assistance in the act of healing themselves.

This may only be a matter of giving them the confidence they need to give it their

best try, or perhaps the act of actually giving them the strength. Perhaps not all positive-attitude patients can heal themselves, but we don't really know. Spontaneous remissions are something that medical science is still unable to explain. My theory is that if it can happen, it should be possible to find the way to MAKE it happen.

People reading this who have faced serious illness in themselves or loved ones may find my speculations offensive. Who am I to conjecture over something which hasn't touched me personally? Yet it is through this sort of conjecture that I hope to bring this subject out of the realms of taboo. A problem cannot be solved if people are afraid to talk about it.

Something I have observed in the attitude of magical people who send their "good thoughts" to a seriously ill person, is that all that seems to be expected is that it may help the person to suffer a bit less. No serious magic user I have ever known has claimed the ability to cure a terminal illness. Yet one occasionally hears of 'miracle healers' who actually do effect such cures, acting with complete confidence. These healers are often debunked as coincidentally performing a healing on someone who "would have had a spontaneous remission anyway", or ignored because there are many more con artists making false claims and using skills than genuine healers. Genuine healings make the news for a day and are forgotten.

What I have observed among pagans and magicians in general is that they tend to be very sensitive people...the sort of people who would not want to give false hope to a friend who is ill by claiming the ability to do something which they have never tried. Any attempt to ease the suffering of the friend is likely to be prefaced by something like, "I don't know if this will help any, but..."

If we never try to take on a challenge, how will we ever know if it can be done? Perhaps instead of approaching the subject from the position of acknowledging our limitations, we could attempt healings as magical experiments. Perhaps instead of "I don't know if this will help..." we could say, "I haven't tried this before, so let's see what happens." As long as conventional medical treatment

is not abandoned for the experiment, and as long as no money changes hands, certainly no harm could come from an impersonal experiment.

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## **If we never try to take on a challenge, how will we ever know if it can be done?**

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Some may argue that it would give the patient false hope, but then, what is there for a person with a terminal disease except hope? And just think, what if it was successful? Without acknowledging the possibility of success, there wouldn't be any point in trying. Just like any magical operation, certainty of failure is a guarantee of that failure, as is lust of result.

The only solo personal healing I have ever performed was successful, but was not on a seriously ill person. It was a matter of preventing post-operative pain for a loved one, an easy thing to explain away. The ritual was approached with exactly the same attitude which I used in a previous ritual to correct a problem with my VCR. I have no more electronic knowledge than medical knowledge. That ritual was also successful. The analogy may seem difficult, but the point is that what keeps many magical people from giving their full potential to a healing ritual for a terminal patient is the price of failure. If we could treat it as any other ritual, our chances for success would be much higher.

I would very much like to hear from anyone who has participated in successful healings of serious illnesses, including self-healings. Write to JDH, Box 1465, Willits, CA 95490, USA. Perhaps success stories in a future article will help to demonstrate that magic doesn't have to accept limitations.

# Rediscovering Shamanism

by Kenneth Deigh

## The Invisible Wound

Our western society has taught us that if you can't see it, touch it, weigh it and measure it - it's not real. Is it any wonder that we seem to have such difficulty in validating the worth, or even the existence of the less material aspects of our being, namely our spirit, our vital forces, our very soul?

These are the most essential parts of our Self, the wellspring from which our life experience arises, and so we are cut off from the very source of our Being. What greater, more damaging and limiting wound can there be?

This wound - this Invisible Wound - appears not only in each of us as individuals, but in our society as a whole. It is the wound of separation, of alienation from our essential and primordial Self. It constantly reminds us, at a level so deep that we can rarely hear it consciously, that we are alone. This aloneness permeates our life, and drives us to seek the solace of momentary and often unhealthy merging of self, through sex, drugs or religion. But none of these attempts even begins to heal the wound. They are merely bandages for the soul. The wound remains.

The signs of this wound are everywhere. The symptoms run

from existential malaise to superficial frivolity, chronic depression to manic addictions. All these arise from the disenfranchised self running toward an illusory horizon, seeking to fill the sense of emptiness within. This vast emptiness comes in turn from the lack of real connection to anything or anyone, including our own true Self.

I know that I have lived with this wound all my life, and I believe that all of us experience it to some degree. My own life work has been about healing this wound, and about helping others to heal as well. I can think of no better term for this work than shamanism.

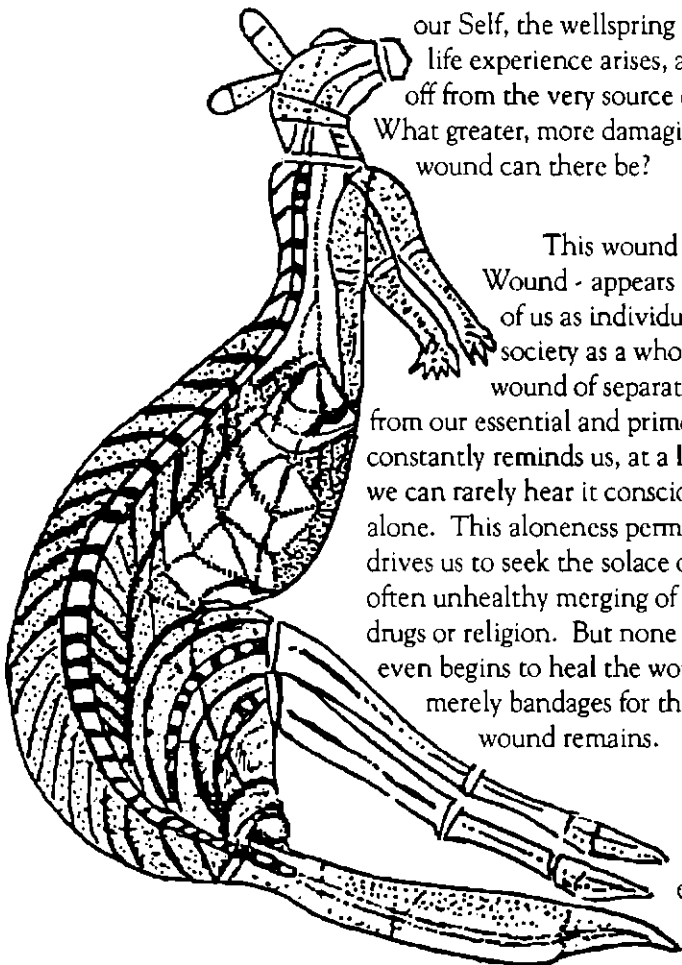
## Finding New Roots

If you examine the pretechnological societies in which the traditional shaman continues to work today, you will find a culture rich in its own connectedness with the universe as it knows it. They have a wealth of mythic content that expresses the world to them in a way that makes them an integral part of all that is.

How many of us go through life feeling as if we are missing a rule book to tell us what to expect, what to do and how to do it? In a very real sense, these other cultures have their own rule books. They have rituals, stories, traditions and expectations that clearly delineate what life is all about and how they fit into it, both as individuals and as a people.

Granted, much of the beauty and harmony of these cultures has been destroyed through the inevitable contact with modern "civilization", but enough remains to give us a picture of what could be.

It is a mistake to believe that we, as acculturated members of modern society, can ever return to the way of being that we can still see glimpses of in these pretechnological





remnants. We do not have the necessary roots of feeling and knowledge, the web of belonging, into which they are born.

However, we do have something that they lack. We have minds trained to work in a rational manner, processing and interpreting information. We have access to an incredible abundance of knowledge, culture and life experience. And, as a whole, we have a greater sense of individual freedom and personal sovereignty than ever before in human history. In short, we live in a world that is, in some ways, much larger than the myth.

These blessings of modern civilization withhold from us the bliss of sinking into a sense of oneness with our ancestors, but they can also propel us forward to discover a new way of connecting; a way to heal the Invisible Wound.

Now we need to be able to create a new web, woven from the substance of our lives, that welcomes us back into a balanced relationship with our Self and our universe.

For this task, I believe we need to rediscover, or perhaps even recreate, the role of the shaman. No other word seems to speak so clearly of the work of healing and integration that awaits us. This work is beyond psychotherapy. It is more than a sorting out of our neurotic reactions to our spiritual wounds. Likewise, if we are to be true to our evolutionary course, there is no religion which can adequately honor our separateness while offering us a union that goes beyond the loss of self into Self.

The shaman can, through discovering for HIrself the root of HIr own being, help us to explore these roots in each of us. However, because we have come so far, it is ultimately up to each of us to heal ourselves. This is perhaps the defining factor of the new shaman: The healer who helps us to heal ourselves.

## **Weaving a New Web**

How can we, today, heal this wound, giving ourselves back the freedom to explore what it means to be human? What are the needs that we are trying to address? They are much the same needs that humankind has experienced for all time. The need for belonging to something greater than the limited self, a connection with the wholeness of creation.

The process begins with finding our center;

discovering the innermost core of Self upon which all the rest of the ego has been built. This can be done through the practice of Stillness or meditation. Once the mental clutter of the ego is cleared away, the stillness of center is revealed. This still center is the doorway through which we may rediscover our connectedness with the rest of our world.

Initially this stillness can lead to an even greater sense of isolation as the structure of the ego cries out in fear of its own annihilation. Often one experiences strong resistance, coupled with an intense fear of immanent death or doom. This is the ego struggling for survival. Let it go.

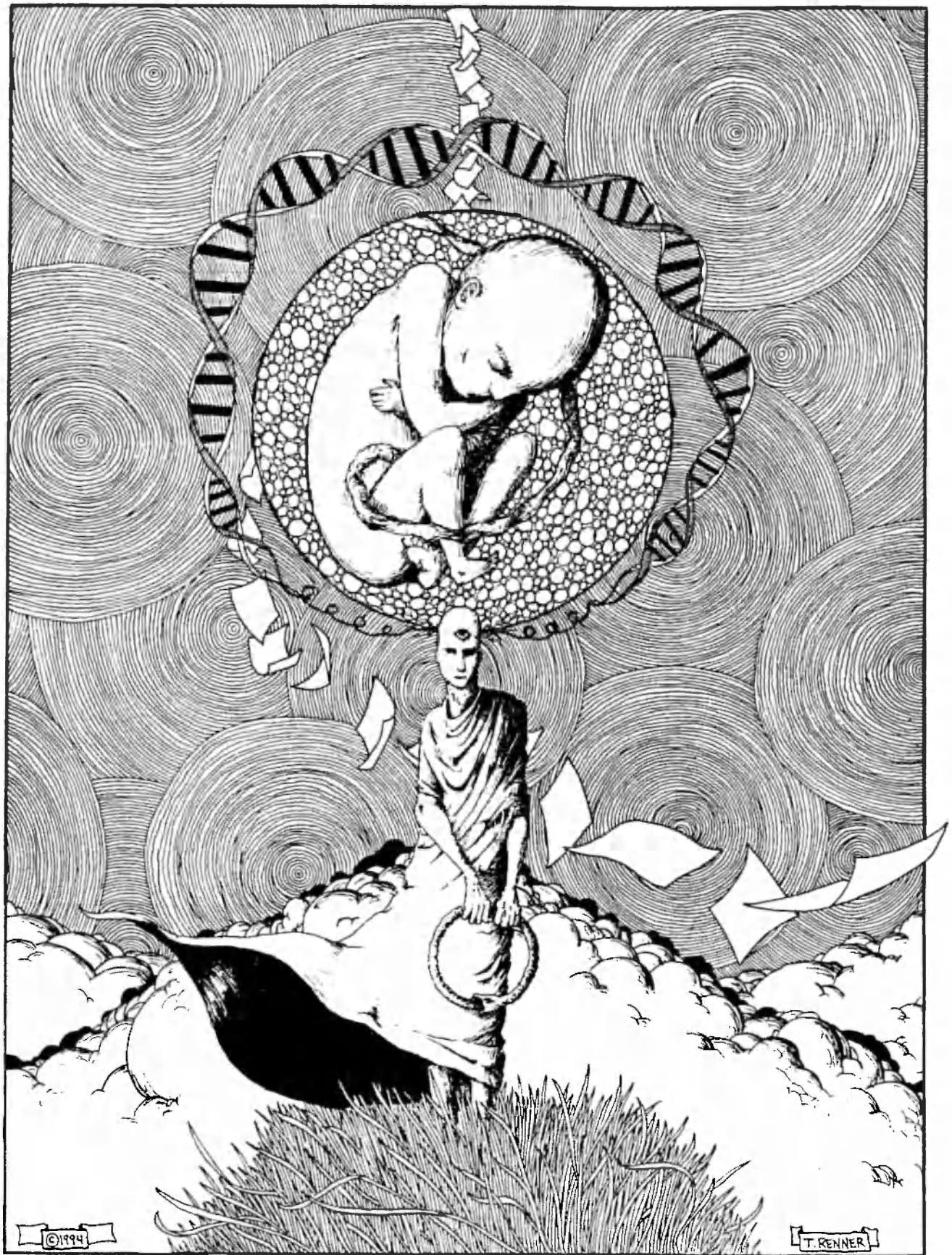
The ego tells us that the only way to find what we need is to look for it outside; to find the 'right' person and merge into a blissful symbiosis, just like it was with mom.

It's not that the ego is lying to us. It truly believes that it is alone, for it doesn't realize that it is merely a mask worn by the Self as it looks into this world. Our egos are patterned after the world they see, and our world has been a place of separation and disintegration. Is it any wonder that the ego fears that this is its ultimate fate?

But, however authentic the ego's fears might be, the assumptions it draws are patently wrong. This is NOT what we need to do in order to be happy. Our life experience has already taught most of us this by now. What DOES work is going inside and discovering the place where we are all One.

This is where we can begin to explore real connectedness. On the inner planes, this is done by connecting with non-ordinary entities. On the outer planes, by practicing stillness with like-minded people. Both these avenues, when worked together, help to provide us with a sense that the universe is a place which welcomes us and celebrates our presence within it. Through this work, we can also develop our own "reality map"; the mythic grasp of a cosmos which we can comprehend through realizing its mysteries. Most importantly, we can heal the wound that separates us from Self and community.

This article only brushes the surface of this issue. My hope is that there are many others who share a similar vision of healing; and an appreciation of some of the deepest roots of human healing, through a rediscovery of the work of the shaman. This work awakens within us the ability to heal, both ourselves and others. And with this healing comes a deeper understanding of what it means to be fully human.



# ONE VIEW ON THE ETHICS OF HEALING

by *Lisa Peschel*

One can argue, I think, that the act of healing—be it spiritual healing, emotional healing, the healing of one's own self-esteem as well as the healing of the physical body—is at the root of all magickal disciplines. In many Western ceremonial traditions, one works to heal the relationship between the soul and the Universe; in Wicca there is healing of the Earth as well as the more conventional healing of the physical body. The oft-heard axiom "It is easier to hurt than it is to heal" seems to elevate healing as an ideal. To hurt is evil, to heal divine... But is it really that simple?

For most of my Pagan life, I thought that it was. If it's broken, you fix it. If the body is sick, you heal it. Seems logical to me. Then one evening my coven and I went to sit in on a "Wicca 101" class and were exposed to an entirely different point of view. The man and woman who taught the class were very traditional in their approach to Wicca, and their point of view was classic Wiccan "politically correct."

They began to discuss responsibility and the importance of behaving ethically and not taking away anyone's free will, which I agree with. I think that the ability of Neo-Pagans of all flavors to take actual responsibility for their actions and walk

through their lives blaming no one but themselves for bad choices made is one of the shining jewels of the Path.

"One should never do magick for the benefit of another," said the woman, "unless you have been specifically asked to do so." For me and my coven, this brought up a dilemma, because two times in the last month we had performed very powerful (and successful!) healings for two people who had serious, life-threatening injuries. One was a covener and one was the brother of a covener. Both were at death's door, one from an automobile accident and one from a point-blank gunshot wound received during security guard duties, and thus incapable of asking us directly for help. "What about a case like that?", I asked her.

She was really appalled. Didn't we know that by interfering with those two people's free will in the way that we did that we set ourselves up for what could possibly be serious karmic repercussions? I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Both of these people could have died—they were broken, we fixed them.

Perhaps it was their destiny to die, was the argument. Perhaps (whether they were aware of it or not) they had willed themselves to be sick. It was their karma to be sick. If we messed with Divine Will by doing magick to make people who were destined to be sick or die better, then we would accrue a serious case of Divine Wrath (sounds surprisingly Judeo-Christian, doesn't it?) which could wreck Life As We Know It.

So we should have let them die because they couldn't ask for help. You see a guy in the water drowning. You see a woman on the street being assaulted. If it is within your power to help them, you help them! Why is magick any different? Maybe it was their karma to get sick, OK. Maybe it was OUR karma to make them better. We were firm in our point of view and they were equally firm in theirs. They were the first people I ever met who held this point of

view, but they were not to be the last. Many people who practice magick will encounter this dilemma if they are “magickally active,” so let’s explore both sides.

The question of ethics and karmic culpability arises in every single magickal operation. As Donald Michael Kraig said in his book *Modern Magick*, “Most of us would agree that it would be bad for us to cut off the arm of a good friend. But suppose the arm was gangrenous and the friend would die if the arm was not removed. It would be karmically bad for us not to help by removing the arm. Of course, it might be the karmically correct time for the friend to go through the transition known as death. Then it would be karmically bad for us to save the friend’s life! As you can see, there are many complexities in determining the karmic ‘correctness’ of an action. That is why doing a divination is so important before performing a magickal act which will affect you or your environment.” (1)

This suggestion to divine before a magickal operation is a sound one, and anyone practicing magick would do well to heed it. Magick is not “black” and “white.” Magick covers the full

spectrum and every shade of grey. Classifying magick into “black” and “white” categories is an insult to the art and often belies an inability to divine the more subtle instances of “right” and “wrong.”

To the individuals teaching the class in question however, magick was very much a black and white issue. Divination did not enter into it. It was a simple matter: The individuals did not request the healing, therefore I and anyone who worked with me would get “bad karma” because we took away the free will of each individual that we performed a healing for. It may have been their “destiny” to die or be ill. We committed the “sin” of interfering with their “destiny.”

Let’s look at the idea of “destiny.” What is “destiny?” The very idea speaks of a future etched in stone, placed there by a divine energy and inflexible as it relates to each individual’s life. The two people teaching this class certainly believed this, hence their horror at the fact that we as a coven had been so cheeky as to interfere with it.

*Destiny* is by its nature inflexible and absolute. *Magick* is the manipulation of energies to a desired end. My question to them was, “If destiny is absolute, then it is FINAL. No plea bargains, no coercion, nothing. If it was truly their ‘destiny’ to die, then our petty magick would not have made them better! They would die. It would be ‘destiny.’”

That’s my point of view. Let’s assume for argument’s sake, however, that both my best friend and my covener’s brother were destined to die and we as a coven interfered. We loved these people, and our love for them was so incredibly strong that we could alter etched-in-stone destiny and bring them back from the brink. Our love for them as expressed through our magick brought them back from their pre-destined death and the “gods” were really pissed off that we had stolen those two lives from them. Never mind that they are gods, for God’s sake—still we wicked Witches were able to foil the divine plan and heal those whom the gods had marked for death. Right.

There is a quote from *A Tale of Two Cities* (and also from *The Wrath of Khan!*) which says “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” As someone who considers healing her forte, I am fully prepared to accept “bad karma” if by doing so I improve the lot of another. A student of alternative

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religions, in the late ‘80’s I took up the study of Tibetan Nyingma Buddhism for about three years. During that time I took both my refuge vow and my bodhisattva vow. When an individual takes the bodhisattva vow he or she vows to continue to live on this Earth, incarnation after incarnation, wallowing in *samsara*, until every living being has achieved enlightenment. This is a fate I gladly accepted, because it is essential that people with magickal knowledge reincarnate and assist those whose souls may still be sleeping.

While I have decided to devote my time to magick, the years I spent studying Nyingma Buddhism have left an indelible mark on my personal philosophy. I am not by nature dogmatic, and I am not by nature absolute. To teach novices that one absolutely, positively should not heal unless one has permission is (to my eyes) hampering them both

physically and psychically. Don Kraig's suggestion is by far the best: Whatever system you use for divination, employ it whenever you have a question about the validity of an operation.

I opened up this debate because not only is this issue of MEZLIM about healing, but MEZLIM in general is about expanding one's magickal horizons. Whether one considers oneself a Pagan or a Ceremonialist, one should never allow one's self to be categorized and constrained by dogmatic views of What Is What and Who Is Who. We are not sheep, we are shepherds! Use your own brain and your own inner judgement to decide such dicey ethical issues as healing someone too ill to ask. Whether you are always correct or whether you eat karma for your actions, the point is that if it seems right to you in your heart of hearts, then Just Do It.

Love magick, money magick, magick to get employment, magick to repulse unwanted attentions can all cause the magician by his or her actions to mess without permission with an individual's free will, thus accruing negative karma.

Any operation can. What magickal operation, however, can compare with the ceremony of magickal healing? Love magick can take away one or the other party's free will. He or she may not wish to love him or her.

Someone may have to get fired in order for you to get the job that you want. If you send negatively charged energy back to one who sent it to you, the original sender may be harmed. Who is harmed through the process of healing?

If destiny is in fact just that, *destiny*, then it by its very nature cannot be changed. Should our fears stop us from healing? To say that, is the same as saying "If I see a person in distress on the street I will pass them by. After all, maybe it was that woman's destiny to get raped and that man's to be robbed. They might have deserved it. Who am I to stop it?"

To me, there is no argument. But I'm a risk-taker. I like to push the envelope. My inner sense of what is right and what is wrong would force me to spit in the eye of a god who punished me for healing. Even people who agree with

my assessment that healing is OK (even if the patient is not capable of asking for it) balk at the implications. "Hmm, if it is OK to heal someone who hasn't asked, then perhaps I can do a love spell for poor Fred who can't get Marsha to go out with him..." It's the same thing, isn't it?

No. It's different. Whose free will are you thwarting when you heal? The virus'? The bacteria's? The Lord and the Lady who have the individual's name marked for death in The Great Book of When Things Happen? The patient, who consciously or not willed this illness upon him or herself?

Not everyone agrees with my point of view. Still, the subject comes up, and I think it is worthy of discussion. Most experienced magicians would agree that magick is not black and white. It is neither absolute nor dogmatic, and its reality changes along with the individuals who interact with the Energy through ritual. Perhaps the real quest is for the magician to integrate his or her True Will and act in a way that compliments rather than thwarts the Divine. Using

divination, as Don Kraig suggests, helps, as does a serious evaluation of one's own motives. Do you really, selflessly want to help? Or do you want to help so that you can bask in the glory of a successful healing?

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**The issue of right and wrong must be between the individual and his or her god/dess, but through debate and discussion one's true inner feelings can be ascertained.**

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This short article cannot answer that, nor would I presume to answer it for you. My purpose in writing this is to cause discussion and debate. When I was a novice, I believed in a black and white universe. As I grew and lived and had life experiences, I began to see that things which had at first seemed to be curses turned out to be blessings, and things which first appeared beautiful turned out to be lacking luster in the final analysis.

Where are you in this cycle? Are you a novice, or are you experienced? Are you dogmatic or pragmatic? Would you shirk a healing because you were concerned about your own karma, or would you heal another at the expense of yourself? There are many paths to the center, and each person has to answer this. The issue of right and wrong must be between the individual and his or her god/dess, but

through debate and discussion one's true inner feelings can be ascertained.

What is the responsibility in today's world for a person who lives and heals in the old ways? Well, there is no better advice than the ancient: "Physician, heal thyself!" Look within first. If you wish to heal mortal flesh then first you must heal your own ethereal flesh. Open your heart, as the ancient shamans did. They sucked the disease from the bodies of their patients. They took the disease energy and spat it out, transmuting its essence while they themselves remained unchanged. They were merely vessels, and remained pure because of it.

A healer is like a battery, a transmitter of energy from the Divine. For one who participates in healing, as for no other magickal discipline, I feel that distancing one's self from the magickal operation is essential. One must open the mind and the chakras, allowing the divine energy to flow. As a healer you are nothing more than a channel. To be truly effective you must allow the divine to flow through you, focusing the energies as they are needed to cause change in accordance with DIVINE will and effect the healing process, realizing at all times that it is your ability to channel divine


healing energy and not your own PERSONAL energy that is doing the actual healing.

The ability to heal in alternative ways is one of the strengths of the magickal community. Whether we heal ourselves, our friends or our Earth, we still drink from a rare fountain. In beginning this article, I quoted the axiom "It is easier to hurt than it is to heal." This is true if we hold to the standard human need for self-preservation against all comers, but if we look upon magick in a truly ethical way then we will see that healing—spiritual, physical and emotional—goes beyond all considerations of THEM and US. One heals because it is the right thing to do.

(1) Kraig, Donald Michael. Modern Magick. 1988 Llewellyn Publications. Lesson Eleven, p. 474.



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# THE MAGICKAL ARTS OF HEALING

by *Paul Joseph Rovelli*

Maturation is the work I take on to heal myself. As with most, its mechanism is activated by the onset of struggle amongst conflicting psychic energies in the emotional fabric of my heart, mind and body. And there are cycles that I have come to discover by remembering the events of my life over and over with the passage of time.

Psychology has done reasonably well in explaining to me in various ways, the structure of these energies and the laws governing their interaction. Wilhelm Reich has struck the most profound chords in me through his perspective leading to the development of his theoretical model of the bio-physio-psyche. And his extension of this vast complex to the hypothesized orgone energy of the sun with its rays showering the earth provides a pragmatic way to connect my psychology with my spirituality. These are an interdiscipline for me and not two separate masks I wear in life.

In concordance with my inner cycles as I've touched on them above, nature of course, also has its cycles — that is, the nature of the exterior world; for my inner world is also a natural world or 'of nature'. When I look at this outside world, I see the benefits of the solar life generated to the point of harshness by mid-summer and then withdrawn just as severely by the mid-point of winter as the ebb and flow of an ocean tide. And with each seasonal rotation, a new

year of experiences in my life adds depth to this insight. I have found a certain constancy in this subtle rhythm that constantly astounds.

And of course, these cycles have their corresponding effect on the innermost nature, as the innermost nature has its effect on that which is without me; a mutual conditioning of inner and outer environments. Its energy flows through, and we can be so unconscious of its effects and how potent we are in affecting it. There's a rhythm that we can learn to become more and more sensitized to, to the point that it can be wielded with great advantage personally, and inter-personally.

This is a constant in my studies and the beginning of my work. Fundamentally, this is a process that I must master before I can engage in the greater and more profound tasks that constitute the Great Work. And I believe this is so for all of us. Awareness of the fluid, cosmic machination of orbital bodies in the macrocosm breeds a corresponding awakening to the dynamic components of the internal, microcosmic, intra-mutual contest of the various psychic daemons that play themselves on the fields of our imagination. From this, true self-perception is generated.

For the artist, the creative process is itself subject to these cosmic laws which govern the psyche. There is a process of taking in which I think is mistakenly viewed as the infamous creative-block. This intervals with the productive period with its rewarding yield of songs and poems, paintings, sculpture, dance and ritual. This helical dynamic, when acquiesced to, can prevent all the unnecessary suffering of prolonged blocks that are the necessary result of attempts to fight the ebb and flow of this process. With the duration of the fight comes the loss of energy that maintains such an orbital equilibrium.

There is another facet to this creative energy and the psychic struggle which

prompts it. In my view, the immature artist uses a selected art-form (or various formats) to work out this psychic struggle that I have called maturation. When these energies are finally aligned to a mature state of equilibrium, the productive phase is ended and the passive phase again referred to as creative-block is enjoined. This can be viewed as an intense experience followed by a lull. Of course, if the aspirant to the Great Work levels off to a pinnacle of maturation that won't be surpassed in this life, then I believe the artistic career is finished.

The adolescent struggle that is revealed in rock and roll music is an excellent example of the intensity of this experience. And what is so intriguing, is the burn-out ... suffered by so many of these 'artists' once they resolve this conflict. It is at this point that they fail to produce quality work and the product that they churn out in their later careers leaves one longing for the life that belonged to their early work.

In contrast to this, some artists discover a greater struggle in the collective psyche of their generation or of the human community across generational and cultural boundaries. Here they reveal their emergence into a collective consciousness with the macrocosmic world that continues the maturation process. This is an initiation of great potency that can be claimed for an entire pantheon of great artists through the various epochs of human history.

This meta-consciousness is the achievement of the mature artist; the works of whose later career prove even more compelling and dynamic than the earlier private struggle. The profundity of the experience and the energy needed to maintain it are larger than the individual and prove a mastery over the esoteric sources that provide the energy. Also the dynamic of passive and productive periods is dramatically enervated and can overwhelm the psyche if the individual is without the biophysical and psychic strength to contain it and channel it with skill.

So is art a healing discipline? In the case of the immature artist who works out the neurosis that I delineated with the use of the adolescent model, it is without a doubt, a most potent tool. But, should the artist/aspirant haphazardly lock onto the larger energies of the collective psyche without

the preparation that is provided in some of the western mystery schools for example, a danger emerges that can be thoroughly destructive.

I really feel that this is what has taken the life of some rock and roll artists such as Jim Morrison and that particularly nasty suicide that has made so much press recently. I believe that even Beethoven suffered with his deafness for similar reasons, and there are so many other examples that could be mentioned. And I wonder how different things could have been if all these tragic heroes had the advantage of the disciplines of Yoga and High Ceremonial Magick.

These disciplines serve as a bridge leading from the immature to the mature aesthetic response. And they strengthen the individual from the harm that 'art-therapy' may truly inflict on the psyche. One can't live in a house whose walls are susceptible to collapse from the force of gravity. One needs a home that can withstand the pressure and whose very functional strength is energized by that pressure.

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strength is energized by that  
pressure.**

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# SEARCHING FOR THE MIRACLE CURE

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by *Wilde Cristian*

Healing has been associated with magick since the beginning of humankind. Tribal shamans undoubtedly administered to prehistoric man even as they still do in our few remaining tribal cultures. As larger sedentary societies developed, the connection was far from weakened. Archaeologists have uncovered Egyptian medical texts for example containing remedies involving herbs, ritual and surgery with no distinction of one method being religious or another scientific. Such distinctions are relatively recent, occurring over only about the last 400 to 500 years. About this time, in Europe, western medicine as it exists today was being born. The manner in which it developed was shaped not only by its position as a science, but also as a profession.

The break between mysticism and science was probably finalized near the end of the Renaissance or around the late 1500's to early 1600's. It began however with the intervention of the Catholic church in the shamanic practices of pre-Christian Europe. Probably more interested in the religious than the medical implications of those practices, the church sought to quell the influence of these shamans. As the medical profession developed, it benefitted doctors to join in the church's persecution of witches, making their own skills more marketable. At this time, the profession of medicine was also based largely in folklore and religion and had

little value judged by today's medical standards. Still, it was in fact the testimony of doctors which condemned many witches to death. (1)

The end of the Renaissance marked the break between the church and science as well. Knowledge which had long been the sole domain of the church began to be disseminated in a broader population. Secular universities made this possible as did the widespread use of inventions like the printing press during the late 18th century. It is no secret that during the latter days of the Inquisition, many of science's greatest minds were taken before the inquisitors as heretics. This battle would eventually result in the break between the scientific and religious views of the world in the West.

The break of science with the church did not stop its confiscation of traditional mystical knowledge for its own ends. Francis Bacon, one of the fathers of the scientific revolution, once wrote that the methods of the Inquisition were useful to "tease and torture" secrets from Mother Earth. (2)

Medicine would continue to evolve as a hybrid of scientific and folk remedies until the early nineteen hundreds. At this time, in the U.S. and most of Western Europe, governments began to regulate the medical profession which until then was unlicensed and exhibited a mixture of medical doctors, naturopathic/wholistic healers, and charlatans out for a buck. The nature of modern western medicine made it the most fit discipline to prove its effectiveness at the time through testing and statistics. Unfortunately, it was also the discipline which paid the least attention to the needs and wishes of the patient. Medicine then, even more than now, viewed the body as a machine that, like any other experienced system, had break downs which could be repaired by a professional trained in the machine's operations.

The development of anesthesiology around the beginning of the twentieth

century, contributed to the illusion that doctors actually were working on inert machines and all but eliminated patient input. This somewhat narrow view probably grew from the fact that modern medical practice evolved in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution. The western world was fascinated with the seemingly endless benefits and marvels of machines. This, coupled with Renaissance artists' reclaiming of the Greek fascination with the physical form, made the body as machine metaphor a logical choice for medicine.

The older folk remedies, whose theories were based in mysticism and religious philosophies, were seen as outmoded. Since there seemed to be no direct correlation between the treatments and the patient's recovery in many cases, it was nearly impossible to put regulations on them. As a result, most wholistic forms of health care were banned by 1914, including naturopathy and chiropractic. Many of these practices could not be legally practiced in the west until the 1960's.

My purpose here is not actually to give a history lesson, but to illustrate how we got to where we are today in the field of health care, and where we might be going. This process in itself is an essential part of magickal healing. However, looking back on the past is not enough in itself. In fact, if one becomes too attached to the past, then this looking back becomes more of a detriment than a cure.

It is easy while looking back to see oneself in the role of the victim. This happens on both an individual and a societal scale. As individuals, we may become afraid to form relationships due to being hurt or used by our old partner. As social group, we may look upon experiences such as the Burning Times or the Holocaust or the Slave Trade and react by blaming other social groups or institutions for present ills. Justified or not, this reaction is like swallowing arsenic to cure a stomach cramp.

The ideology of victimhood puts one in a state of disempowerment. Whether the dis-ease experienced is physical or emotional, one must act from a place of power in order to confront it. This power can come from knowledge, laughter, faith in a certain cure, cause or doctor, or various other sources. Power never comes from blaming or

victimhood. When one gets in touch with his own inner power, they are able to break their attachment to the past, sickness, injury or any other cause of dis-ease. Thus, the malady is denied its source of power, making a more conducive environment for healing. Once it is deprived of the crutch of our own thoughts and worries, the disease is susceptible to medicine, surgery, herbs, chi, social action, psychotherapy or any modality of healing we choose. This is the essence of magickal healing.

As the nation debates the future of health care as profession and practice, I am left wondering where that vast and varied arena known as "alternative medicine" will fall in the new order. The growth in interest in these alternative therapies has made the government take notice as evidenced by the National Institute of Health's fledgling Office of Alternative Medicine (created in 1992). Still, it is unlikely

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that Qigong energy treatments will be covered under your company's health plan any time soon. It would be nice if only the need to provide the most care at the lowest cost was involved here, but we have the additional symptoms of a lucrative medical profession, corporate fear of "big

government" and dirty partisan politics to deal with as well. We can look to the past to gain the knowledge of how these things may effect our options for health care. Then it is up to us to build the power to find a cure.

(1) The Burning Times, Donna Reed, Director. 1988 National Film Board of Canada.

(2) Ibid.

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# AN ALCHEMIST'S VIEWS ON HEALING

by *Dexter Magnus Edmonds*

I must admit this month's topic of "healing" was a welcomed surprise. I am a new reader to MEZLIM and find it to consist of many diverse thought systems in the magickal. For many years I've studied various pathways and found that of the Spiritual Alchemist to be the best for me. Alchemy is the religion of the natural sorcerer. It is by attention to the spirit that the base material of humankind can be transformed into the divine gold of true awareness: Christed illumination of human consciousness.

Alchemists share a common bond of bearing witness to the "light", the truth. Here are some of the basic truths of healing as I understand them: Whenever a magickal person, alchemist or not, brings another into the light, a "healing" has accrued. Healing is a by-product of standing in the light. It is representative of real awareness. When false conceptions about religion are corrected, then the power of personal divinity can heal a misled and confused soul. When perceptual errors are brought into the light and we remember that we are "God-like" and not weak victims of random chaos, the healing power within each is called into action.

Healing is brought forth when age-old misconceptions about reality come tumbling down and we regain our lost sense of importance. When we share this with a

non-magickal person, the miraculous can happen. Spirits can be healed, disease can be cured, broken bones mend and all the rest of our delusions fade into our memories...

Healing is not something magick practitioners "do". On the contrary, all magickal happenings are a direct response to healed situations. All magickally inclined persons are "healers". There is no separation; one exists because of the other. Both are representative of correct awareness.

If correct awareness is the vehicle of the healing process, faith is the energy. It is rocket fuel for the untapped super subconscious mind. This was the message of Jesus when he said, "If only you have faith, you can say to a mountain rise up and fall into the sea and your command will be obeyed. All that is required is that you really believe and have no doubt. Listen to me, you can pray for anything and if you believe you have it, it is yours." (Gospel of Mark 11: 22-23). It is important to know here that Jesus never mentions in what it is that you are to have faith. Perhaps it is faith in yourself, your own personal divinity through a Christ-like consciousness.

Faith gives birth to unlimited possibilities through communion with the One Source. In helping others, we strive to open the door of their own personal healing consciousness, but they too must have faith.

Even Jesus had problems performing miracles in His own hometown of Bethlehem in the presence of doubt and negativity. In the Gospel of Mark this is described: "...and because of their unbelief He couldn't do any mighty miracles among them..." (Mark 7:7). The townspeople he grew up with could not be "healed" because they did not have faith in his healing process. They must have thought, "Who is this local boy who would claim to be able to cure the sick and make the blind see anew? Why he is just one of us." No amount of Jesus's preaching could change their steadfast world view and allow faith to prosper.

Without the faith "flowing" in both directions, there could be no healing and no real magick in their normal everyday consciousness. This is where our divine attention must be turned if we, the magickal practitioners of the world, are to regain our lost importance and once again be a contributing factor in world evolution.

If faith is our rocket fuel, then "surrender" is our internal guidance system toward cosmic alliance. It is not enough to wish for a healed situation or magick manifestation. It also cannot be willed. No amount of desiring or wanting will bring about the changes you seek. Only through the divine act of surrendering our wills does the universal find a way to answer our calling and manifest our humble and loving thoughts.

To surrender is to let go. One lets go and deep inside himself or herself "knows" the healing will happen. Jesus taught us to heal this way: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." He taught us to surrender to the Divine Intelligence. This will always be our final act of the healing process. It is divine evolution that mankind can wield the vehicle, the fuel and the guidance system to rocket himself to a place of paradise; a place we've been before called "Eden".

My fellow explorers of the light, we do not have to hide in the back rooms and cloak ourselves in veils of mysticism and secrecy. It is by choice we choose these cowardly actions. There are no more inquisitions or witch burnings. With or without us, sooner or later, the truth will be known again. All will make that alchemical transformation and stand in the light. Even the darkest, deepest void cannot hold back the brilliance of a single candle flame. The only question is will we, the magickal community, "dare" to once again make a difference in the world of which we are so intricately a part. Will we be meaningful or meaningless? Or will we merely continue our indifference to the suffering around us that so desperately needs to be healed?

I submit that it is our job, as magick practitioners, to create an environment capable of sustaining the healing paradigm. It is through this new world view that the healing process creates truly unlimited magick potential. Healing and magick are forever intertwined in our quest to regain our personal divinity, complete the alchemical formula, and once again consciously co-create with God, the universal consciousness, the One Source, or however you relate to divinity.

The healing starts within each of us and radiates by love and faith into the world and completes the biblical healing prediction "heaven on earth".

Here is one of my favorite meditations on healing: "Healing is a thought by which two minds perceive their oneness and become glad. Healing is freedom. And as you let yourself be healed, you see all those around you, or who cross your mind, or whom you touch or those who seem to have no contact with you, healed along with you. Perhaps you will not recognize them all, nor realize how great your offering, when you let healing come to you. But you are never healed alone. And legions upon legions will receive the gift that you receive when you are healed. **THOSE WHO ARE HEALED BECOME THE INSTRUMENTS OF HEALING...**" (1)

Let us all take comfort in this new healing paradigm, this new alchemical awakening, which is expanding and transforming the minds and hearts of a great multitude of humanity.

(1) A Course in Miracles, Ch. 5, p. 73. (Foundation for Inner Peace, PO Box 1104, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.)

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# THE FAD OF PAGANISM: ABUSES IN THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

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*by Jennifer Toone*

Having recently graduated from college, I have seen many trends in the collegiate “pagan” community which are troubling, to say the least. In the search for others of a like mind, similar beliefs, or just some way to be “different”, Paganism has become the favorite personal definition for many people who are in no way called to the Pagan path. I can think of five main groups of people who abuse the name of Paganism for their own personal goals.

The first group is the group which is, perhaps, the most innocent in this abuse. When most people go to college for the first time, they spend their first year making friends and developing social circles which will stay with them for the rest of their college career. Most people are rather lonely when they first get to college; and some people have never developed sufficient social skills to be able to alleviate their loneliness with friends and acceptance. These people are often seen as social misfits or outcasts. The lure of an alternative religion with which one can obtain attention is a large lure

to this type of person. Also, many books which have been published on the subject of the magickal side of Paganism promise great powers through spell casting and ritual which this type of person hopes can heal the loneliness that they feel. These people do not claim the Pagan path for any noble motive — they are simply seeking acceptance, which is not the basis of a religion.

The next group of people are what I have come to think of as the “teachers”. These are the people who have found Paganism through the first group of people (i.e., to gain attention and a false sense of power) and who now look for people to whom they can teach their “tradition” or powerful ways. These individuals often seek followers from the incoming class of freshmen and frequently act in a recruiting, or proselytizing, manner.

Once they have secured their followers, they instill them with a sense of their own importance by telling these people that they have varying psychic talents (i.e., making up these talents as an interest hook) and telling them that they, the teacher, will help them to develop these talents.

Through ritual and threats of psychic attack (or promises of protection from psychic attack), the individuals who follow these teachers often are incapable of independent thoughts, believing just what they have been taught by their “all wise, all knowing and all powerful” teachers. I have seen groups of people engage in actual fights — with words and with fists — over whose tradition and whose teacher is right or wrong.

The sad thing in these cases is that the teachers often take individuals away from a faith with which they were happy and which they would not have spurned if not influenced by the teacher in the first place. I have seen this happen with several Christians who have come to me in a confused and spiritually wounded state wanting to know why they are having these

conflicts of belief within themselves.

And the thing which frightens me is that, for the most part, what these individuals who call themselves Pagan teachers actually teach is more based on science fiction and fantasy writers' stories than on metaphysical books, Pagan publications, actual tradition, or on historically based religious practices. One particular author who has caught the eye of several "teachers" is Mercedes Lackey through her Diana Tregard books. I find this teaching trend tantamount to brainwashing, and it worries me deeply.

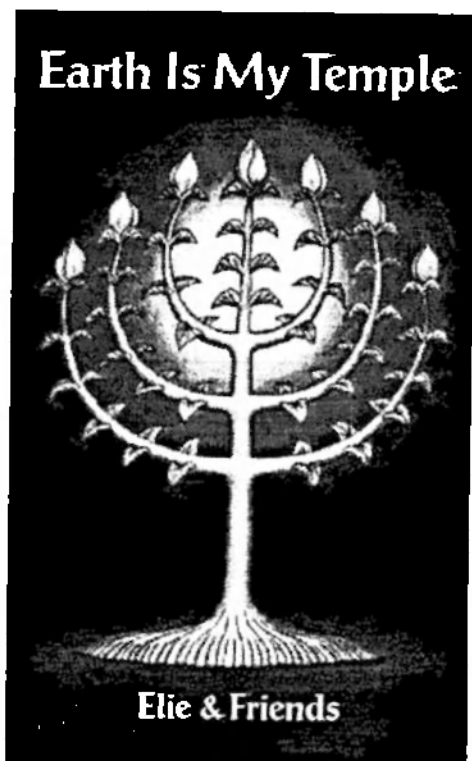
It is not only the people who get caught up in these little teaching cliques that end up getting harmed in some way. Nature, itself, can be affected and harmed by these little groups jumping about trying to "work with" nature. There is a small lake back in the woods near the campus that I attended which became a focal place for activities of one particular teacher and her followers. They tore branches from limbs to make staffs for themselves and engaged in ritual which resulted in the dumping of a lot of personal problems and anger out into the area. Anyone entering this particular glen now would encounter a lot of residual nasty feeling and an unclean feel to the place. Pagan ritual and magickal practice should never be used to harm the environment nor

ever be used to harm other people or living things.

The third group of Pagan-fadders are what I think of as "users". The user becomes involved in Paganism on the fringe of most of the little groups of teachers and followers. Thriving off of the power that the teachers garner for themselves, the user might even consider becoming a teacher for a while. Realistically, all the user wants to do is convince others to think that he or she is a special person who can be trusted with all kinds of personal business — religious and mundane. This kind of information is then talked about publicly to anyone who will listen.

How would you feel if you were someone who was genuinely called to the Pagan path but uncertain as to how to proceed, and you came to a person like this, and this person turned around and made fun of your questions, honest beliefs and thoughts to others? People like this are sick, and it is a pity that they have found Paganism as a means by which to further their sickness.

The fourth type of person is someone that I think of as a "control freak". These are the people who use Paganism for mundane personal gratification. These people could also be users or teachers as well. The few people I have met who



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are control freaks use Paganism to “hit on” members of the opposite sex by offering to teach them mystic sexual rituals and inventing personal fantasies that the object of their control fantasy is actually madly in love with them. This is when the use of the Pagan fad is at its sickest. People like this are manipulators *in extremis* who often put off everyone around them, particularly members of the opposite sex.

The fifth, and final, type of person is one of the many growing members of the PaganNet. There are many bulletin boards on the information highway which focus on Pagan issues and discussion. The four categories of person which I listed above can all be found on the internet as well. Due to the fact that internet access is often free and unlimited to college students, a significant group of PaganNet participants are from the college population. It is on the Net that many true Pagans and Pagan-fadders can meet, interact and exchange beliefs and traditions. Most Pagan-fadders are quickly discovered on the boards, because their beliefs and practices are so easily seen for what they are. The reasons that these people are on the Pagan boards are, for the most part, because “it’s neat, it pisses off their parents, and all their friends are Pagans.”(1) However, I will say that as far as a networking tool and a place to meet Pagans that one would otherwise never do, the PaganNet is a fine and worthy ground for “getting to know you”.

Some individuals who do not know much about the Pagan community turn to the Net for their first contact and knowledge about the community. This is where the abuse can be seen. Some boards are so wrapped up in discussions about “psychic attack” or “shielding techniques” that many people get the impression that the world as perceived by the Pagan community is a frightening warzone of personal attacks and malevolence. This is not the impression that seekers of the Pagan path should get. Though the PaganNet has possible abuses, I believe that the good of the system outweighs the potential bad.

Many budding Pagan-fadders do not realize that Paganism is not a proselytizing faith. It is not a system that lends itself to large groups, as it encourages individual belief and practice. For that matter, it is not one system. Paganism is a collective term for many faiths and traditions. I fear for those individuals who may truly be called to the Pagan path and who are waylaid by one of the above faddish types. These individuals are being harmed by activities of a false or misleading nature.

I think a Taoist friend of mine phrased the hope for the future of Paganism the best: “...hopefully, Pagans in the

world will realize how precarious their position [is], will realize their full history, whether part of a non-broken lineage of Pagans or a neo-activist, and it will teach them to be different from those that have persecuted them. Unfortunately, only in the spiritually mature, not surprisingly, does this conclusion tend to hold true. For this generation, many of the young, immature Pagans feel it better to exchange spit for venom and tooth for claw with Christians and other non-accepting faiths, despite Pagan moral teachings like the Wiccan Rede. I can't say I blame them, though, but I think it is typical of human short-sightedness. It is again my hope that as time passes, as new traditions gain a veneer of age, spiritual maturity will flower in coming generations and it is they who will bear out this idea of religious tolerance.”(2)

I hope that the Pagan movement can see its rough times through and become a true path for those it can nurture the best. I have mentioned many abuses inherent in the College environment today, but I am not sure what can be done about these abuses. If you have any suggestions, please publish them or let your local Pagan network know of them. As a united people — united in humanity, not belief or practice — we can foster spiritual well-being for everyone, Pagan or otherwise.

(1) - Personal correspondence with a friend of mine who works with college bulletin boards as a daily job.

(2) - Ibid.

### Dear Reader.

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# The Practice of Magick

by Julian Vayne

The athlete, poised to run a record-breaking race, is in peak physical and psychological condition; she has trained towards this moment, with dogged determination to succeed. Although what most people will see is only the final winning run, underlying this are hours of repetitive and strenuous preparation. This principle—that beneath a single magnum opus lies a foundation of exercise and practice is common to most fields of human activity. It is also, in my opinion, true of magick.

There are certainly features of magick which make it much more akin to an “art” than to a science: The emphasis placed on intuition, receptive states of mind, the value of the emotional and imaginative faculties. In these respects, many people seem to feel that magick need not be practiced, that it all comes “naturally” and that it does not need to be trained or developed in. However, developmental processes and artistry are not opposed processes. Consider, for example, the artist. Although the spirit of the artist may be something that the individual is born with, or which develops as a result of life experience, there is also the importance of technique.

Pablo Picasso, before exploring the notion of cubism, was a proficient figurative artist. It was the profound understanding of perspective and dimension that allowed M.C. Escher to create his impossible geometries. In neither case did the artists’ understanding of the “rules” and “techniques” of art stifle

their expression. This is much as a child learns an agreed upon series of letters, the common tools of written language, which then permit expression in the most individual of ways.

In the case of magick, I think that the practice of magickal skills, the gradual training of abilities and mental processes, and the repeated practice of many exercises is vital. This does not mean that technique takes control, nor does it necessarily mean repetitive hours of meditation or study of arcane tomes. What I think is important is the continuous use and refinement of the thought processes which underlie magickal abilities of all types.

These areas, which require regular work on the part of the magickian if a real level of magickal competence is to be achieved, might be considered in terms of the following qualities.

*Will* - the ability to persevere in the face of adversity. The determination to succeed. This ability may be cultured by taking magickal oaths, by making commitments to oneself and not breaking them, by developing endurance of the mind and body through learning to focus and hold one’s concentration. Practices such as yoga, meditational acts, physical and psychological hardships (such as rock climbing and caving) and indeed any activity where, by virtue of stern determination, the will can overcome.

*Creativity* - Will requires imagination as its vehicle, and imagination necessitates creativity. If you’re going to do a ritual, creativity is necessary to fashion a drama which will be both pleasing to the artistic sense and which will allow sufficient raising of the required power. Creativity also means allowing one’s sense of awe and awareness of beauty to inform all aspects of one’s life. The study and practice of music, the visual arts, dance, conversation, in short, finding opportunities to express one’s inner artistry—this is how creativity is developed.



*Flexibility* - the ability to change in the face of different internal or external circumstance. The ability to slough off old, outmoded patterns of thought and develop new strategies of thought and behaviour. The ability to adapt and re-form procedures in the light of new information. Any practices which stop the mind and opinions becoming ossified increase one's flexibility. The ability to use correspondence languages and symbols to understand ideas in new ways; exercises designed to demonstrate that all beliefs are relative; being able to change the plan for one's ritual in the light of a change in circumstances and, moreover, to be able to use the changes in circumstance to one's own advantage—these are the fruits of flexibility.

*Discrimination* - the ability to sift "fact" from "fantasy", the ability to discern what impressions of the universe enter the mind, from where and which psychological filters they are coloured by. Discrimination also means the ability to limit one's creativity so that the most appropriate answer to a problem is found without going to gaudy excess. If you're designing a ritual, it is important to decide how it is best done and what elements may be included without going too far and producing a beautiful but practically unworkable drama. Discovering the origin of inner impressions, such as dreams coming through the "gates of ivory" or the "gates of horn" is also a discriminatory process.

*Receptivity* - since magick is about consorting with the great powers in the universe, it is easy to develop an over-inflated sense of one's own importance. Receptivity, as the art of listening and of receiving, helps offset this problem. Learning to listen in conversation instead of merely waiting to interrupt. Learning to read the signs in the weather, to listen to the trees, to hear the inner processes of one's own psyche, these are important receptive skills. There is no point in being able to invoke the "spirits of the vastly deep" to give you wisdom if you are too bound up in yourself to listen to them when they come.

These abilities (and I dare say there are others besides those given above) are vital elements for the magickian to develop. But magick is a process, a continual "every coming" state of being. As such, there can be no time when the magickian has "finally got receptivity sussed". A conscious attention to these elements of one's being and regular attention to them is necessary if the traps of egocentrism or dogmatism are to be avoided.

Let's take one specific example. Much of the western tradition of magick relies on the use of the correspondence system. At one level, this system is merely the existence of

generally agreed upon lists of ideas, objects, spirits, qualities, etc. which are all said to have something in common. Thus, Saturn is lead, is jet, is limitation, is Binah, is slowness, is The Universe tarot card, etc.

The idea behind correspondences is, at one level, that the whole universe is interconnected and that, by discovering some of the subtle connection in the universe, we can learn to use/work with the natural weave of the universal "Pattern".

For the newcomer to magick, these lists of sometimes apparently unconnected ideas make little or no sense. Certainly, trying to learn the correspondences from 777 or another source by heart would require a great feat of memory. However, the point is that correspondence "chains of thought" are not meant to be learnt. The primary purpose of correspondence systems, as with most aspects of the technology of magick, is not that it is important to "know the answers". Rather, the aim is to produce a fluidity of mind, to give the magickian a new approach and way of thinking. To take music for instance. What colour is heavy metal music? Apparently the question makes no sense until the student finds that sounds and emotions can be perceived in terms of colours—heavy metal is purple, or perhaps red, folk music is green or brown, the blues is, well blue!

"Knowing" that red=ruby=Mars=iron=aggression does one very little good, but having the mindset that can happily think in symbols is of great value. Thus, when the magickian comes to create a ritual, to interpret a dream, or to meditate on a problem, her mind is able to use a series of "multivocal" symbols. Correspondence and the use of symbolism generally frees up the mind, allows new ideas to be conceived, and old notions to be analyzed from many different aspects. In short, it is a practice which makes the mind less rigid, more flexible and therefore more powerful.

Magickal practices need not occur in a special place and at a special time, although it's advisable to have some more formal practices too. Instead, magick needs to become so much a part of the magickian's daily life that each day can be seized upon to provide illumination.

Standing at the bus stop gives one time to observe others and to realise that they are behaving in much the same way as oneself. Eating gives one the opportunity to experience how food feels and to consider the whole process by which the food comes to be eaten and what happens to it after it is digested. Walking provides the opportunity to observe the fractal forms of clouds and the subtle colours of

the sky. Using a computer gives one the opportunity to consider how to solve problems using logic and mathematics as one's mechanism.

Added to this, regular body/mind practices such as yoga, dance, paranayama, meditation, martial arts and others may be employed. Certainly one should not stop at magick being "in the head" but explore the magickal uses of physical movement, sexuality, and the dynamic relationships which exist between individuals.

Since magick frequently revolves around acts of ritual, it is useful to practice this too. Concentration on the physical body and its movement will help this, since ritual generally means the use of dramatised speaking and moving to effect (or reflect) changes in one's state of awareness. Taking time to explore the magickal properties of the voice by experimenting with chanting, singing and the use of vibrated words of power is beneficial to ritual work.

There are rituals which may be done as practices to centre the self, infuse one's being with magickal power, and to generally let the channels of magickal energy open up and flow through oneself. Rites such as the "Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram", the "Nusphere" ritual of Rodney Orpheus and Phil Hine, the sun salute of Hatha yoga. These rites and variations of them are, in effect, centering rituals. Practices intended to invoke the powers of the universe and to establish the magickian as the centre, the axis mundi, the intersection between all the levels and worlds of the universe. Rites of this type are active, ritualised meditations.

These rituals are excellent in providing a ritual workout for the psyche, making it in better shape and better prepared when other magickal work needs to be done. Once again, they bear repetition since they teach something new to the magickian after every performance.

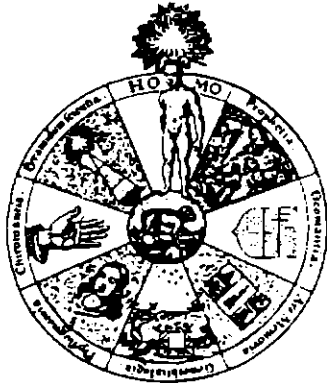
Magick is not a game, nor is it the same as a religious (though not uninspiring) Paganism. It is a pattern of skills, of abilities, of practices designed to make the individual more fully aware of the flow of The Pattern of the universe. It is a way of finding oneself in The Pattern and of pursuing that single thread of the True Will through the fabric of existence.

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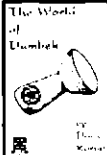


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# MESHIKAN

## Part 2 The Desert

by Norman Jope

...we are seen by an enormous kite  
with cogwheel eyes.

We are dried-up salt-mounds, panned  
of water, sitting at the roadside. It sees our  
eyes upon the heaps of shattered ivory, the  
deshicated keyboards that we are.

The kite descends, a painted  
skeleton; the spectre of its lineage. He pisses  
on his territory in amber lasers—strikes us  
with his pheromones, that naked stench of  
strength and appetite. We coalesce to life,  
with throats that taste of fiberglass and  
clotted newsprint. We turn our backs on  
sunlight—our opponent here—and walk  
towards the sapphire minarets and alabaster  
spires of Meshikan.

Mirage is what condenses us.

The desert is the predicate, the wind  
its subject.

Punctuation marks are heaped in  
dunes.

The city is a sharp oasis.

Rain gesticulates from clouds.

Five footprints are enough.

Left long enough, the stones would  
form your answer.

The sun lacks purpose in its  
woundings.

Sand is the last thing edible, the  
travesty of grain.

I and I and I are grains of light on  
shores of shadowlands.

Over our heads, the thermals whine  
like starving buzzards. There is a cut-throat  
moon up there, the shade of anthracite, and a  
rusted sun whose light does not escape its  
rim.

How many deserts do we know, must  
we endure, to see each grain contains its own  
metropolis of lustres?

We (the city)

are

a

red

horizon

sharpened

humanized

each of us a sun

each a )( two faced moon

dripping

down

to

smear

this

plain

Our kingdoms are unspeakable; the  
visions of the honey-bee.

We are the pollen dance; the dunes of  
what is possible.

The cities in our cells; the spiral  
geometries besieging space.

Our lives are no less cryptic

Than the sun that slashes us.

# On Starting a Ritual Group

## Part Two: On Scrupulous Preparation for the Transpersonal

by Antero Alli

In the Beltane 1994 MEZLIM, Part One of this series explored the significance of intent when approaching group ritual; not just intent in general but the functions of "social" and "asocial" intent. I defined "social" rituals as those revolving around the fulfillment of social needs, i.e., for security, status, emotional support, courtship and a sense of belonging. Social rituals function to feed the personality and nurture the self-development necessary for healthy involvement with others, the community and the world at large. I also stressed the value of meeting these needs first - whether in literal social rituals or the more casual rituals of everyday life - before venturing into the "asocial", which I defined as the "transpersonal realm of archetypal forces and energies" much larger and more complex than any one body, personality or group of people could contain without diminishing individual and group integrity.

*Only that which exists is subject to change.* By somehow establishing one's personal existence and presence, a power base develops from which one can advance and be affected, moved, shaped and transformed. The more well-rounded personality tends to be less resistant to change by its need to test and challenge ego flexibility. In Part One, I also delineated between the social and asocial to encourage more questioning of intent regarding any given ritual or group based on a growing awareness of actual needs, as opposed to

wishful thinking or misplaced ideals. I believe that clarifying intent renders any ritual more effective from the start.

In Part Two, I wish to present a process of cultivating specific conditions through which scrupulous interaction with the transpersonal can occur. Caveat emptor. My ritual understanding is cheerfully biased by the notion that real archetypal forces, not unlike real wild animals, are not subject to the beck and call of the ego-personality...no matter what that ego thinks, feels or believes. Whatever forces one can conjure up using the personal Will alone are probably idealized projections of what that Will "wants to be when it grows up" or perhaps, those excitable yet misplaced urges to regain the personal power lost during childhood and adolescence, i.e., the frustration of incomplete rebellion. I wish now to further elucidate what is meant by transpersonal and asocial.

## Ritual Preparation Involves Layering

"Transpersonal" not only implies *beyond the person* but also beyond the control and comprehension of the personal. Archetypal forces are not a product of personal power, in other words. Personal power can be augmented, however, as the personal Will begins yielding to and serving that larger Will innate to those forces larger than oneself while maintaining its individual integrity. Like riding a wild horse, the awakening ego learns to pay attention, listen to and respond empathically to those powers greater than itself. Asocial ritual has the potential for synchronizing oneself with the natural timing of the archetypes themselves and thus, inform our sense of good timing in general.

When introducing an asocial intent to any group ritual process, that intent must be agreed upon by everyone present. (To do otherwise fragments group energies and disperses focus.) When approaching the

transpersonal, individuals - and group leaders - must diligently work to enter the space of the ritual setting as if it were sacred. (As "sacred" differs with each individual, it's of little use to define it here beyond a symbol for whatever each individual and the group deems most important.) Preparation for a social ritual begins when the group is ready to stop socializing before and during the ritual itself. Here now are a series of techniques to support the cultivation of a more conducive ground for the visitation of the muses, the archetypes and the transformative powers that be.

Two ritual techniques for increasing awareness of the sacred, in approaching the setting and while moving inside it, will be referred to hereafter as: (1) Space forming; and (2) Idiosyncratic motion. Space forming is your way of physically moving through the ritual space while communicating relationship with that space, moment to moment, as you go. Before entering the space itself, it can be effective to meditate, empty the mind and release any obstructions to the immediate task at hand: Feeling the space before you and responding physically as you move through it. Idiosyncratic motion can be applied after spatial awareness is established by physically moving in ways so intensely personal that outside replication becomes almost impossible; movement innate to your own personal energy. With enough commitment, a type of "movement signature" surfaces, characterizing the distinct energies of that individual in motion. Once established, this movement signature is also subject to change.

## The Working of a Charged Polarity

The combined functions of space forming and idiosyncratic motion support a ritualization of personal integrity and autonomy, the effects of which help stabilize one's participation in more unpredictable states of the archetypal realities. I believe these techniques (and those to follow) are generic enough to blend easily and even invisibly into traditional and iconoclastic ritual technologies alike,

given a need for implementing their functions.

The crux of effective ritual design lies in a certain intuition for building and layering sufficient preparation for a final "blossoming" ceremony, where the fruits of several hours labor can be reached for and enjoyed. In the spirit of this layering, I suggest the proceeding technique of charged polarities to follow idiosyncratic motion which, in turn, follows space forming. A charged polarity (as defined hereafter) acts as any set of internal oppositions simultaneously carrying a strong positive charge of excitement and, a strong negative charge of resistance.

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## The crux of effective ritual design lies in a certain intuition for building and layering sufficient preparation for a final "blossoming" ceremony, where the fruits of several hours labor can be reached for and enjoyed.

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Weak/Strong; Order/Chaos; Safety/Danger; True/False; Growth/Decay; Mundane/Magick; Earth/Sky; the supply is limitless. What makes a particular polarity charged is when, for example with strength/weakness, you feel a big excitement about your strength and a significant resistance around being weak. In this way, charged polarities are highly subjective and demand the utmost in self-honesty and integrity to actually work.

Technically speaking, the ritual function of charged polarities is three-fold and contributes considerably to the blossoming phase referred to earlier. They are: (1) Ego-flexibility; (2) Raising the personal energy; and (3) Raising the overall group energy. The actual mechanics of this technique, however, depend heavily on the internal risks taken to openly engage in charged, or 'hot', personal issues for the overall purpose of self-knowledge and the more important, immediate objective of emotional honesty. Undergoing both sides of a charged personal polarity marks the transition, in ritual preparation, between self-discovery and potential revelation of Self.

From a ritualistic perspective, polarities represent that constant interplay of contrary forces inherent to human nature; not to be confused with "problems to be figured out" but pursued as mysteries to be lived. Please consider the following examples, in various degrees, as living contradictions: Love/Fear; Grief/Joy;

# Polarization of Personal Power

Many are the ways to polarize, or balance, contrary forces; please adapt the following procedures to your own. The individual preparations for personal polarization can occur within a group context, as long as that group has agreed to permit the solitude necessary for personal work. Select your charged polarity based on what you believe are currently charged issues in your life; know that you are free to change this polarity at the last moment if another more compelling one emerges. After enough space forming and idiosyncratic motion, find a place within the larger setting to mark as your own, i.e., a smaller personal area. Take charge of this smaller area, by putting your idiosyncratic motions to work to help you completely own your space. The objective here is generating a deeper sense of safety and solitude within the boundaries of this area. It may become important, also, to physically demarcate the borders and the center of this area to further establish your energy there.

When you are satisfied with the sense of "being alone and safe", step outside the parameters of this small area. Turn to face your cultivated space. Stand there, emptying your mind, body and soul. Take your time approaching as deep a condition of formlessness in your being as you're currently willing and able. From this receptive state of mind, divide the smaller space before you in half and send all the energies and forms inherent to each side of the polarity - as aspects of yourself - into each side of the zone. Allow these energies to have a life of their own by honoring their autonomy, i.e., they already have a life of their own: Honor them.

When you feel receptive enough to enter your space without trying to control or direct yourself, step into that side of the area that feels to you like it needs you the most. You read that correctly; not the side you think you need, but the side that you feel needs you the most. Enter that side with the intention of absorbing - body, mind and soul - whatever forces are innate to that side by allowing them to affect you from the inside out, moving you this way and that, bringing you to the floor or shifting your center of gravity. In a word, see if you can find it in yourself to yield to the direction of the energy itself without trying to direct or control the outcome of that energy. By relaxing your desire to control

and determine an outcome, you sensitize yourself to the energies at hand and enter into direct knowledge of the archetypal realm these personal energies draw sustenance from.

## When Legitimate Questions Arise

Stay with one side of the polarity until the need arises for visiting the other side. When such a need emerges, physically cross the line and subject yourself to the same process of absorption, yielding and follow-through that just transpired. When you've absorbed enough of that side, cross over to the other side, again. Keep moving back and forth between the polarity's alternating currents until you feel you've had enough of both. At this point, step outside of your area and re-establish a standing posture enabling the emptying of body, mind and soul you entered with.

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**With enough self-commitment,  
your integrity as an individual  
develops and that integrity is  
what makes for scrupulous ritual.**

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Some questions may arise. What if, when you enter one side of the polarity, you don't feel the need to move to the other side? Stay in that side until you get

what you need. Sometimes our lives are more one-sided than we think. Given the chance to gain access to a side of your nature you might normally avoid can be a little like finding drinking water in a desert. If there's an honest thirst for an experience, stay with it; find out what you've been missing.

Another question. What if, after stepping inside, I don't feel anything and I am not moved? Contrary to popular opinion, feeling nothing and not being moved are legitimate conditions; they exist. Stay with these states, no matter how discomforting. That they emerge at all may signal their denial in a previous nonritualistic setting, i.e., your real life. The key here is follow-through. To stick with whatever comes up no matter what its nature and no matter how it appears; stay with it. With enough self-commitment, your integrity as an individual develops and that integrity is what makes for scrupulous ritual.

One more question. What if I can't stop my mind from thinking? What if I'm deluged by my concepts and opinions of the polarity and not the living forces? Great

questions. All of these images may not belong to you in the first place. Learn to pay attention to them. If they don't go away and insist on buffering you from a more direct knowledge of the underlying forces, do something unexpected. Surprise yourself by temporarily becoming the image or stereotype in question; take time to personify it. Give it physical and vocal expression. Accept the image and try it on for size, in other words. Make a fool of yourself; who said ritual has to always be dead serious? Resisting the residue of the mind has never made the residue go away. By releasing some of the charge around images, it's possible for a more open quality to emerge.

## The Emergence of Group Intent

After completing the personal polarity, it may be a good time for the group to gather for the purpose of looking for common experiences that may prove useful when layering further phases of group ritual development. When a group talks amongst themselves, it can get a little tricky insofar as maintaining momentum and focus. To minimize dispersion at this point, I suggest steering away from philosophizing and expounding upon the possible meanings of what happened and instead, stay closer to the present-time memory of what actually occurred; the innate meanings will surface in time. The objective: To discover those elements common to the collective, while staying alert to the emerging group need and sometimes, the two are not the same. However, once articulated, the group need rapidly forms the intent of the emerging ritual, i.e., why this group came together in the first place (without necessarily knowing why at the time).

At this time it may be appropriate to apply the charged polarity ritual to the group itself. By consensus vote about what the group need might be and/or by observing common threads, or reoccurring themes, in individual polarizations, it may be possible to select a charged group polarity. Ideally, such a polarity would have the effect of raising group energy while simultaneously cohering group unity. The intent here is to find consensus agreement without compromising individual autonomy and integrity.

If and when a group polarity is agreed on, simply apply the procedures from the smaller area directly to the larger area of the entire ritual setting, with the following exception: Instead of standing outside of the space before entering, the group forms a single-file down the dividing line

between the chosen polarity inside the large area. (Starting group polarization from the outside or the inside may also be subject to consensus.)

Once individuals have begun approaching their No-Form stance, you pretty much let it go to the process itself; people follow their own paces and rhythms. As with the smaller area, everybody traverses back and forth as necessary between the alternating currents until it's time to return to the No-Form center line. When the group polarity is over it may, or may not, be appropriate to reconvene in a circle to briefly talk about what happened. By this time individual and group needs have become, if not immediately understood then, more clear. This also should be the final group talking circle before agreeing on how these accumulating energies are best directed in a final closure, or blossoming, ceremony.

## The Blossoming Ceremony

Knowledge of the blossoming ceremony depends entirely on several interdependent factors: (1) The people participating; (2) Their commitment levels; (3) The nature of the material emerging from both personal and group polarity work. As a result, each closure differs even when the same group meets again, given that time itself acts on the group as an agent of change. The predominant element, then, to each blossoming ceremony becomes none other than the X-factor of the unknown. A futile endeavor meets those who entertain preconceptions or pretenses about what it is or how it will come out. This closure is not just a clever cop-out this writer needs to finish his essay in time for the publisher's deadline, but as honest a claim as I can make about the mysteries each and every group approaches in their momentum towards magickal and mystical ritualization.

In the next issue of MEZLIM: ON STARTING A RITUAL GROUP: PART THREE: Dangers, Pitfalls and Just Rewards.

*Antero Alli is a free-lance ritualist, author of ALL RITES REVERSED: Ritual Technology for Self-Initiation (Falcon, 1987); director/writer of "ARCHAIC COMMUNITY": an 85-min. documentary on group ritual process; editor of TALKING RAVEN QUARTERLY; and, a practicing astrologer (author, ASTROLOGIK & others). For a free catalog of his books, tapes and services call his 24-hr. INFO-line at (206) 781-5691 or write him directly at PO Box 161, Port Townsend WA 98368.*

# Neophyte's Niche

## The Art of Stillness

by Donna Stanford-Blake

In the beginning there is stillness. It is the prelude to a storm, the moment before dawn, the pause that refreshes. The universal emptiness sought by so many from so many different paths. Why? What is so special about nothing? A question that I found difficult to answer - until I experienced it.

After my attempts and finally my 'successes', stillness has become an important key in my magickal development. It is the foundation I use to build everything else on and - paradoxically - the ultimate goal in my work. What is this tool? How do you do it? And, most importantly, why?

First the "what?":

Some may call it meditation or centering but, no matter what you refer to it by, it is found in us all. Stillness, silence, nothingness - the deep place where our true Self resides. This is the first lesson in magick. In fact, it is central to most (all?) transformative paths. A lesson to be learned again and again, but never quite perfected. For the more we come to know ourselves, the more there is to know. In attempting to describe it, I feel like I am talking in riddles. Yet that too is fitting, since stillness gains us access to that greatest riddle of them all - our Self.

As one quiets the mind of everyday chatter and sinks deeper into the velvety

darkness, the true essence of who we truly are has an opportunity to be glimpsed. It is not something that must be summoned from somewhere "out there". It is not hiding. It is always there. In our ignorance and fear we have allowed the dreck of everyday existence to accumulate and clog the direct link we naturally have with our greater Self. Stillness is the way to clear the debris away and re-establish that link.

With practice this link gets stronger, clearer, and more easily attained. Stillness can be done alone or in a group. It can be used as part of a ritual, or preparatory to ritual or initiation. Sacred dance uses stillness, as does martial arts and magickal healing. It is the method used to put our ego firmly in its place and allow our greater, truer Self to emerge.

If this sounds like serious stuff, well it is. Not dull or boring - but exciting. It's the point where discoveries are made. Some "A-ha's!", and some "Argh's!". Invigorating, stimulating, infuriating - but not stagnant.

So, how do you do it? Gently, one step at a time.

The basic method of stillness is deceptively simple. Quiet yourself and empty your mind of thoughts and pay attention to what happens with as little inner commentary as possible. Short, sweet, easy - right? Well...If you have ever meditated - or attempted to - you know how uncooperative the mind (and body!) can be. Patience, perseverance and practice is really what you need to succeed.

The method of stillness varies with the practitioner. You may be more comfortable sitting, lying - even walking. You may be alone, partnered, or in a group. Choose an echo of silence or entice relaxation with music. Practice it in a ritual or a bath tub. The setting is as different as the individual or as unique as the moment.



First, choose a place in which you feel the safest and most relaxed. Then empty the extraneous thoughts of the day from your mind using exercise, primal screaming, a hot bath, or, better yet, good old fashioned journal writing. Relax so your body is comfortable, but don't be tempted into falling asleep (one of those sneaky ego tricks). Some people prefer to do a ritual before hand. Light a candle, use some incense, raise a temple - use your favorite method for creating sacred space.

Environmental distractions are also a consideration. Should you unplug the phone? Lock the cat out of the room? In the beginning - yes. But as you progress, the very things that once pulled you out of stillness can be used as a test to see how well you can stay in that deep place within. If the phone rings, can you allow it to continue, or let the machine pick it up, without automatically jumping up to answer it? My cats often test me by walking across my lap and demanding affection. Can you sit unresponsive while your furry familiar rubs and purrs? It is a real test of the depth of stillness when you only note the disturbance but don't respond - either with your body or mind. Of course, some things demand immediate attention: The smoke detector, a baby's cry, tornado sirens. But even then - it's your choice.

O.K., you have created your space, become comfortable, eliminated distractions - now breathe deeply and close your eyes. The most difficult part is not responding to your thoughts. The harder you tell yourself to be quiet, the louder the chatter becomes. Better to just observe and let flow. My teacher suggested that I enclose each thought as it appeared in a bubble and let it float away. I've found this to be effective. Visualizations work well, too. Picture something - a pleasant scene, object or color (blue, green, violet) in your mind, then focus. This distracts your mind and gives it something to do. Mantras - meaningless (or meaningful) sounds intoned or repeated over and over - serve the same function. Experiment, find what works best for you. If it is impossible one day, try again the next. Don't yell at yourself; be gentle and patient and soon you will begin to explore the stillness.

As your mind clears and the blankness envelopes you, send yourself deeper and begin to explore - or just let things

appear. The first glimpses are often vague. "Did I see that?" This comes from our ego place that firmly believes nothing exists inside. Or if something does, it must be dark, bad, wrong. Trust your perceptions and remember what you encounter. It is helpful to keep a journal to map your progress. A seemingly meaningless vision or symbol may only make sense days or weeks later. The Self communicates in symbols and feelings. Since we tend to find validity in only the "real" world, we often miss what is being given us. Set those pre-conceived notions aside and "listen".

Be aware of ego tricks. These are the little things that block your efforts at stillness. The most benign behavior is really your poor, frightened ego trying to distract you. The ego is afraid you will kill it off when you find your true Self. So it uses a whole bag of tricks to distract your efforts.

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**In fact, it is difficult to separate stillness from magickal work. They are interwoven; dependent on each other.**

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Itching, strange little pains and twinges, irritability, nervousness, falling asleep (my ego's personal favorite), etc., etc. If it prevents you from doing stillness, be assured it's the ego's dirty work. Don't get angry at yourself. This isn't happening because you are

stupid or doing anything wrong. In fact, it's a pretty good indication you are on the right track. Persevere. Your Will is stronger than ego's. It also helps to reassure your ego that annihilation is not your goal. Growth of Self will not destroy it, just put it where it belongs. Being aware of why something occurs enables one to make choices that result in bypassing those stumbling blocks - at least most of the time.

As with any skill, the real key is practice. Daily is usually best, but don't give up if you miss a day or a week ... or a month. Try not to make it a chore. It is better to want to do it for the reason it is intended - to learn about your Self. Isn't this the essence of The Great Work?

Why is stillness an important tool for magick? One aspect of the answer has already been touched on: The discovery of and learning about the true Self. This is the heart of all paths. But how can stillness aid one in the working of magick?

Focus and clarity are two key elements that are achieved. The ego is effectively quieted and the practitioner can become a conduit for the energy that is being summoned. This holds true whether in ritual or dance - alone or in a group. It is also a wonderful technique when used with

scrying. It keeps the world from seeping in and coloring any messages received.

In fact, it is difficult to separate stillness from magickal work. They are interwoven; dependent on each other. The differences lie only in the level of stillness. Alert and centered as temple is set; focused during rituals; deep, dream-like when working with the aspects. The more I use stillness, the more I see it as the state that differentiates magickal work from the everyday and makes the everyday magickal.

It also offers a quiet refuge into which the battered magician can retreat. The stresses of everyday living compounded with spiritual growth leaves

even the hardest soul drained. The solitude of stillness offers a way to clear the debris and recharge the batteries of the psyche. Regular practice keeps toxic waste from accumulating and may even prevent illness - both physical and mental.

This is a practical tool and a very convenient one. It is always there waiting to be used. With practice it can be used virtually anywhere. Those around will not even be aware of what you are doing. Use it for a moment - or longer. Time is not the measurement of its effectiveness. "Quality not quantity" is an apt motto when using stillness in this manner.

Experiment with your own uses for stillness. I enjoy stillness as I walk in the out of doors (yes, with my eyes open!). Hot tubs, floating (deprivation tank or a pool), riding in the car - some people do it while driving! The list is limited only by your imagination and personal preferences.

How do other people feel about stillness? I have given my own point of view, so I asked two practitioners to share what stillness means to them - personally.

Ann: "What does stillness mean to me? Stillness is the beginning. It is the quieting of the body and mind (which is NOT an easy task). But by doing this I find that point within, that center, from which all that I am arises. I can return to this point when I am feeling scattered and come back to my self. This point, this stillness, is the

foundation of my magickal practice."

Barak: "What does Stillness mean to me - personally? It remains first and foremost a refuge from the onslaught of everyday life. A quiet place between space and time, into which I can retreat when necessary, leaving all the tumult to hurry on without me. There are days when this aspect of Stillness is what carries me through.

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**Words arise from it,  
but cannot capture it.  
Like the Tao, it is a Mystery  
whose only description is the  
awakened experience of it.**

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"Perhaps more importantly, in the magickal sense, it is also my doorway into everywhere I wish to go. This is true on many different levels. When moving into any altered state of consciousness, I first enter a deep state of Stillness, from which I

can emerge into the chosen state at will. Before beginning any journey, I center in Stillness and clarify myself in the moment. This allows me to move forward with clear intent and also helps the various layers of my consciousness to shift gears and move me on down the road.

"It is the doorway I walk through everyday, leading from the past, through the present and into the future.

"Personally, I find Stillness to be the primordial state of being; present before I knew my name or face. Clear. Pristine. It interpenetrates everything with its presence, and yet is somehow separate as well. Words arise from it, but cannot capture it. Like the Tao, it is a Mystery whose only description is the awakened experience of it."

Simple, silence - stillness. Learn this one skill and you have the beginnings of magick.

As I have developed magickally, the importance of stillness has become more apparent. I realize there is a reason it is one of the first skills a neophyte is taught. It is the foundation that all my work springs from. And the place I go when I feel I have no where else to go. At once a cave, a doorway, and a conduit. Stillness takes me where I need to go - ultimately home - to my Self.

# MAGIC AND SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY

## An Essay on Subjective Science

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by *David G. Shoemaker*

As practitioners of the magickal arts, we strive to cultivate a great number of unique skills in ourselves. A prime example of these skills is our training in introspection, or the ability to look inward into ourselves to perceive our subjective reality. The perception of this reality may take a number of different forms. We may have visions, experience bodily sensations, or come to understand truths which had previously eluded us. Regardless of the form in which our subjective state is perceived, we arrive at its perception by well-controlled, structured, inward observations. This is our scientific method—the science of the subjective.

This term, subjective science, would be received with only a smattering of applause from most mainstream scientists today. Because our focus is on the inner experience of human beings, the scientists most relevant here are, of course, psychologists. Modern scientific psychology demands that its subject matter be defined in terms of purely “objective” criteria. That is, scientific conclusions must be based on observations of external, “I know it’s there because I see it there on the table” events.

The existence and manipulation of anything remotely subjective is allowed for only in the sense that it can be accounted for in external terms. Thus, modern psychology will not, as a rule, accept that depression is being studied without some means of

quantifying that subjective feeling—for example, a numerical rating scale based on the responses of the patient to certain questions relating to depression, or a brain chemistry printout which indicates the presence of high levels of depression-related neurotransmitter substances. In other words, science says that we can’t scientifically study the inner experiences of humans using the data of their own introspection alone. Such methods are too biased. They can’t control for extraneous factors. In a word, they are too unscientific.

Well, imagine that we have decided that instead of “looking outward” to the external, physically apparent world for our data, we will turn our scientific eyes inward. We will allow ourselves to examine subjective phenomena, with due consideration to internal factors which may influence them. We will proceed methodically, recording in detail the conditions of our introspection—place, time, weather, diet, mood, physical activity, and of course, the nature of the introspective work itself. This, as I am sure you have recognized, is our *Magickal Diary: The record of our Subjective Science*.


This method is not accepted by modern scientific psychology. In the later decades of the 19th century, however, attempts were made within the world of scientific psychology to work in this way. Wilhelm Wundt, the founder of the first psychological laboratory (in the modern sense), utilized this type of introspective approach. Yet, his methods were soon discredited by the emerging “behaviorist” trends in psychology, who emphasized, then and now, the importance of external, objective observation, almost to the complete exclusion of purely subjective phenomena.

Similarly, the psychoanalytic, introspective observation of Freud, Jung, and others was never really embraced as a true science, especially in America, where the objectivist trends had taken root so strongly. As should be clear by now, many of the

mainstream attempts at a science of the subjective were simply extinguished by the growing obsession of the scientific community with being objective in its narrowest, most restrictive sense: "If you can't see it by the light of THIS lantern, and ONLY this lantern, it IS NOT THERE!"

Magicians, under many different names (alchemists, mystics, etc.) and within many different systems have, of course, been working on this for centuries! Aleister Crowley has been, in the opinion of the present author, the most articulate spokesperson for this subjective science, as it can be applied to "spiritual" pursuits; hence, the motto of the A. A. ., "The Method of Science, The Aim of Religion". Crowley adhered strictly to the ideals of science as it can be broadly defined—a method of observation and experimentation (inward or outward), with pains taken to specify the conditions and results of this observation and experimentation. Yet, as you may have gathered, the methods of this subjective science would never get past the lobby of an institution of mainstream science in America. This resistance from scientific psychology is at the core of the challenge presently facing Scientific Illuminism. So we can avoid depression, let's delete "challenge", and insert "opportunity"!

Our opportunity: As a body of Scientific Illuminati, we are in the position to bring the subjective world back into the fold of scientific psychology. We can do this by striving ever harder to be thorough and detailed in our documentation of our Work. We can do this by working together, within the organizations founded for this purpose, to advance the study, practice, and dissemination of Scientific Illuminism. Change will undoubtedly seem slow, but we must remember that Magick has historically pushed ahead of mainstream science, seeking to comprehend that which those without courage and tolerance refuse even to contemplate. Soon, we will find that our Work has precipitated a wealth of discovery, and that the subjective world has regained its place as a source of enlightenment and advancement.



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# WORDS AND POWER IN MAGIC

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by Rebecca A. Hart

Words have always been a great part of magic, from the dawn of its development to its manifestations today. Everyone has her own image of 'magic words,' from the withered hag muttering over a crystal ball to the stage magician triumphantly proclaiming "Abracadabra!" as he pulls a rabbit from his top hat. Words have played a crucial role throughout all the history of wonder-working.

In the Bible, we are told that the first and greatest act of magic, the creation of the Universe was the work of a Word. There God uttered us into being, and Jesus is called *the Word made flesh*. Thus language is as natural and easy as life itself - God's gift to mankind.

If humanity learned its first language directly from God, no wonder words are seen as a highly powerful gift. When we look at what may be called the primary aims of working magic - to question, commune, communicate, discover - we see that the very language of magic is itself about language - about words and their functions.

Words are distinctly human; at once our medal and our mark of Cain. They give us a rich and precise power of communication which sets us above the rest of creation, but it is our very dependence on them that reminds us we are not gods.

Often in medieval magic, an initiation will require periods of silence. The

Key of Solomon prescribes abstinence from "useless discourse" as part of the purification period before any magical rite. (1) The purpose of abstinence is usually to make a person, through experiencing life without something, become more aware of its power and importance and learn how to use it wisely and with respect. The Key of Solomon's specific restriction to necessary and meaningful words seems a reminder not to use the gift of speech randomly or for unimportant reasons.

However, the problem with words is that whatever is spoken or written becomes to some extent the property of anyone who can hear or read. This is undesirable because one of the essential elements of magic is secrecy. The words *occult* and *arcane* mean 'hidden,' and it is important for occult practitioners to keep their craft secret.

The Book of Shadows, the primary text of modern Wicca, says "...it is not wrong to let people think that we of the Cult have more power than we have. For the truth is that if they believe we have more power than we really possess, we really do possess these powers..." (2) Secrecy adds potency. If knowledge is power, then to possess knowledge that another lacks gives a person power in a given situation.

The very state of having a secret is highly charged as it makes one the *have* and the other the *have not*. The desire which secrets create in those who do not share in them makes the possessor of secret knowledge the center of attention, attracting the others' energy to him. It is the same principle as in the craft of theatre, that if the audience, the outside source of energy, is focused on the practice of the craft, believing in it, the actions of the practitioners will be that much more successful.

In the magical texts to which we have access now, it seems that hardly any spell can be complete without some form of vocalization; indeed, speech seems to form the backbone of most spells and rites. Having now established that words are of great import in magical procedures, we must

ask, why? What, ultimately, are magic words?

To work magic, to practice the occult arts, one must have knowledge of hidden things. It is this knowledge that gives the magician power to accomplish his aims, to work wonders. As human beings, our primary means of acquiring or sharing almost any form of knowledge is through words, whether spoken or written. Thus, words are knowledge, knowledge is power, power is magic. Hence we may see the idea of magic words in a new light - that all words are magic words.

When we look more closely at how words function, we begin to see their magical properties. For example, it has been said that visions are a necessary part of magic. The essential aim of language is, as we have said, to transmit information, to communicate, to make someone understand. It is no accident that the slang term for this is to 'get the picture.'

The fact is that speech enables us to induce visions, to will a picture into someone's head, to alter her focus of attention and her consciousness, with or without her consent.

Using an old example, if I turn to you and say suddenly, "Don't think about a pink elephant," it will be very hard for you to keep the image of a pink elephant out of your mind. Even if you have excellent mental control, anticipate my intent, and force yourself to see only a blue cockroach, your consciousness will still have been changed in response to my words.

The ability to speak provides an opportunity to seize the reins of another's imagination. By choosing words, one can control another's train of thought. This is what we do when we converse, although we are unaware of it; it is also the craft of the stage magician and the fortune-teller. Manipulation, then, is an important part of magic, and language is our most powerful tool of control. Conversely, it is nearly impossible to form a mental image without hearing associated words, at least mentally. Even when I see something for which I have no name, words to describe it still enter my head ('tall,' 'red,' etc.).

Such is the power of words that, should an image or idea form in my head of something which I have never heard described, I will be more likely to dismiss it as impossible. Words effectively assure us of the reality of things. If there is

a word for it, it must exist, our instincts tell us. Words serve as the link between us and experiences that are otherwise incommunicable. They stand for concepts. I cannot give you a concept, but I can give you the words for it.

In magic, it is the same thing; the Law of Similarity states that a symbol is equivalent to the thing symbolized. *Devanagari*, the Sanskrit word for alphabet, has been translated as 'container of the gods,' and this I find entirely appropriate. Every word is indeed a container, holding not only one image for speaker and listener, but a vast array of memories and associations that will be different for everyone who speaks or hears that word. Human beings have a passion for categorization. We must organize the world around us or be overwhelmed by its mystery. Since language is so distinctly human, by encapsulating the universe around us in the various containers called words, we bring it down to our level, we compartmentalize it so that we can deal with it. We are following Adam's example; he had dominion over all

other beings in the garden of Eden by capturing each one within a word. He named them. (3)

We have been speaking of words as powerful because they contain a vast array of

intangibles which the speaker can conjure up in the listener at will. Proper names are especially potent. They may be thought of as words of concentrated power. They have simpler associations than other words, and the images they will conjure up will be less flexible, simply because they are so specific. Their purpose is to classify the individual herself.

Every law of magic states that a name is equivalent to the thing named; when you speak a proper name you are harnessing an individual's very self. We feel the power that comes from knowing someone's name in everyday life, although we might not articulate it in these terms. To be on a first-name basis with someone is a big step toward familiarity with them, and changes a given relationship. You call your teacher Mrs. Jones all through high school, and when you graduate and come back to visit she says "Call me Carol." You both recognize this as a move toward equal status. By allowing you to use her first name, she is relinquishing some of her authority over you, giving up some of her power.

A name is equivalent to the thing named. When the name of a being, natural or supernatural, is used in a magic spell, it is an invocation, to attract the being's attention,

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## **We are all familiar with the story of the sorcerer's apprentice, who lost his life because he did not know how to use the name of the demon he summoned.**

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possibly to command it. Such is the power of names in magic that the texts are full of warnings about their use. We are all familiar with the story of the sorcerer's apprentice, who lost his life because he did not know how to use the name of the demon he summoned.

The name of God is the most potent of magical terms, and under no circumstances is it to be used lightly. Jews took care never to pronounce it in full, referring to it as the Tetragrammaton, or writing its consonants only: YHWH. God and the angels have multiple names. Many kinds of magic require as many names as possible for any particular deity since no one name can capture its essence.

In the thirteenth century, one of the types of magic banned by the Inquisition was called the Notory Art. Said to have been passed from God to Solomon, who then taught it to Apollonius, it used the power of the names of God in prayers and formulas "consisting of unknown polysyllables, by which all knowledge and virtue can be obtained [in] a month." (4)

In the same vein, certain works of the twelfth century were circulating in Northern Europe which were said to "abound in characters and incantations which consist either of seemingly meaningless vowels or Biblical phrases and allusions." (5) In 1323, a monk in Paris was seized and burned at the stake for possessing one such text. (6)

Yet how can one hope to obtain "all knowledge and virtue" from a collection of "unknown polysyllables." Why would a text full of "seemingly meaningless...phrases" and allusions to the Bible inspire such hostility and fear toward its owner? These phrases and syllables cannot have been entirely meaningless; they must have had some power, because in spite of growing hostility and violent measures on the part of the Church, use of the Notory Art became more and more widespread during the late Middle Ages.

The Wiccan Book of Shadows says "Of spells, the exact words matter little if the intent be clear." (7) The emphasis is on the will behind the words - "...the most important is 'Intention.' You must know that you can and will succeed." (8) It is, then, the intent behind the words that causes them to work.

If certain words are chosen by the practitioner, it is because experience has assigned certain meanings and nuances to them for her, and therefore she will have the necessary intent only behind those words. Once we understand this essential point, we understand the effectiveness of what we have called nonsense words, i.e., *abracadabra*. To the magician, the nonsense word is an empty vessel, into which one can pour intent and meaning, with all the more focus and passion for being unhindered by established associations.

According to the Book of Shadows, the power of the words lies not in what they are, but in the "frenzy of will" that must accompany them. (9) This perspective enables us to understand, too, the medieval view of magical language, which held that spells lose potency in translation.

The Chaldean Oracles tell us, "Change not the barbarous names of evocation." (10) The Egyptian magicians held that even if exorcists did not understand the language of their spell, it was necessary to retain the primary form as another word would not have the same virtue. It is also said that the

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### **According to the Book of Shadows, the power of the words lies not in what they are, but in the "frenzy of will" that must accompany them.**

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names of demons in incantations must be in the demons' original language. The actual word itself matters little; its power comes from the purity and strength of the intent behind it.

But there is still another reason why language is a powerful magical tool. When Iamblichus spoke of the force of prayer, he stressed the idea that to establish a strong connection with the priests and with God, the prayer ought to be repeated several times daily. (11) He seems to be emphasizing not only the words themselves, not only the intent behind them, but insisting that the actual act of speaking is a powerful thing in itself.

In order to understand the significance and truth of this, we may start by examining the function of sound in magic, specifically music. The very word *enchant* implies 'capture by means of song.' Ficino held that music was a means for channeling cosmic influences; however, it should be noted that he also believed that the words of the Orphic hymns he used were more important than the music. Singing was simply a way to increase the potency of speech by adding

the power of music to it.

The Book of Shadows states that “Power is latent in the body and may be drawn out and used in various ways...” (12) One way for it to be drawn out is in our capacity to speak, to make sound, especially when Gardner goes on to say that “Power seems to exude from the body via the skin and possibly from the orifices of the body.” (13) It seems that the mouth, being both a bodily orifice and the place where speech and song originate, is an extremely important magical source.

The human body, which creates sound through vibrations, the contraction and release of muscles and the control of breath, is very much an instrument. This is a word whose double meaning stands out in relief within a magical context. The body is an instrument in the sense that it can create music, and it is also an instrument in the sense that it may be a pathway for other energies. The latter sense is what Ficino and his contemporaries were counting on when they tried to make themselves links between the earth and the powers of the stars and planets.

In Jewish magic, the consonants of a word were called its ‘body,’ while the vowels were its ‘garments,’ and the vowels were said to be the most important part of the word. (14) This takes on great meaning when, staying with our notion of the body as instrument, we realize how both these sounds are made.

Vowel sounds are made when the mouth and throat are open, when there is a current of air, when the instrument is in use. The vowel sounds are vibrations. The consonant sounds are made by cutting off these vibrations, stopping the flow. The instrument is closed, not alive, in making these sounds. It may be said that the body can only be an instrument in the second sense, able to receive energy and channel power of any kind, when it is open.

Magic texts show very often that the opening of the mouth is a significant act because the mouth is an entryway into the human being. There is a Jewish story of a woman possessed by a spirit which had been able to enter her through her mouth when she said the word “Satan.” Keeping this information in mind, we may notice that the chants discussed in the Book of Shadows consist almost entirely of vowel sounds, for example: IAU, IEHOUA, HO HO HO ISE ISE ISE. (15) These calls are prolonged, thereby keeping the instrument open and receptive to power for as long as possible. (16)

In the same vein, in Judaism, the most powerful name of God is written only in its consonants; suppressing its vowels kept people safe by making it impossible for the instrument to be open and vulnerable unintentionally. Who knows what would happen to those who opened carelessly to that kind of power?

Finally, it may be noticed that speaking is one of the few acts that must involve the entire human being. Without speech we could not articulate our ideas as effectively, and we cannot speak without an intent to utter words. Language is effective in magic both because of the miraculous nature of our ability to speak and because of the “frenzied will” and strong passions that first gave rise to the need for words.

#### NOTES

- (1) S. Liddell Macgregor Mathers, The Key of Solomon the King (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1989), p. 88.
- (2) Aidan A. Kelly, Crafting the Art of Magic, Book I: A History of Modern Witchcraft 1939-1964 (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 1991), p. 78.
- (3) Genesis 2:18-19.
- (4) Joshua Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition. A Study in Folk Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1939), p. 89.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Ibid.
- (7) Kelly, p. 81.
- (8) Ibid., p. 89.
- (9) Janet and Stewart Farrar, A Witches' Bible, Volume II, The Rituals (New York: Magickal Child, 1984), p. 61.
- (10) W. Wynn Westcott, ed., The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster (Edmonds, WA: Surefire Press, 1984), p. 47.
- (11) Joseph Ennemoser, The History of Magic, transl. by William Howitt (London: George Bell, 1893), Vol. I, p. 456, paraphrasing Iamblichus, On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians, Bk. 5, Ch. 2.
- (12) Farrar, p. 53.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Trachtenberg, p. 91.
- (15) Farrar, p. 56.
- (16) Kelly, p. 76.



# LETTERS

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the recent issue dedicated to bridging the gap between the magickal and the mundane. If there is such a thing as a collective pagan consciousness, *Mezlim*, as usual, seems to find its pulse. Although I have been struggling with aspects of this concept for quite a while now, the *Mezlim* articles simultaneously helped to focus my internal argument AND to add even more voices to the din inside my head. (Qualify that “thank you” at the beginning!) I am writing to toss a few more ideas into the magickal/mundane brew you have bubbled up to the surface of our community.

In my opinion, yes, there is a gap between the magickal and the mundane, which is as it should be. I understand that we are each vessels of the divine, so we therefore carry our “magick” with us wherever we go— affecting our environments just by entering into the gestalt of a circumstance. It is, however, the interplay of these two worlds that I’m concerned with. Our ways of bridging this gap are as unique as our individual paths. My personal practice celebrates the relationship between “opposites” — goddess/god, light/dark, sun/earth, receptive/active, etc. and how they spiral together into manifestation. Two topics I didn’t see fully covered are (1) how we compromise (or don’t compromise) our true selves to blend in to “normal” society; and (2) our tolerance of other belief systems.

There seemed to be general consensus amongst the authors that the “mundane” world, if separate at all, was

a constant; a never-changing structure to which we must adapt ourselves. We just accept that our corporate job requires suits or high heels every day or that our children should belong to a christian church, at least in name only. These are all decisions that we make every day, adapting or not adapting our belief systems or personal freedom to the established structures society has erected. My concern is that we automatically accept that the structures are here to stay and it’s up to each of us to decide how we are going to deal with them. What has happened to anarchy? Where is our idealism? Think of the system as the lingum and the practitioner as the yoni — and we have patriarchy at its best: a straight, unbendable structure (patriciate) around which the rest of us must bend. Okay, it feels good to bend and this is the nature of things & part of the dance of life. But, isn’t it interesting to think about the lingam with more mobility and the yoni with more firmness? Why can't the system adapt to the practitioner?

Just as we choose the extent to which we are adaptable to societal pressures to be part of the status quo, we also must choose how we will deal with those who believe differently than us. The raging idealist in me wants to think that I can accept a “rainbow” path of spiritual practices, including christians, muslims and jews — who are all seeking the same light through paths disparate of my own — but I am not a saint. Sam Webster’s article was quite insightful on its own, but I especially liked his quote of Magnus’ suggesting we approach those of other faiths as our neighbors. Well, I escaped the neighbor-infested suburbs 18 years ago. I choose to live in an urban environment which guarantees my privacy and allows me the option of whom I do or don’t spend time with. I prefer to spend my time with pagans, not christians.

I realize my comments are not fully delineated and I am merely skimming social and political ramifications of spiritual behavior. If my input sparks additional thoughts on the subject, I will feel like I truly contributed to the controversy!

Blessed Be,

Ariadne

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To the Editor:

As readers of *Mezlim* may be aware, Antero Alli and I have not always seen eye-to-eye. However, I feel it appropriate to give credit where credit is due, and his article, “On Starting a Ritual Group, Part I” in the *Beltane 1994* issue is right on the mark.

Too often, those who start ritual groups are unaware of the interpersonal dynamics among people who want to become members of such groups as well as the way those dynamics function to fulfill the (conscious and unconscious) needs of each individual. Today there are those who use ritual groups to merely fulfill the emotional needs fulfilled by extended families in previous generations. They, in turn, satisfy the power issues of the “leader.” As a result, many groups into which members have put hundreds or thousands of hours of effort (through physical labor or by giving the value of such labor in the form of money) end up falling apart. This disappoints many people who, in turn, become turned-off to the whole idea of group structure at all. This is unfortunate for individuals and ritual groups.

As Alli states, “...the issue of intent must be addressed” (emphasis in

original). Making clear what the intent of a ritual group is can help prevent the phenomenon of people joining for a short time and then leaving the group—this disrupts the harmony of the group and often leaves the departing person saddened at his/her hope for a group to work with.

Starting a group for any reason is not easy, and starting a ritual group, because of the energies raised during rituals, can be even more difficult. Alli's article may help some people through the rocky road that leads to the formation of, or membership in a ritual group.

Donald Michael Kraig

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Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing the only magazine I've yet to encounter which actually reaches through the veil of ignorance and says, "Magick is really happening!"

For many years I was certain that I was alone in my desire to explore the outer reaches of the human experience through the tools of Magick. Now I find that, not only am I not alone, but I am an unknowing (but very willing) member of an active and vital community of like-minded people. This is a very exciting discovery!

I can only judge by your most recent issue on Sacrament, but it certainly feels like I have found the community I feared existed only in my imagination.

Thank you again!  
Fire Drake

Dear Mezlim,

It was with great interest that I picked up the latest issue of your magazine on sacrament. Having been around a wide variety of people who refer to certain drugs as "sacrament", I was very curious. Sacrament often seems to be used as a euphemism or a code word for drugs.

Drug use as a magickal practice? I don't know. While I'm aware that there are cultures that use mind altering substances in their religious practices, no one I know comes from one of these cultures.

Bekki Shining Bearheart's article on recovery expressed what I feel are some of the dangers of sacramental drug use as well as some of the misconceptions of those who use drugs in a ritual practice, while also validating the spiritual nature of the quest many of these people are on. A well balanced article.

Sam Webster's letter to Soror Keter left me wishing that someone had written a letter like this to me...several years ago. It speaks to many of the questions that come from working this path of magickal and sacramental use of hallucinogens.

It was good to see the few mentions of sacraments other than drugs. Donald Michael Kraig's *Radical Sacraments of Magick* was, as usual, insightful and informative; offering both cautions and options.

I liked that there were at least two writers who challenged the qualifications of "self-initiated" shamans. One of my favorite lines was Oujemka's: "Don't fool yourself into thinking that because you take drugs and flog a drum all night you're a

Powerful Shaman."

It was also good to see some of the more personal and experiential treatments of the topic. Joy Cumming's *A Path of Many Stones* was a sometimes frightening reminder of just how altered you can become while under the influence of "sacrament".

After looking through the whole issue again, my favorite pieces were *Navigating the Labyrinth* by Ariadne and *Neophyte's Niche* by Donna Stanford-Blake. I enjoy the personal and comfortable way both these writers get their points across.

The art in this issue was wonderful. It's good to see that you have so many talented people working together. I hope that your artists will continue creating such beautiful drawings.

I think you managed to present a variety of points of view. Personal choice, using caution, and focused intent seemed to be common threads. Just as with any other magickal practice, this seems to be something not to be entered into lightly. I think that the whole topic was handled thoughtfully and intelligently.

Personally, I'm still undecided. But I'm glad to have other opinions; more food for thought. As a long time Mezlim reader, I look forward to future issues as well. Your magazine is always a pleasure to sit down and read cover to cover.

Sincerely,

Celeste

# REVIEWS

## **Circles, Groves & Sanctuaries: Sacred Spaces of Today's Pagans**

by *Dan & Pauline Campanelli*

Llewellyn Publications

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

\$12.95

Reviewed by Jennifer Toone

If you are ever feeling lonely and isolated away from the Pagan community at large, buy this book! It is a wonderful bringing together of many different people from all over; a sharing of beliefs, traditions and systems that is sure to bring a sense of community to anyone who reads it.

This book takes you on a tour of the various personal working spaces of people from all traditions and systems. Starting with Indoor Altars, the Campanelli's go through Shrines, Circles, Sanctuaries, and Groves—both indoor and out! Another wonderful feature of this book is the number of pictures that are in it. There are pictures of almost every sacred space that is discussed—so you not only get to read about the people and their space, but you get to actually see it for yourself.

For someone new to the Pagan path, this book would prove invaluable as a tool by which one can get ideas for the kind of altar/sacred space that would be most effective to you personally. A wonderful read, this book brings much enjoyment with it.

## **Living Wicca: A Further Guide for the Solitary Practitioner**

by *Scott Cunningham*

Llewellyn Publications

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

\$10.00

Reviewed by Jennifer Toone

When this book came out, I immediately went to see how one of Scott Cunningham's final projects had turned out. I must say, I think this is the best book of his that I have

ever read. Useful and informative, it is refreshing to see material that is not just "basic" Wicca.

Primarily known for his resource texts (Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs, Complete Book of Incense, Oils and Brews, and Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem and Metal Magick), Living Wicca is a tribute to an ever-developing writer. This is a book that I wish I had had when just starting to investigate Pagan and Wiccan beliefs. The contents are not particularly advanced, but they are more advanced than the majority of books on Wicca which seem to contain only basic information about tools, Sabbats, Esbats, covens, and basic spells.

Of particular note about this book is the fact that Cunningham discusses some of the philosophies behind why Wiccans do what they do. In the book to which this is a companion, A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner, he dealt primarily with basic rituals, Sabbats and tools. In this book, belief is directly addressed—it is so refreshing seeing someone deal with basic concerns like how to pray effectively and whether one should practice when not feeling well.

While not a difficult read, this book is an invaluable reference for one's library. I highly recommend it!

## **A Witch's Guide to Faery Folk**

by *Edain McCoy*

Llewellyn Publications

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

\$12.95

Reviewed by Jennifer Toone

I have been waiting and waiting for a book to come out that will finally do justice to Faery magic and working with the little spirits in nature. So many books have come out that are nothing more than happy, fanciful romps through a fantasy-based world of make-believe. Unfortunately, I will have to continue to wait.


The premise of this book is sound—to show Pagans how to interact with and to give details about the Fey in the world around us. However, all this book does is continue to hold fast to fairy tale based folklore and myth, and makes no attempt to dispel either. It seems that the author's opinion is that all disembodied creatures are part of the faery world—from leprechauns to spirits, the definition of Faery is stretched quite far!

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The latter third of the book is a dictionary of known Faery names from all over the world, and, as a resource in this fashion, the book is quite worthwhile. However, unless overly interested in a compendium of Faery, this book is not for anyone who works seriously with the Fey.

## **The Mask and The Mirror**

by Loreena McKennitt

Quinlan Road

PO Box 933, Stratford

Ontario, CANADA N5A 7M3

\$12.95 Album/Tape

Reviewed by Jennifer Toone

Ah, yet more gloriously lilting tunes wafting their way down upon us from Canada. This album is another glorious showing of Ms. McKennitt's vocal wonder. The music on this one, as on the three previous albums, continues in the same airy, light, mystical vein that has become her signature sound.

The lyrics of this collection of songs run the gamut of images from the moon and reverence of the natural world around, to Shakespeare set to music. The music is both compelling and wondrous. And, there are pagan themes to be found in every piece, in both the music and the lyrics. This is an inspiring and enjoyable album; definitely one not to be missed.

## **Dreamkeepers: A Spirit Journey into Aboriginal Australia**

by Harvey Arden

HarperCollins Publishers

10 East 53rd St

New York, NY 10022-5299

\$30.00

Reviewed by Kenneth Deigh

I have been fascinated by the concept of Dreamtime and the aboriginal culture that surrounds it for quite a few years, avidly consuming everything I can find on the subject. (I've even learned how to play the didgeridoo.) So I had high hopes for this offering.

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- Antero Alli

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- Wyrld Magazine

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From the beginning, I was enticed by the way the book is put together. The attractive dust jacket and beautiful color photos by Arden and his Aussie guide, Osborn, in the middle of the hardbound book appeal to my aesthetic spirit. I figured, even if the book isn't worth reading, at least it's a joy to look at.

As I began reading the book, I was initially somewhat disappointed. I had been anticipating a collection of Dreamtime tales gathered from Arden's walkabout. Instead, the book begins with a description of Arden's visit with an aboriginal "blackfella" who angrily accuses the *awtha* (author in the Aussie dialect) of coming to "steal more Dreamtime stories." He advises the "whitefella" – or *Gadia* – to get their own Dreamtime.

This early visit sets the tone for the rest of the book. Instead of collecting tales from another culture, we find ourselves dealing with real people – a people who are still connected to the Dreamtime, but live in this world as well.

The *Awtha* brings us face to face with a variety of very real people, from those who still live in the bush, following the old ways, to a self-educated public servant who works for his people from within the bureaucratic system of white society, misunderstood by both sides. We see the struggles of the aboriginal culture against the *grog*, a problem with alcohol much like we find on our own native American reservations. We also meet charming people who invite us to "drop by for a yarn"; rock paintings that date back thousands of years; and, a past that goes back much farther than our own limited sense of history.

The essence of this book comes through clearly in these quotes by aboriginal elder David Mowaljarlai.

"What's important is beyond all understanding – that's the first thing you must understand. Ask me questions if you like...but remember the same question's got different

answers for different people. Maybe they're true for you, maybe not. And never forget – *everything's* a mystery anyway. Once it stops bein' a mystery, it stops bein' true."

Like so many other aboriginal elders, David Mowaljarlai is trying to remind the younger generation of his people of their identity. This is difficult, since they have been denied the foundation of their identity - the land upon which their ancestors have lived for thousands of years.

I did not get what I was looking for. Instead I got something I didn't realize I was looking for: A realistic portrait of the Dreamtime today. I highly recommend this book for anyone who has a sincere interest in the Australian aboriginals and their culture.

## Errata

In *Mezlim* Vol. IV:4, Samhain '93: *Folk Magick in the Academy* by Nikki Bado, pp. 3-7. On page 5 there should be quotation marks around the paragraph in column two, beginning "When they start out on a long fishing trip...in order to insure a safe and profitable trip." This was supposed to be a long indented quote from Patrick Mullen's work on folklore from the Texas Gulf Coast fishermen. We regret the omission.

We apologize for taking so long to include this correction. Sometimes it just takes us awhile to recognize our mistakes.

Also, in *Mezlim* Vol. V:2, Beltane '94: *Recognizing 'Substance Abuse' Supports Restriction* on page 30, in the second paragraph and again in the second footnote, the phrase "war of drugs" should read "war on drugs". We take full responsibility for this typographical error.

## 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 S.A.S.E, a cover letter with your contact information and the name under which you wish to be published. We request that we be informed if your submission has been printed previously in another magazine, or if it is being simultaneously submitted to any other publisher. Submissions on 3.5" Macintosh compatible diskettes are GREATLY appreciated. Please use text file format.

## Serpentine • the first coil

by Serpentine

P. O. Box 1735

Cathedral Station, NYC, NY 10025

\$10.00 cassette tape

Reviewed by Grendle

A strange tape, which will no doubt appeal to strange people everywhere. Serpentine's vocals, highly altered by electronic studio gymnastics, sound a bit like a cross between Nina Hagen, Kate Bush, Enya and Yoko Ono. (Remember her?) Liberally sprinkled with bits and pieces of ceremonial magick, wicca, paganism, gothic counter-christianity and avant garde vocals, *Serpentine • the first coil* is definitely a strange brew.

The question is, how does this brew taste? *Circle*, the first cut on side one, is also one of the most successful on the whole tape. It is an evocative (both literally and figuratively) excursion into surreal sacred space. Reminiscent of Kate Bush's early recordings, it manages to escape clear definition,

while still manifesting the impact of immediate and personal experience.

*The Burning Times* is a bit heavy handed in its renunciation of christianity and patriarchy. Both this and *Invisible* are less successful in accomplishing the crossover into the hyperimagination of the listener, but may still work as background soundscapes to internal rituals.

*Innana* is a further journey into the realm of electronically altered vocals, creating a tonal temple of the goddess. Layered vocals, distorted and twisted into strange shapes of sound, take the place of instrumental music. The rhythm of this cut captures your attention and brings you into the desire to "dance in the Temple of the Goddess".

The juxtaposition of the haunting *Cordelia's Song* to the haunted *Lilith* is rather shocking. (Surely not intentionally.) *Cordelia's Song* is a rambling art song, strewing gothic petals of "chilled bridal flowers" along our path. The words, taken from a poem by Vincent Starrett, give more visual caress than meaning. *Lilith*, on the other hand, explodes with unabashed sexuality and demonic imposition. Screaming and wailing, *Lilith* descends in a fury of serpentine sound.

*Belonging to No One* owes at least a good portion of its melody to a popular country western ode. It condemns the suppression of female sexuality, and chronicles the passage of a nameless female voice from the discovery of her own sexuality and its repression by her mother, through marriage, religion and finally her rediscovery of the goddess.

Finally, *Precious Blood* sounds a whole lot like a catholic hymn, complete with background harmonies.

Serpentine is obviously "interested" in the occult. Equally as obvious is the fact that there is a lot that she doesn't understand about the words she's using. But don't let that hold you back. The failings of this tape are the inevitable shortcomings of any earnest first solo recording. It's well worth tracking down and giving a listen to.

*The first coil* relies heavily upon Serpentine's versatile voice and auditory gyrations. Fortunately, Serpentine isn't afraid to push the envelope of our expectations. She rants; she raves; she screams, snarls and croons her messages in words that value image over information. And so if her message is, in the end, unclear, her delivery is not.

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## *Our Next Generation: Children in the Magickal Community*

It is often said that there is no greater gift that life can give us than the joy of parentage...it is also said that having children can ruin your life. This issue of Mezlum will address the questions of where the Magickal community is going in the next generation. How are we raising our kids? How are they responding to having pagan parents? In what ways can we include our children, and the children of our extended magickal family, in the evolution of our community? Looking at the children and parents you know, where do you think they will take us?

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: **September 1, 1994.**

The theme for the Imbolc 1995 issue will be:

*Sacred Dance: Magickal Movement for All* Deadline: **December 1, 1994.**

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