

## THE GREEN

It is my intention to discuss the Green elements of modern Witchcraft and neopagan practices as well as relate those elements to my own Craft practice and the bits and pieces of Iberian-Celtic tradition handed down to me from my mother and her mother. My approach is both historical and personal; my interests lie in history, and I would be untrue to myself if I discarded history (which is so great a part of my perspective on life) in any presentation of Craft practices. My family associations with the Craft did not come through formal training or through recognized tradition, but by observation, activities, and verbal guidance.

Much of Craft practice has been softly muffled through its passage over the generations. It has only been in recent decades, with the formalization of Witchcraft traditions, that practices have been created to preserve oral traditions that otherwise might have faded. I am very grateful for the Gardners and the Bucklands and all the other writers of the Craft who have worked so diligently to preserve an ancient religion. My purpose here is to show the underlying thread that appears to run through most traditions and relate it to the ancient historical past, while also presenting insights as to how this thread weaves its way through three generations of my family, and is now entering the warp and weave of a fourth.

This does not mean that I know all there is to know about any one tradition- I don't. I am a solitary practitioner and have been for over thirty years. My information on traditions comes from reading about them and keeping current with the Craft through newsletters and other pagan publications. I correspond with a number of Wiccans, some with coven traditions and some who are solitaires, and I have found that some issues are repeatedly addressed, which I will bring out in this book. I have found that there are terms and there are terms, which means that words like "tradition" can lose their generic, mundane inference and be seen as representing a formal school of the Craft. I shall avoid using this particular word except in its accepted Wiccan form whenever possible. The generic version will be substituted with words like "custom" or "practice." Another word that sometimes carries negative inferences is "Aryan." From the historian's point of view, the Aryans were a people from the Central Asian areas that extended as far west as the Ukraine who were absorbed some three thousand years ago into the cultures they conquered. Any connection of Aryans with twentieth-century Nazis or modern racial, ethnic, and religious bigotry does not figure into this writing. The Aryans as a separate people simply don't exist anymore, although their heritage, like that of the Dravidic people of the Indian subcontinent, can be found throughout the modern world.

My own practices involve elements that appeal to me, but do not reflect an endorsement of any one tradition or practice. To be fair, many pagan usages recognized as belonging to a particular group are really older, common practices formalized by that group. To use a circle is not to be a Ceremonialist any more than to call upon Brigid is to be a Roman Catholic. Circles are a custom that pre-date Medieval Ceremonialism by many thousands of years, and Brigid was a Goddess long before she became a Christian saint. Just as old Pagan temples and holy sites are recognized today as Christian ones-from Lourdes to Notre Dame-the ancient beliefs underlying the modern ones cannot be claimed as a possession of the modern with any sort of historical validity. The four directions, the elementals, the center of the spirit, the five-pointed star, the star in the circle-all these are primal images that go back ten to twenty thousand years with no formalized Wiccan or Ceremonial tradition. Yet it is due to the Ceremonialist and modern Wiccan traditions that these ancient symbols and usages have not lost their meaningfulness. Most of the images of the Craft and Ceremonialism can be found lurking in the dark recesses of modern mainstream religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but it took the neopagan movement to pull these out of the shadows and back into a primary focal point.

I tend towards a pragmatic approach to the Craft and all religion in general, which does little for "faith" but a lot for connection with the universal powers of which we all are a part. The idea of an immanent Dual Deity makes faith unnecessary and contact an easier proposition. This is all part of being in tune with the energies flowing around us and recognizing that we and the energies are one. The communication is ongoing and does not have an "off" switch.

It is my impression that human unity with the life force was the normal state of affairs prior to the great Aryan expansion of 2100 B.C.E. It was with the need for leaders and followers in a warlike culture that the newer religions came about and created a need for deities to enforce a ruling class and a warrior class, with a priesthood to stand between the masses and the elite. The power of the priesthood was not in arms but in spirit,

and over time, this drew the spiritual connection of the common folk away from their oneness with the universe and into the priestly caste. This spiritual power has been at constant war with the temporal (political) power ever since. This is the source of friction between prophets and kings, popes and kings, preachers and government officials-who really rules the people: the political, legal rulers or the spiritual guides who communicate with God?

With the resurgence of Pagan practices in modern times, the clergy class has come under the threat of a significant loss of power. Secular humanism and neopaganism go hand in hand, and these are targets of religious propaganda and hysteria in the modern world-the Salem mentality of our times. Political aspirants have and will continue to ally themselves with leaders of the clergy in order to gain power and dominion. One faction feeds upon the other: clerical ministers become powerful through media exposure to large numbers of ordinary people by supporting a political personage, who gains power through media exposure to large numbers of ordinary people by soliciting the support of the clergy. Thus we see Nixon and Billy Graham, Kennedy and Cardinal O'Connell, Bush and Pat Robertson, and so on, united in purpose to control the governance of Americans. Independent thinkers are generally ignored or vilified without such political pairings.

My basic goal, then, is to reunite the individual with the energies of the universe through the various exercises of Wiccan traditions and Ceremonial magic. My personal approach is not one that can be pinned down to any one tradition; I have borrowed what I wanted and discarded as I saw fit (and still do). Although I am not a member of a specific tradition, I use a variety of practices found in different traditions because they aid in my union with the Divine. I use a few elements that are not generally (or at all) recognized in formal traditions, yet I have traced these from my mother and grandmother to what were once common concepts still identifiable in myths and stories. It is not my intention to offend or discredit any tradition, but I cannot ignore customs with which I have grown up or those that I feel have become a concern to many people in the Craft. These matters will be explained as I progress so that the practical side is weighed with that of belief.

I consider it important for individuals to have information made available to them so they can make informed decisions. People sit on a jury during a trial, hear all the evidence, and then are required to make a decision. Just as people are trusted to decide on legal matters, people should be making rational decisions on matters of the spirit. We have minds; we may as well put them to work in conjunction with our spirits in order to be a whole, functioning being. Just as the Lady and the Lord are One, my perspective is that we should be united within ourselves. Our minds can work with our spirits to give us a connection with the energies of the universe and with each other.

## **Green History**

My use of the term "Green" as the core element of Witchcraft is derived from various sources that are easily identifiable in modern Paganism. Green is the color used to describe the nature worship and herbal usage that has been a part of humanity from the earliest times. Green relates to the Lord and Lady of Greenwood, the Primal Father and Primal Mother, the Earth Mother and the Lord of the Wildwood. The Celtic and Gaelic peoples used this color to denote the earth spirits, fairies (or faeries, which I don't use as it is associated in some literature with fey, ill-fated), as can be noted in a variety of legends in which the mere mention of the color gives away the nature of the person involved. I highly recommend Katherine Briggs' book *An Encyclopedia of Fairies* for an excellent analysis and compilation of fairy motifs, legends, and anecdotes.

Green was an important color for the people of the British Isles, who maintained specific rules for making and using green dye. Men could participate in the labor of plant cultivation, but other parts of the dyeing process were only to be done by women. The proper natural shade of the color was the result of a long, involved procedure that could have been part of a ritual (see *The Witches' Almanac*, 1992-93, Pepper and Wilcox, pp. 88-89, for some fascinating details gleaned from Briggs, Lady Wilde, and others). If not properly created, the color was considered unlucky. One takes great care when working with the colors of the Other People, but no matter how well the material is dyed, the Scots consider it an unlucky color that should only be worn by someone attuned to the earth and the Craft of the Wise.

While fairies figure into the Green elements of Witchcraft, this is not the same as the fairy or elf traditions of Wicca. The ancient origins of Green Craft practices are easily identifiable in aspects of today's various traditions of Witchcraft (or Wicca), Ceremonial magic, and a variety of practices frequently lumped together under the label of neopaganism. In these Pagan expressions, the Green factors form the foundation upon which the more recent ideas and practices have been layered. This solid base level is primarily derived from what constituted the "Old Religion" as it existed before the innovations of political deities, authoritarian dogmas, designated priesthood, complex rituals, and degrees of initiations.

In the Norse/Teutonic systems (often identified as "Aryan" in the historical sense of the term), the base level is labeled Green, with the additional "higher" levels of Red and unified Blue and White becoming the primary focus of worship and practice. The identity and function of the deities occupying these various levels, however, gives evidence to their actual origins and purpose. Green belongs to the Lord and the Lady (Frey and Freya, literally translated), with the Lord representing abundance and fertility and the Lady representing peace and love as well as vast powers of magic. Red belongs to the Warrior (Thor), representing strength. The upper level is shared between White, belonging to the Lawgiver (Tyr) representing societal law and order, and Blue, belonging to the Ruler (Odin) representing paternal chieftain power, magical power (runes), and magical self-sacrifice. These same deities appear in other Aryan religious structures (with different names, however). The Lady is able to travel upward to the realm of Odin, and she supposedly taught her magic to him, the practical effect being that the newer deity of Odin has usurped the position of the Green-level Lord in the northern system. A deity of rulership was created some 4,000 years ago to equate the political reality of communal living being replaced by a ruled society; hence, the deities of the Red, White and Blue levels are relatively newer innovations specifically designed (or evolved) to authorize the new political situation. As Edred Thorsson in *Northern Magic* describes, however, it is the Green level that is the true Witch level.

I traced the Northern levels back through time in my book *Dancing Shadow. The Roots of Western Religious Beliefs*. While the new deities of the Warrior, Lawgiver, and Ruler can be found as early as 4,000 years ago, the oldest known religious practices of humanity came from a people called the Dravidians living in the Indus Valley. Their religion dates back 30,000 years, transported over the millennia by seafaring merchant folk to form the core of Pagan systems throughout Europe.

The Dravidic people still exist as a distinct ethnic group in India today, and their practices reflect much of what we tend to label as European Paganism—the concepts and even the names are recognizable. The Dual Deity of the Indus region, the Dravidian (rather than Hindu) Shiva (or Isha) and Shakti (or Uma, Danu) can be seen from the perspective of dating, migrations, and trade routes as the forerunner to the European duality of the Lord and the Lady—the Horned God of love/fertility/wildlife and the Goddess of life/death/rebirth—which formed what later became known as the Green level (base) of the Odinist (Asatru) tradition. The Green level reflects the earlier religion before the establishment of a warrior class and a ruling class, and before the need for the creation of political deities to authorize the power of rulers through a clergy class. It was the latter that resulted in people's separation from their deities, which led to the subsequent pattern of the remoteness of God as reflected in modern mainstream religions.

It is significant here to understand that when I write about the Green style of Witchcraft, I will be using deities that have become part of the Aryan-based Vedic Hindu tradition but which pre-date even that ancient religion by tens of thousands of years. It is not a matter of mixing pantheons to use both Shiva and Cernunnos, for example. Cernunnos' origins are from the Dravidic Shiva who is depicted in Indus Valley archeological finds as horned, surrounded by animals both wild and domestic, and symbolizing fertility and love, teaching and blessing in a yogic position. Cernunnos, seen on the more recent Celtic Gundestrup cauldron, is also seated in a yogic posture, horned, and surrounded by animals with one hand raised in blessing. This is the deity brought to Europe by the Celts, who themselves are of Dravidian heritage, being a people driven into Europe and the British Isles (by way of the Iberian Peninsula) from their home in Lydia because of the expansions of the Aryan tribes from 2000 to 1000 B.C.E. I have placed a further discussion of religious development in Appendix A.

In my practice of the Craft, I have tried to be as close to the Green customs as possible, and I find that this does not involve set litany, stylized prayers or rituals, required vestments and accouterments or dogma. From my conversations with other Witches, both traditionals and solitaires, and from my readings of other people's

practices, I have deduced that this practice of not conforming to a style or format is common. This Pagan approach was part of what spurred the Protestant Reformation to move away from the elaborate pageantry of Catholic ritual-codified and adhered to without room for improvisation and without the need for understanding-and back to a simpler expression of religion.

It is no coincidence that the ceremonies of Catholic Rome were discarded by the Germanic peoples, who had a stronger rural Pagan heritage and practice. The Catholic vestments, formalities, and design of the altar all come from the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruled as a god and was duly worshiped as one. The Catholic Church merely appropriated Diocletian's ceremonies and labeled them Christian after the old emperor retired. The Pope has become the emperor of religion. John Romer gives a fascinating analysis of this evolution of religious practice in his video presentation Testament.

## **The Connection of All**

The Green-level Witch does not require detailed instruction on approaching the Divine because the Witch and the Divine are connected as One. The Green Witch performs only those rituals that appeal to the individual's point of focus, being as elaborate or as plain as the mood dictates. With many people who practice a natural Witchcraft there is a sense of cheerful anarchy along with profound belonging, for the Witch is not a steward of the earth, the Witch is the earth. What the earth is, a Witch is-be it part of the solar system, the galaxy, the universe, or more-we are an integrated part of All. As was stated in the television series A Practical Guide to the Universe, we are all made of star dust.

By being part of the earth in all of its manifestations, one is then both pantheistic and animistic. The planet is like Cerridwyn's caul-dron, and we are part of the stew bubbling inside. Sometimes we rise to the surface, pop, and return to the soup to intermingle and rise again. The forms of creation are always changing, for change is a sign of life and not something to be feared. Science recognizes, as the ancients did, that energy is immortal, which is a view at odds with the central message of Christianity-believe in Jesus' immortality or die. But even this dogma is confused, as the Scriptures state that non-believers will actually live forever, only in a lake of fire and/or the torments of hell (a place curiously named after the Norwegian Goddess Hel, ruler of the Norse Underworld, where everyone went after death to rest before rebirth).

In the Green level, life is an immortal energy. The Goddess' mes-sage that we do not "die" is what the Judaic religion tried to suppress two and a half thousand years ago in its story of the Tree of Life (a Dravidic theme). For students of religion and cosmology, it is common to say that the Goddess represents matter (Mater; Matri; Mother), and the God represents energy (Spirit; Fire; Father). He is life, and she is the form that life takes; the one requires the other for definition. This is the nearly 30,000-year-old heritage of Dravidic Shiva and Shakti. It is the mainstream rejection of matter in favor of energy that throws people into conflict with their very existence. Denial of our unity of body and spirit projects a self-loathing element into the new religion that curbs one's enjoyment of life by imposing artificial restrictions, making death preferable to life.

For the human species, hatred for the material container of the spirit, the body, is suicidal. Much of society's wars and psychological problems can be traced to the separation of people from the joy of life through unity with the Goddess and the God. Indeed, early Christians, including the revered St. Augustine, taught that all sexual union was evil, having children was evidence of committing sin, and all people should be celibate to be worthy of the Kingdom of God. Augustine kept a mistress for most of his priestly life, however, postponing baptism in the belief that he would then be forgiven. Interestingly enough, the fate of "bad" King Herod's painful death from intestinal worms, seen as a sign of God's punishment - was the same death experienced by St. Augustine, yet he is called holy. The result of people actually practicing what early Christianity preached, however, would have been the end of the human species. That is why modern calls to espouse "Christian family values" are historically humorous-it was the Roman Pagans up through the fifth century C.E. who denounced Christianity as being detrimental to family values (Tacitus). I recommend Will Durant's highly readable History of Civilization: Part IV, The Age of Faith for anyone looking for a start in studying religious history.

The connections found through the Green elements of the Craft place the practitioner of the Craft in harmony not only with the Lady and the Lord (who are seen as equals), the earth, the stars, and the uni-verse, but also with other life forms and the elementals. The four elementals are more than the personification of earth, air,

fire, and water; more than the symbols of colors, directions, seasons, and aspects. They are the real entities of powers that the practitioner can invoke for assistance. They are part of the Goddess and the God, but in the same way that many Christians find it more comfortable to work with the Son of God or with saints, many Witches find they can work better by directing their focus on the elemental powers of the Dual Deities. Because these are aspects of the Lord and Lady, two are seen as relating to each Deity; earth and water to the Lady (matter), and air and fire to the Lord (energy). I see in this a deeper significance.

There are those who see the elementals as unknowable forces without personality - as a "what." My view is that since I am made up of parts of them, and I am a "who," so are they. I call them my kith and kin: earth is in my body, air moves my breath and stirs my intellect, fire is the spark of energy within me and my passion, and water is in my bodily liquids and my emotions. I have learned through contacts with other Witches that I am not alone in this viewpoint, so perhaps it is an undercurrent in Witchcraft today that is simply not well publicized.

My own approach to the elementals, as developed from the pantheistic heritage of my mother and her mother, is one not found in most traditions as far as I can tell. My subsequent studies indicate that my mother and grandmother, both Brazilians of Iberian-Celtic descent (with a surname that is a Celtic god), passed on a perspective still practiced in the modern derivation of Dravidian and Vedic religions known as Hinduism. Witchcraft of European heritage contains aspects of the Dravidic culture as it was spread through a series of migrations, the most recent wave being the Gypsies (initially assumed by Europeans to be Egyptians but subsequently recognized by historians as being from India, with one branch traveling through Egypt and later into Spain circa twelfth century C.E., and the other through Eastern Europe), and I consider both the pantheistic and animistic qualities to be part of the relationship with the elementals.

By becoming connected with nature and the universe the Witch can expect to have new, meaningful experiences from which to gain insights, which is one reason it is a good idea to keep a journal for dreams and visions. From one such inspiration, I saw that the elementals are as "personal" as the forces that are the Lady and the Lord-the connection between the God and the Goddess and the elementals is too wonderful to be summoned or banished. While I had been pondering over whether or not I should incorporate that tradition into my own practice, my conclusion was that this was not right from my animistic perspective.

### **The Law of Return**

Within the traditions of Wicca and all forms of magic practice there is a Law of Return. In Wicca this is usually called the Law of Threefold Return, meaning that whatever magical power is sent out returns threefold, but my mother and maternal grandmother taught this concept to me more equitably. "What is sent comes back," my mother told me on numerous occasions. This is a Green element found restated in mainstream faiths as "doing unto others as you would have others do unto you." I am more inclined to accept an equivalent Law of Return as its appearance is more frequent in a variety of sources, throughout various belief systems and Greek philosophies. The original emphasis was not so much on being a good neighbor and obeying civil laws as it was a warning to not indulge in magic to harm others. From this comes the traditional Witches' Rede, "If it harms none, do what you will," which I have added to my Green practice because of its appropriateness and its widespread use in Wicca. The Law of Return had always been the main guide for my mother and grandmother, and the logic of the two are the same. You do not want to harm others because what is sent comes back, hence you would be harming yourself.

### **A Religion and a Craft**

As Marion Green points out in her book *A Witch Alone*, Witchcraft is both a religion, with a reverence of the Lady and Lord (rather than a faith in them, as their immanence makes belief unnecessary) and a Craft, with magic spells, charms, and the use of herbal knowledge. In mainstream life, the law of Pagan religious practice has become related to civil injunctions and is presented as ethics, while the magical power itself has become the possession of the clergy to distribute on behalf of the people under the right conditions and with proper compensation.

This leads to another aspect of the Green customs of the past: magic was not performed for monetary payment. If a person gave a donation of their own accord, that was acceptable, but the Witch rarely asked or demanded

something in return. The Green heritage indicates that an exchange would be made to "secure" the magic, like giving a gift to receive a gift in fairy legends. Instruction was another matter, but not considered the same as a professorship at a school. The "student" was actually a "seeker," and it could have been a hindrance to another's spiritual development to require payment, except perhaps as an apprentice's service. Things have changed, however, and the ideal of the village Witch with one apprentice, or performing magic and receiving tokens such as food and materials, is not realistic today. The number of seekers is enormous and the expense of training would be prohibitive. The Craft is truly learned through intuition, so the more experienced Witch can only offer the benefit of that experience for the seeker to accept or discard. In the end, it is the seeker who must connect personally with the Lady and the Lord. Learning, however, is an unending road.

### **Solitary or Communal?**

For the most part, the Green elements of the Craft are seen in the path of its ancestry as a solitary practice, although it had communal elements and can be coven and overlaid with nearly any tradition. The aspect of personal union with the Divine does not lend itself to dogma, however, and any coven focusing on the Green elements would have to provide for variations in approach. When Wicca was "re-discovered" early this century, the idea was initially promoted that there had always been covens of Witches practicing their craft in an underground environment. Later, when it was difficult to defend Margaret Murray's theories of continuous practices, it was postulated that the Wiccan tradition was never passed along and that anything calling itself Witchcraft today was basically someone's fabrication. These are ideas that are known among practicing Witches, have been written about in a variety of books and articles, and in some instances have given rise to controversy within the Pagan community. Paganism has many sects and denominations, just like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and some are very defensive about their heritage. From the pragmatic viewpoint, this is unnecessary.

### **The Grandmother Heritage**

I have heard people ask what to do to become a "real Witch" and this is troubling to me. The traditions that have relied on a chain of initiations (Gardnerian and Alexandrian, for example) have been presented at times as being more "legitimate" for their ties to Gardner, while the so-called "Grandmother Heritage" became tied to Murray's erroneous conclusions and became accepted as basically fraudulent. Yet to accept a narrow view that makes the heirs of Gardner's particular variety of Wicca the only "true" Witches is to pretend that there were never any Witches elsewhere in the world or to retain a myopic view limited to Europe. Again, this could be considered a matter of terminology. For some, the word Wiccan does not mean the same as the word Witch, but the definitions are still hazy and it may be that something will be worked out over the next few decades. I have no trouble with the idea of being a Witch, but I do not yet see myself as Wiccan, unless I use the words interchangeably.

What has perhaps added to this confusion is not that there is no "Grandmother Heritage," but that it has been misunderstood by the people who write about coven-oriented Wiccans. It has been my experience that there are indeed two kinds of "Grandmother Heritage"-one in which the grandmother (and/or grandfather) practiced folk arts without regard to the religious conventions of the land, and one in which the grandparent practiced the Craft within the confines of those religious conventions. Much of the Green elements of the Craft survived two thousand years of Christian oppression by being integrated with the prevailing religions or by non-acknowledgment. Spell work was done without payment, with no civil laws involved and only tokens exchanged, like a barter system outside the realm of taxes and bureaucracy.

In my own family background, my maternal grandmother was known as an herbalist and a healer in her region. She was consulted even when medical doctors were available because she was known to cure even the most hopeless of cases with her herbal remedies. The payments she received were things like chickens, fruit, and odd jobs around the house and yard. Often there was only gratitude. She was sought after for charms, cures, "the power" and advice, but no one called her a Witch and she functioned quite comfortably within the folk traditions of the Catholic Church in Brazil. In her case, there was no element of Afro-Brazilian macumba (a Brazilian type of Santeria); instead, she drew upon her Celtic-Iberian roots from Portugal and Galicia (in northwestern Spain). Not surprisingly, I find the writings on Celtic Witchcraft most meaningful to me, but I

include the Dravidian connection. My mother also related to the Dravidic Shiva; due to his aspect as teacher and healer, she gave her brother a small Shiva when he went to medical school.

The non-aboriginal people of the United States have mostly lost touch with their Pagan roots simply by not being exposed to them for two centuries. This is particularly true for those of European descent. The religious culture of Christian America is rather lackluster compared to that of Christian Europe. How many people in America understand Morris Dancing, Jumping the Bonfire, Maypole dancing, the Green Man, the Fool's Parade, or any number of other Pagan traditions still held in Europe and the British Isles within or parallel to a Christian context? There are no standing stones to relate to (like Avebury or Stonehenge), no multiple thousands of years of pre-Christian European-based history, mythology, and landscapes, and no ancient ancestral caverns, burial mounds and artifacts for the European-descended American to influence American religious practices.

I feel a sense of loss over this distance between American Witches and their European heritage because even if a person studies and learns about these things, the culture was not "lived." What is attractive about the Craft is that the expression comes from the experiences and feelings of the practitioner. For example, it is fine to learn Celtic (all knowledge is a delight), but there is a difference between learning Celtic and growing up Celtic in Wales.

Even in Europe, the Celts are an elusive people. Other cultures, be they Roman, German, Norse, or Saxon, have worked so diligently to eradicate rival ethnic Celts over the centuries that today, Europeans of Celtic descent can only piece together what was once Celtic. Today the places in America where the Pagan heritage is strong are those areas where the folk ways of isolated ethnic groups have been largely undisturbed, such as in the Celtic practices of people of Irish and Scottish heritage in the Appalachian Mountains.

Another aspect of the solitary "Grandmother Heritage" that makes this influence hard to assess is the lack of formal training for the solitary compared to that experienced by modern covens. My grandmother (and there are other Witches who have had similar experiences) never instructed anyone on herbal cures, spells, or charms, but used them in her daily life when the need arose. Family members simply picked things up through being exposed to the actual practices. My own mother passed along some of the spells and guiding principles, but I know there were many spells which are lost to me that she forgot or never used because there was no need.

Although my mother considered herself a Catholic, for her the Catholic Church was a connection to the Pagan past, with the anointing oils and sacred magics of the priest motivating her attendance at Mass in her later years. Despite all the Catholic rhetoric about sin, heaven, and hell, she still believed fervently in spiritism and reincarnation-ideas that would have been considered un-Christian if she had spoken carelessly about them. So for many modern solitaries, the heritage has always been there, perhaps evidenced by unorthodox customs coexisting with Christian practices.

The Green elements of the Craft are like the "Grandmother Heritage"-quiet and not flashy. There are aspects of the Old Religion that have moved into the mainstream such as the Christmas tree (a relatively recent Christian development), mistletoe, holly, and so forth, some of which were illegal only a couple of centuries ago because of their Pagan connections. Today this trend of incorporating Pagan practices is even more manifest in people who see themselves as Christian but also accept New Age ideas. Crystals, herbs, candles, and meditation move easily into a Christian setting.

## **Coming Home**

For many modern Witches, the sensation of coming home that is found in Wicca is partly due to a personal acceptance of the intuitive process that brought the older heritage back into prominence. For a successful transition, the baseless fears induced by mainstream faiths for the purpose of controlling their members must be discarded, and the individual must be opened up to the power of the Goddess and the God. The deities of Wicca are not the punishing political deities of conventional religions. When the Witch talks of a loving God and Goddess, there are no lists of laws, dietary demands, dogmas, worship formats, or even "witness"-type acknowledgments required. There is but one major rule to remember: "what is sent comes back."

The most frequently used Green materials are herbs and other natural objects (flowers, sticks, nuts, rocks, shells, et cetera), candles, and invocations. Also used are oils, inscriptions, string, fiber cords, feathers, and natural cloths like wool, cotton, and muslin (which is simply a stronger cotton). These are sometimes stocked as part of a magic supply, but frequently the items are procured from one's surroundings as needed. The Lord and the Lady will always provide what you need to work a spell, from the words to the ritual to the materials used therein. You will learn through experience to trust them for your needs.

Another item found in Green usage is a forked staff, or stang. I have had many over the years. We move around a lot, and I have always found a nice staff awaiting me in my new location. This is something that I use while living in an area, and which I leave behind as belonging there when I move away.

Only recently has this changed, and the manner of this change was meaningful to me. I am currently in an area that I like very much, but I will be moving again to what should be my permanent home. When I first arrived here, I did indeed gain a staff right away, but when I realized that I would be leaving here to finally settle in another place, I began to think about taking something of the spirit of this area with me. There were some tall beautiful trees in the neighborhood, many of which have now been cut down. As I walked near a pile of tree trimmings, I realized that the stack of debris was full of strong, straight, neatly forked stangs. Now I have permanent stangs for everyone in the family, and the individual decorating of each stang is a ritual that personalizes the staff while allowing us to take part of the spirit of this region wherever we go. In a way, I have been given the last vestiges of trees now gone, and the stangs will remain connected to the Lord and Lady through attendance in rites and Craft work. These stangs can be used as natural altars in outdoor rituals or simply as walking stangs. When indoors, mine carries some of my tools: feather, cord, pouch, and seasonal wreath.

### **Craft Connections**

The deities of the Green level of the Craft are the Ancient Ones of human history, with names that have flickered on the edges of our awareness for two thousand years, and yet, they are nameless. Many popular names for the Goddess and the God abound in the Wiccan community, derived from various heritages. The names include Cerridwyn, Cernunnos, Hecate, Herne, Danu, Lugh, Parvati, Shiva, Kali, Hades, and many others from the Near East, the Far East, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. But the Oldest of the Old is the Great Mother and the Great Father, the Lord and the Lady who figure in creation and destruction, the beginning and the end, and also renewal and rebirth.

While many modern traditions of Wicca incorporate elements of Ceremonial magic, with the accompanying Kabbalah and lists of angels, archangels (and their demonic counterparts), realms and levels, these aspects are unnecessary to the Green experience. There is instead an open communication with the Ancient Ones, and as you practice this dialogue, your powers will be enhanced through use. Tools of the trade are the familiar ones; for example, the kitchen witch of modern times is close to the Green elements of the Craft. It is unnecessary to follow a particular pattern of activity in the conducting of ritual because the emphasis is on individuality. People of today do not need to emulate what they may believe to have been the behavior patterns of the people of a few centuries (or millennia) past to know what feels right. Sometimes the approximation of forgotten customs can enhance one's work, other times it is a detraction. Only the practitioner can decide what should be used or discarded.

In the past, for example, swords were only held by the nobility; the moors were certainly too cold and damp for naked circles, especially in a time when disease was a dire threat to survival; and people were for the most part illiterate and not regulated to calendars in things of nature but to the changing of the seasons as they actually occurred. Calendars of Roman heritage were re-designed by the Church to institutionalize conformity in behavior. In modern times, pushing aside the inhibitions of orthodox religions may be aided by naked dancing, or drawing a circle with a sword may add to the individual's visualizations. It is always a matter of personal choice.

The folk who practiced the Green level of the Craft were the common people who lived close to the earth and knew the cycles of nature as they revolved in the weather and growth patterns. Their implements were from nature or from their country existence, and their ritual robes would have been the same as their daily wear or



their festival dress, if they were fortunate enough to possess such a thing. They kept no written litany because they were illiterate, and they passed their Craft ways along through a variety of myths and everyday practices. In Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft there are many options offered, with the acknowledgment that the practitioner of the Craft may pick and choose among the elements to formulate a suitable path. In this respect, it is an excellent source book for some of the varieties of approaches to the Craft.

## **A Symbolic Union**

I have heard from a number of women who have asked whether they must have sexual relations with a coven leader in order to be a "real" Witch. This is another controversial aspect of the Craft that I feel needs to be discussed simply because it is not something that can be ignored. The idea of having to engage in sexual relations with a coven leader has the undesirable effect of linking Wicca with Christian cults like those of Jim Jones or David Koresh (wherein girls as young as eleven and twelve years old were turned over to these men by their dominated parents to be sexually initiated and impregnated by the cult leaders) but that is not what Wicca is about. People are constantly being warned in various Pagan publications against the potential for domination, control, and ego-mania in the coven situation. Once again, if something feels uncomfortable, it is not appropriate for you. Witches are not cultists, but individualists, and any time you find a coven environment that denies the power of the individual, you may be well advised to seek elsewhere for companionship.

For those who wonder if sexual energy produces magical results, the reality is that it is a hit or miss situation that will vary with each attempt. Human sexual psychology is immensely variable, not only between couples, but between each encounter for the individual. Sexuality is so personal and intimate by nature that the only person who truly knows how things went is the one who experienced it. But for a couple to have sexual intercourse aimed at one purpose, each person must fully depend on the other not to lose concentration or stray in the mental imaging, and how many can honestly attest to that? It might work, but then again it might not. Rhiannon Ryall in West Country Wicca states that in her childhood, the coven members believed that if the woman being initiated got pregnant, she did not handle the magic properly. So besides an unexpected (and perhaps unwanted) baby, the woman is blamed for messing up the magic and made to feel like she is an incompetent Witch. This attitude is debasing to women and is simply another way of asserting male dominance in what should be a religion of balance. The chances of pregnancy depend a lot on the internal cycles of the woman, which have nothing to do with effecting magic for distribution at a gathering (as suggested by Ryall). The risk today of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), let alone the possible psychological damage, must be weighed against the expected gains. With monogamous pairs who care about each other the chances for success are much higher, and a lack of success would be less likely to cause psychological harm.

The Etruscans performed sexual unions in the presence of others without concern and enjoyed watching one another after banquets, according to Greek writers (who found such behavior disgraceful). Public copulation was perfectly acceptable, and the men did not know or care who fathered the children in a marriage-but their society no longer exists (Massa, *The World of the Etruscans*). Who is to say that the so-called immorality of the Roman emperors was not an attempt to return to the Etruscan heritage that pre-dated the Romans? Yet societies do change and we are not separated from our culture, so a coven approach to sexual magic might result in more pain and unhappiness than power-raising. It would seem reasonable, then, to relegate such magic to married or recognized couples.

So what is the history of the Great Rite? It was the symbolic union of energy and matter that was later replaced with the transubstantiation used today in the Christian Eucharist. The translation of the Unity of the God and the Goddess into a human physical union originated with a marriage between the High Priestess and the secular king who ruled for a year and a day. Merlin Stone (*When God Was A Woman*) and Joseph Campbell (*Masks of God* series) both offer insights into the way this practice developed in different cultures, particularly in the Near East. The public witnessed this union of the sacred and the secular leaders and believed that this would ensure the fertility of the land and the people for a year. At the end of that time, the king was executed as a willing sacrifice, and his role became that of the Sacrificed God, with his body and blood being distributed about the fields of the realm in a ceremonial holy communion. Indeed, this is the ancestor of the Christian sacrament of the same title, to be reborn as the corn (this being the European word for grains, especially wheat or oats; "corn" as maize is an American plant) that sustained the people.

It is important to remember, though, that this was an institutionalized public performance relevant only to the point in history where it appeared. Modern Witches do not perform blood sacrifices, nor do they burn or strangle messengers to the gods. Likewise, they do not perform a sexual union before the whole national community-and the word "national" is vital. The ancient event was not confined to a small crowd of select membership, like a coven, nor to a private area set aside from a small gathering (an option offered by some covens), but before thousands of onlookers as part of a civil ceremony. The spectators themselves then participated in feasting, sexual unions, and general celebrating. This was a societal event.

The application of sexual union to Witchcraft is more Ceremonial than Wiccan in heritage as it came from the later time frame of an instituted priesthood. This occurred when the power of the female lead of religion was overtaken by Aryan priests, with the priestesses becoming the generational tool by which a permanent secular king (or pharaoh) gained his throne legitimately through marriage (see Stone). For the practical Witch, the Great Rite is performed when the knife (athame) is lowered into the cup during ritual, so while the first is a national event out of context in a coven, the second is a personal and symbolic event suitable for either private or coven ritual. The symbolic union of male and female is for the happiness of both, and anyone who is uncomfortable with the idea of having sexual intercourse with a coven leader is certainly correct to not do so.

In reality, there are only a few covens that require sexual union in order to acquire the highest degree of initiation, so this is the exception rather than the norm. The Green Witch experiences the Great Rite through personal union with the Lady and the Lord. The use of "degrees" is a practice derived from Ceremonial magic orders and need not be applied to Witchcraft. As Marion Green states, you either are a Witch or you are not: no degrees are involved. The actual sacrifice of the king became obsolete and was replaced with the symbolic ceremony, so there is even less point in reviving in part the practice that even the ancients discarded in total.

## **The Key to Green**

The central Green element of all Craft expression is the Goddess as undying, threefold, and associated with the earth, the moon, and the living (sacred) waters, and the God as undying, threefold, and associated with the earth, the sun, and the sky. As God of grain and solar phases, he is also the willing sacrifice who "dies" and is "reborn" in the Goddess in the yearly cycle of the seasons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is that concept of the Trinity dating back some 30,000 years to Shiva as the Threefold God. He is both the seed and the eternal energy of life.

"Green" is a somewhat generic term, then, for the elements that can be found in herbal, natural, traditional, or family traditional Witchcraft, and it has great flexibility and variety. The Green elements can be adapted to those Ceremonial aspects you find appealing, and it forms the foundation level of the Odinist tradition (which is very restrictive on what elements are acceptable-Kabbalah and Tarot not being used, as an example). The key to the Green facet of Witchcraft is to be attuned to nature and the natural forces surrounding you.

## **Green Festivals**

The Green-level festivals are centered around the solstices and equinoxes. Marion Green calls the other Sabbats "White festivals," relating to events in the lives of the Goddess and the God, but really the solar Sabbats also relate to events in their life-myth, and the whole of the eight Sabbats can be seen as one continuous, mystically overlapping story. As a child, in my family the changing of the seasons-spring, summer, fall, and winter-were noted along with All Hallows Eve and Harvest Home, so two of the traditional eight Sabbats were ignored-bnbolc in February and Lughnassadh in August. I have since included these two for many years in my own wheel of the year, because I have found a relevancy for them and they make my year complete.

Since the seasons of plantings and harvests vary depending upon where you are in the world, the eight Sabbats are, from a practical sense, centered on the quarters and the cross quarters as they relate to the central myth of the God and the Goddess. I label the solar festivals as the quarters and Lesser Sabbats, with the cross quarters being the Greater Sabbats at the mid-points between, but I have seen these labels interchanged in various combinations in my readings of different Wiccan traditions. Some covens only celebrate four of the Sabbats, others trade off leadership roles between the High Priest and the High Priestess according to Sabbat. It is basically a matter of preference. Each Sabbat is worthy of attention for attuning to the earth and the universe,

but I have skipped Sabbats from time to time and know this is common among other Witches. Sometimes the celebration comes a day sooner or later than the normal timing, which can work because the Craft is not dogmatic nor possessed of an orthodoxy. The individual's input is vital.

## **Personal Power**

As you study the Craft, make your own interpretations and your own variations. There are no precise spells or recipes, but those given here are tried and true formulas that have achieved their goals. Each Witch must make a change of one sort or another to personalize any spell adopted from another's spellbook. The tables of comparisons can be manipulated in any way that feels appropriate to you within the overall format. An important thing to remember is that magic takes place between you and the deities you invoke. It is personal, and you create your own sublime power.

## **2. BASICS**

The Sabbats of Wicca are fairly consistent no matter what the tradition. There are the quarters (the lesser Sabbats) of the solstices and equinoxes, and the cross quarters (the greater Sabbats) of the midpoints between the quarters; although some traditions freely adjust these terms, the sequence remains fairly uniform. In my own application, the terms "lesser" and "greater" are not used for the Sabbats, while quarters indicate the Sabbats of the four seasons, forming the Solar Cross in the wheel of the year. Some Wiccan traditions celebrate only four of the eight Sabbats, and as I was growing up, we observed six (but with their mundane names rather than as "Sabbats"). In addition to the accepted eight festivals, there is one other that is sometimes used—the annual festival called Twelfth Night. For those who observe it, this is generally a day set aside for use only when it is needed for a Naming Day. It need not be celebrated every year, although you may use it to reinforce the power of your Craft or working name.

To envision the progression of the Sabbats, it is easiest to think of the year as a circle, or a wheel, with eight spokes. Starting at the top is Yule, the winter solstice, which generally falls on December 21 (almost any calendar will have the solar phases clearly marked as "First Day of Winter," "Spring," "Summer," and "Fall," so any variance to these dates can be easily found for your correction). Moving right leads us to Imbolc, which is February 2, although some Witches celebrate it on the eve of February 1 (rather like some Christians go to church on Christmas Eve, others on Christmas Day). Next comes Ostara, the vernal (spring) equinox on March 21. This is followed by Beltane on May 1 (May Day), then Litha, the summer solstice (traditionally called Midsummer) on June 21. The wheel of the year progresses now to Lughnassadh on August 1, which, like its opposite on the wheel, Imbolc, can be celebrated on the previous eve—in this case, July 31. Mabon follows as the autumnal equinox on September 21, and the last Sabbat of the year, Samhain, is celebrated on October 31. The year begins anew at this point for many Wiccan traditions, and the wheel turns onward to Yule.

### **Twelfth Night and Other Celebrations**

It is easy to see how the celebration of the New Year could vary from one tradition to another in the old days before the Christian calendar unified it all. For many people, Samhain was the end of the old year, being the last Sabbat of the year. But then Yule was the day the sun began its trek back to the earth, so it was also appropriate to see Yule as the last Sabbat of the old year and the beginning of the new year. January 1 is merely a compromise as the midpoint between Yule and Twelfth Night, which the Christians appropriated as Epiphany, the day the three Wise Men located Jesus and recognized him as Christ (a type of Naming Day occurring about two years after he was born, yet they show up at the creche scenes anyway). Marion Green states that in earlier times this was a day for bringing children into the community of adults through a naming ceremony, which relates to the naming of the God. With each community the God's name would be different, and perhaps revealing the name to the child in a puberty rite was part of the ceremony.

In the old tradition, the God was from birth to Naming Day simply, Son, the Son of the Mother, or Mabon. In a community Twelfth Night is celebrated annually, but with the solitary Witch this is unnecessary. The indication, then, is that a Green element such as Naming Day only be used when someone, either the individual Witch or a family member such as a child who has reached the age of puberty (generally between the ages of twelve and fourteen), is brought formally into the Craft and chooses his or her Craft name. In modern Wicca,

this is a Rite of Passage. It really does not matter when you decide to commence New Year, but I have always used December 31 because this is part of the cultural society I live in (coming from the Norman/Scottish Hogmanay Day), and it was how I was raised. The purpose of religion should not be to set people apart from others, but to celebrate and honor the gift of life.

Sprinkled around the calendar are other days that can be marked with any degree of ceremony you desire, be it the simple lighting of a candle or incense before an image to a fully developed ritual. These days include April 14 as Mother Goddess Day, May 18 as the Feast of the Horned God, August 20 as the Marriage Day of the God and the Goddess (coming after their union and her becoming pregnant, as was traditional for people in times past), September 23 as Ishtar's Day, and November 27 which doubles as Parvati's Day and Triple Goddess Day. There are any number of Goddess' Book of Days, Witches' Almanacs and Magical Almanacs to peruse that will give information about a variety of holidays throughout the world for you to pick out your favorites-the above are a few of mine. I generally use an almanac and like to mark a new calendar with all the holidays for the upcoming year as part of my Yule ritual. Calendars for all the family members are always a Yule gift in my home.

### **The Life-Myth and the Sabbats**

The Sabbats are integrated with the life-myth of the Goddess and the God. This requires an understanding of the allegorical nature of the myth, for the deities will sometimes be two different beings at nearly the same time. This is usually explained as how the Goddess is changeable-going from pregnant mother-to-be at Mabon to the crone at Samhain to new mother at Yule-although this means that she is crone and pregnant at the same time, mythically speaking, and young again at Imbolc. In the God's life-myth, he impregnates the Goddess with himself in summer, "dies" in the fall, and is "reborn" in winter. At the same time, he is the King of Shadows at Samhain, and the Holly King (Santa Claus) at Yule who is displaced by the Oak King (or New Year's baby) at winter solstice-banished by himself, as it were, with the dark of winter aspect giving way to the Sun God aspect as "Light of the World." Somehow, it all comes together and evokes a sense of right-ness with the world and the orderliness of life's cycles.

Yule [Yool] (December 21) is when the Goddess gives birth to the God (a familiar tale from which Christianity evolved one of its major holidays). This is a time of rebirth, and candles are lit to welcome the God who is the returning sun of the winter solstice. Gifts are given (especially to children) by the departing Holly King as he rides his solar sleigh, pulled by the eight Sabbats personified as reindeer, through the sky at Yule Eve. He was called Old Nick by the Pagan Norse, was usurped by Christianity and turned into a sainted bishop named Nicholas, and is recognized today as Santa Claus (while "Old Nick" became a name for the Devil-the Pagan horned god of nature). This is the holiday that Pagans and Christians can both relate to as a holy time and a sacred birth. My Catholic mother and grandmother focused their adoration on the Virgin Mary, and the birth of the "Light of the World" had the greatest appeal. The winter solstice celebrations were held on December 25 rather than on December 21, demonstrating how smoothly Pagan observances were blended into the Christian religion over time (our tree never had an angel on top, however; it was always a five-pointed star).

Imbolc [Em-bowl/g] (February 2) is a time when the Goddess recovers from the birth, rejuvenated, and the God is a spirited youth. It is a time of purification and dedication. This is one Sabbat we never celebrated as I was growing up, the four seasons being considered primary.

Ostara [Oh-star-ah] (March 21) is the vernal equinox, when the God and Goddess walk the fields causing creatures to reproduce. The first day of spring is inspiration for renewal and creativity, translated into Christian belief as the resurrection of life from death-the seed buried in the ground now begins to move back into the world. For my family Easter served the same purpose as Ostara, with the annual romp of the Easter Bunny and the celebration of renewal with fresh spring flowers, particularly tulips, crocuses, lilacs, and hyacinth (we never used lilies).

Beltane [Beel-teen or Bell-tayn] (May 1) is when the Goddess and the God unite and is a celebration of fertility and healing. We celebrated May Day with flowers and flower tokens (anonymous gifts of small nosegays, tiny baskets of flowers, and flowers stuck in the crevices and crannies of porches, walls, and fences).

Litha [Lee-thah] (June 21) is the summer solstice, although referred to as "Midsummer." It is the peak of fertility, used to celebrate love, health, purification, and dedication. In my childhood, this was merely Summer.

Lughnassadh [Loo-nahs-ah] (August 1) is when the God impregnates the Goddess with himself, and is the feast of bread and time of transformation. This is the other Sabbat we did not celebrate when I was a youngster.

Mabon [May-bone or Mah-boon] (September 21) is the autumnal equinox when the God prepares to leave and the Goddess rests. This is celebrated today as the Harvest Home feast of Thanksgiving, which was moved to the November time frame in the nineteenth century by President Lincoln even though the Pilgrims celebrated it in September. While we noted autumn with shopping for new warm clothes, Harvest Home was transferred to Thanksgiving. We did not indulge in solemn prayers, but celebrated the abundance of the earth with a loaded table and wine for everyone.

Samhain [Sow-eeen, or the American Sam-ham] (October 31) is when the God departs and the Goddess mourns, but knows he will be reborn at Yule. This is a time of celebrating the mysteries of death and of contacting spirits. The Catholic Church adopted this celebration with an All Hallows Eve Mass and calls the following morning All Souls Day. Although there are Protestant churches that consider Halloween Satanic, they could be viewed as biased against Catholicism as much as anything occult, Wiccan, or even Satanic, as Catholics also keep it as a holy day. The Christian deity of evil is not part of the Witch's pantheon. Instead, the dark and the light are seen as a balance of positive and negative energies-every yin has its yang.

The images of the Sabbats are more meaningful when you keep in mind that in some of the Sabbats the Goddess is the earth and the God is the sun, while in others they represent the cycles of the spirit: life, death, rest, and rebirth. With or without the imagery, however, the Lady and the Lord can be successfully invoked and will respond to those who seek them. The names of the Sabbats as given here are typically found in Wiccan traditions, but are of a generic Celtic heritage. Mabon and Litha are considered newcomers to the celebrations of Witches in names if not in practice, according to Marion Green. Today, I use all eight Sabbats and the typical Sabbat names, but as a child, the names we used were simply winter/Christmas, spring/Easter, May Day, summer, Harvest Home/Thanksgiving, and Halloween. In this way, our celebrations were attuned to the Christian community in which we lived and occasionally participated.

### **Modern Issues for Celebrating Sabbats**

The modern Witch needs to reconcile the mythic presentation of frolicking deities with the realities of the cycles of the earth. People know today that the seasons will change and the order of nature will proceed whether or not someone celebrates a Sabbat, so the individual must decide what relevancy the Sabbats have in the modern world. Just as I know of families who stop celebrating Christmas after their children grow up and leave home, and others who enjoy getting into the holiday spirit year after year, there are Witches who do not always feel in the mood to celebrate a Sabbat. Intuitive feelings, personality and worldview play an important part in how a person greets the turning of the wheel.

For my immediate family, the Green Sabbats (Yule, Ostara, Litha, and Mabon) are celebrated as a time for uniting with the ebb and flow of the sun's energy as manifested during the solstices and the equinoxes. These are times for recharging individual batteries, just as the earth does, while moving through the cycles of planting and harvest. The other four, the White Sabbats, are times for internal realignment and feeling at one with the earth and the cycle of life itself.

Imbolc, then, is for self-cleansing and for the purification of our surroundings in preparation for spring. This is when we work on restoring our balance, re-dedicating ourselves to our Craft, and performing an internal housecleaning that rids us of unproductive and undesirable feelings, habits, and concepts. It is a time for self-assessment and redirection. This is the rest of the spirit between lives. As my practice evolved away from Christian influences, I found Imbolc very meaningful to me as a time to reaffirm my path.

Beltane brings a sense of complete renewal and the joy of budding new life when the earth is at the height of its springtime. I always bring fresh wildflowers into the house (daisies are my favorite). Now is a good time to assess your physical and emotional health. This is the union of spirit and body.

Lughnassadh is the first harvest of the grains, the Bread Festival, and is a time for well-being celebrated by acknowledging the earth's abundance. Now is also a good time for renewing your commitment to the protection of the earth's resources. This is the spirit alive in the body and enjoying life on earth. We enjoy picking berries and baking blackberry pies for this Sabbat, and eat fresh multigrain bread and drink blackberry wine. This special day is now part of my wheel and makes my calendar complete, but my parents never made any fuss over August except for my birthday. While there are Catholic holidays covering all the ancient Pagan days of celebration, with Lammas on August 1 to recall the imprisonment and miraculous escape of Saint Peter, and Assumption Day on August 15 to honor the Virgin Mary ascending to heaven, my mother and grandmother did nothing to note these.

Samhain is when your spirit reaches out to disembodied souls (I like to consider the notion of Cerridwyn as the Great Sow being a misinterpretation by the modern British of the word "Soul," for when it comes to visualizations, there is an immense difference between sow and soul), instinctively recognizing that we are all of the same essence and making the same passage through life, death, rest, and rebirth. There is no fear of the dead, but loving connection instead, and this is why the Goddess and the God are seen as rulers of the Land of Shadows, or the Summerland. At Samhain, we greet the spirits passing to the shadowy realm. We bury apples or pomegranates in the garden as food for the spirits as they travel to their rest, and sometimes we set out a Mute Supper of bread, salt, apples, and cider for our departed friends and relatives whose spirits are invited out of Summerland for a visit. Carved and lighted pumpkins light their way to our homes. This is the death of the body and the passing of the spirit from this life into Summerland for rest and renewal. Some years this holiday becomes at least as hectic as the Yule season and we do not have time for all the observances, but we enjoy it to the fullest of our ability.

### **Different Ways of Celebrating Sabbats**

Throughout all religions, recognition of Green events are well-known and serve as focal points in their particular litany. By any name and with any mythology, the solstices and equinoxes are celebrated worldwide. The only difficulty with this is that some religions have become strident in demanding that their particular litany is the only "true" one. Witchcraft, however, involves much more than the sum of its Sabbat mythology-it is a way of life that can exist perfectly well without the formal celebration of a single Sabbat, and perhaps that is why some covens limit themselves to the four Greater Sabbats.

Common celebrations include Yule as Christmas or the Festival of Lights (Hanukkah); Ostara as Easter or Passover; Litha as the time of weddings and the June bride; and Mabon as Harvest Home, Fall Festival and Thanksgiving. The other four Sabbats are still incorporated into Christian and secular calendars by other names as well. Imbolc becomes Groundhog Day, when we look for signs of spring or six more weeks of winter. Beltane is May Day, and is greeted with May baskets or simply the desire to fill the house with the first flowers of spring or begin planting in the garden. Mother's Day is a means of celebrating the goddess aspect of motherhood in women and is a May festival that lends itself as a further expression of Beltane. Lughnassadh is Lammas on the Catholic calendar, and is a time of summer picnics with bounteous food, fresh breads, pies, and cakes. In the countryside the farming community still observes the bread festival without calling it as such, celebrating after the crop is brought in. This is the time for fairs and rodeos. Samhain remains as Halloween, a sore point with many Fundamentalist Christians who refuse to celebrate a day honoring the dead, and so have tried to ban the holiday. Yet the Catholic Church has special Masses for the Dead on All Hallow's Eve and All Souls' Day, and many people enjoy the atmosphere of mystery and closeness to the Underworld and the Otherworld inspired by this time of the year.

### **A Personal Journey**

From my experience growing up, the Sabbats were not celebrated as rituals of Divine lifestory events. Instead they were earth-centered, forming a special feeling for the time of the year and for the sensations of the earth as we moved through the yearly cycle. I have danced around the Maypole as a school activity and gorged myself on the blackberry pies of Lughnassadh simply because the wild berries were in season and we went out and picked a bucket of them. My own children have had the indescribable pleasure of picking their way through the wild tangles of berry bushes, competing with birds for the plumpest berries, and fending off spiders who strung their webs across the sprawling arms of the bushes to catch unwary insects-all for the reward of seedy

blackberries the size of thumbs, filling pots and pans for me to bake into pies. Without a formal ritual, robes, and tools, the Sabbats are honored by doing and by living them. Through experiencing the Sabbats, we invoke the elementals and become united with the earth and with the Lady and the Lord.

This gives a clue as to how those who are not sure they want to abandon their Christian upbringing may still look to their Pagan roots and expand their Christian perspective to include pre-Christian, Green-level practices. Since the holidays are virtually the same, it may be that over time one might move away from the newer expression and closer to the earlier one. My mother and grandmother were not "churchy," and I was not raised in strict Christian spirituality. I rarely attended a Catholic Mass, and actually spent an occasional Sunday in a variety of Protestant churches. I experienced the Lutheran and Baptist church view by spending my first two years of formal education attending a Lutheran elementary school, where learning catechism was as important as any other study, and later by attending a Baptist church in high school. Out of curiosity and an interest in the varieties of Christian beliefs, I have also attended services in Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian churches, sometimes with my mother, other times alone, or, on special occasions like winter solstice and spring equinox, with my husband and children when they were little. These were social events for the children where they could be involved with other children in festivities and egg hunts, but as early as first grade, each had recognized that the ideas taught at such gatherings were contrary to their own sense of self worth and connection with nature. They are content with family gatherings and gravitate toward friends with open minds and hearts.

The family of my childhood celebrated the cycle of life independently, yet on the fringes of the societal framework. By the time I was fifteen, however, and had been questioning the meaningfulness of Christian doctrine to myself and how my family related to the Christian holidays, I realized that the groundwork for the Pagan heritage had been quietly and firmly laid. My personal explorations into a deeper connection with Witchcraft were greeted with interest by my mother, who then supplemented my studies and offered her perspective on what I was picking up. Her emphasis was on spiritism and channeling, but even so, she still considered herself Catholic.

After I embarked on my path as a seeker, my mother used to tell me she envied me for being strong and not feeling the need to conform. I am pleased today that my children are not growing up under the constraints of a religious system I cannot endorse, but might feel is imposed by societal convention. My mother continued to attend Mass until she passed on; however, the book on her bed table that she read from nightly was not the Bible, but a book of spiritism as revealed by a master spiritist in Brazil. Neither she nor my grandmother could say very much about the Bible, or even the Catholic sacraments-it was always like a foreign territory to them-but they could talk at length about spiritism, reincarnation, the powers, and contacting the Others for help.

I used to find it humorous that because I had been exposed to various religious patterns over the years, my mother would depend on me for Bible information even when I was a child. I remember her amused smile when I recited Lutheran catechism for her or told her about the Bible stories I had learned. She was very tolerant even of the religious fervor of my Baptist friends, and never indicated outwardly that she did not agree. She was always pleasant and amenable to other people's religious or political positions, so that any churchly visitor left feeling a convert had been made to their particular point of view. But she never was swayed into any kind of fundamentalism or rigid view, and remained detached from churches and dogma all her life.

These days, after making my own spiritual journey, I celebrate the eight Sabbats for the enjoyment I derive from them and for the feeling of closeness to the Lady and the Lord. The rituals are comfortable, and I have collected many items over the years that I use in my ceremonies. Although I keep a magic box for many of my supplies, I also place some of the ritual tools in plain view around the house. My whole living area is part of my circle of magic and infuses the house and my family with warmth and familiarity.

Studying history was a major step towards breaking the grip of conventional religion for me. This step was important because I wanted to know what the relationship was between the Christian faith my family had lived on the fringes of and the Pagan practices I had experienced, sometimes with my mother, in an atmosphere of seclusion. When I could see images in cards, foretell the future, and engage in spell workings, I had to be circumspect about who knew about my activities. Even so, there were times when fellow students and friends considered my views and maternally-encouraged activities as not quite acceptable. As time went on, it became

more a matter of associating with people of like mind rather than being on the edge of heresy and damnation. One benefit of getting older is being freer to pick your own friends.

Once a historian learns the truth about the beginnings of modern faiths and the derivations of the modern myths, it is fundamentally impossible to remain a "believer" in any sense of the word. Many famous people, from Arnold Tbynbee to Joseph Campbell, have started on a quest for knowledge and understanding only to be amazed at the results. I should not have been surprised when the same happened to me. For some, the response has been a mild refutation of Judeo-Christian beliefs, or a case stated for relinquishing "faith" as obsolete and an enforcement of ignorance. For me, perhaps because I had the additional perspective of religious teachings applied to women as second-class humans, the result was anger. I was furious to discover that people have been lied to for two thousand years, and enraged that people considered me odd for having Green knowledge. I was incensed that fictional characters of the Bible were not only taken from preexisting, non-Judaic sources, but that they were still appearing in history books as real-time persons involved in real-time events. But anger is unhealthy, and rage only leads to headaches, so I write and hope to reach at least a few people.

As a teacher, it is a delicate matter to present history to teenagers unfamiliar with anything outside of the familiar church rhetoric. I try to teach a balanced, non-judgmental course in which all views are laid out for the students to consider and make their own value calls, but it is impossible to teach history without reference to religions and the conflicts inspired by contradictory practices. There are some cases where strident religiosity is the only perspective a teenager will accept, but now and then, students pause and ask questions. Often just a bit of history's basic information can cause a child to sit up and take notice.

Some students who have been normally silent and withdrawn-outcasts to the rest of the class-brighten and confide in me later that they had been considered "different" from their classmates because they had questioned the reality of accepted religious views, and that it was rewarding to find a teacher who confirmed what they had discovered. Other students are happy to have a balanced picture and say that their parents raised them to be independent thinkers, and that it is refreshing to have a teacher who doesn't expound conventional religious beliefs. It is my impression that the teenagers of today are much more interested in truth and the validity of religious principles, and this is sometimes misunderstood by adults as defiance and lack of morals. Instead, they are asking questions their parents may have been too frightened to ask, and they are seeking their own meaning for life.

## **Pagan Roots**

My research into the roots of mainstream and Pagan religions took me back to the Indus Valley of the Dravidians, and connected those people with the Celts of my maternal heritage. I have thus brought into my personal pantheon a mixture of deities that have moved along the waterways from India to the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast of Iberia and onto the British Isles as well as overland through Eastern Europe to the Western expanse. My paternal heritage is English, and some is German, but these two aspects were never emphasized in my life. Instead, I have been drawn to Shiva and Uma Parvati, to Hecate and Rhea, to Hades and Herne, and to Cerridwyn and Cernunnos.

When I think of the God, the Lord, I envision Shiva in one of many forms-cosmic dancer, teacher, and paternally loving being. When I think of the Goddess, the Lady, I envision Hecate-not as a crone so much as the crone energy expressed as a beautiful, maternally loving Goddess of wisdom, magic, and the moon-the Goddess of the Witches. She is said to have originated in Thrace, as did Dionysus, who other historians (such as Danielou) have already linked to Shiva. She, too, can be traced to the people of the Indus who settled in Thrace several thousand years ago. Because Uma Parvati is the Earth Mother Goddess, I use her image as a counterpart to the Shiva image. I also like the image of Rhea as the Snake Goddess, snakes being symbolic of wisdom and rebirth. The mythologies, however, do not factor into my practice much. The storytelling aspect of Pagan tradition is something that is experienced through daily activities and the changing of the seasons.

The deities of Egypt and Olympic Greece have not captured my heart; perhaps I feel they are overexposed by Hollywood and popular fiction. The only Egyptian deity I feel closeness to is the most ancient image of the pantheon, Bastet (the later division of this Goddess into Hathor, and then Isis, caused her to be altered in modern view as more of a Goddess of cats, joy, and the fine arts than one of the power and creativity of Hathor and Isis). How Shiva managed to be in my maternal line remains a mystery to me, as I did not learn about



misconnection until just before my mother passed away. Somehow I had independently arrived at the same God image my mother had secretly maintained for at least sixty years without it ever being discussed. I have since determined to be much more communicative with my own children, although they will be free to choose for themselves the identity of the Lord and Lady. My daughter is drawn to Isis and Anubus; my young son is drawn to Shiva and Herne, with the Goddess being as yet unnameable (but I am sure an image of the Lady will come to him as he matures).

## The Sabbat Altar

My Craft tools on a Sabbat altar are arranged as follows:

Goddess Area	Area for Both	God Area
statue of Parvati	3-armed candelabra statue of Ardhanari candle snuffer	statue of Shiva
water bowl	censer	salt bowl
wine cup	pentacle	incense
wand (and oils)	cauldron (and matches)	athame
bell	book/cakes	bolline

Keep in mind that these are the pre-Hindu deities of the Indus River region known as Sind, from which I have traced the very word "sin" as relating to "non-Judaic." I discuss the relevancy of these deities to modern religions, as well as to Paganism in general and Witchcraft in particular, in my book *Dancing Shadows*. Here it is only necessary to say that Parvati is the Mother Goddess; Ardhanari is an androgyne figure of the Divine in unity, half female and half male; and Shiva is the Great God, cosmic dancer of life and death and rebirth. The choice of deities is always up to the Witch.

The circle, at the center of which sits the altar, is marked at the quarters with a green candle in the north for the earth element, a yellow candle in the east for the air element, a red candle in the south for the fire element, and a blue candle in the west for the water element. I have special pottery dishes I use for these candles, with each dish decorated with an emblem that I relate to the element: a square for earth, wings for air, a Solar Cross for fire, and a Lunar Spiral for water.

Decorations for the altar vary according to the Sabbat, but no magic is performed during these festivals. Magic spells and divination are normally left for Esbats, the celebrations of the new and full moons, although divinations at Samhain are also a tradition. As in the Green level, the altar faces north, and the casting of the circle is done from right to left (deosil), from north to east to south to west and back to north. There are many Wiccan traditions that have the altar facing east relating to the rising sun, but I am drawn to the north for the polarity of north and south and for the fairy reference. The north is the realm of Black Annis, of the Snow Queen, and the Goddess as crone. There lies wisdom, and in all Pagan systems the Goddess is identified with wisdom, be it with snakes or with the tree of life and knowledge.

The components of the Sabbat ritual begin with a purifying bath scented with herbs such as vervain, rosemary, thyme, lavender, basil, and fennel. Next the space where the circle will be created is purified and swept with the Witch's broom (besom). The sacred space may be delineated with a cord, although I usually do it with visualization aided by the candles situated on the floor at the quarters. I give myself sufficient space to move around in without contacting the candles, and do not use a measurement of feet or yards. Rocks can also be used, or other natural objects signifying the elementals.

The tools to be used are laid out on the altar, and the incense and altar candles are lit. In casting the circle the quarters are illuminated, lighting the candles with the center candle of the three altar candles, and the circle boundary is created with the athame or the power hand, purified, sealed with blessed water, and incensed by carrying the censer around it. Then there is the invocation in which the elementals are called, followed by the welcoming of the Lady and the Lord to the temple. The Sabbat observances come next (each one being different) where the energy is raised, and the residual power is earthed. The Goddess and the God are acknowledged and the elementals are blessed and released as the circle is then opened with the athame or the power hand. The term "released" should be seen here in the same usage as when you and a friend hold hands,

and then release each other's hand. This is not the same as forcibly summoning and then banishing an elemental-it is calling upon a friend and holding hands for a time, then saying farewell for now.

## **Esbat Celebrations**

For the celebration of an Esbat (moon observances) the components are basically the same, but with variations depending upon the type of moon involved and any spell work, divination, consecrations of tools, or craft work being accomplished. If there is a full or new moon the day of the Sabbat, the two observances may be combined if there is no spell work being done, or the one may follow the other. Although either can be first, I prefer the Esbat. But it is not necessary to leave spell work for an Esbat. In fact, it might be preferable to do spell work on an as-needed basis, and you can make whatever correspondence between days and hours you require to aid the work. I rarely consider days and hours for spell work, only need. It would not be very helpful to put off doing something simply because of the day or hour. Scott Cunningham writes that you could work in the day and hour at any time; if the time was not right for an increase spell, change it to be a banishing of decrease. For my own part, the main determination is the phase of the moon-waxing for increase, waning for decrease, full for accomplishment, new for endings and new beginnings.

## **Alternative Rituals**

There is no need to always have a stylized ritual with an altar, tools laid out, statues, and bowls of things. There is another way to celebrate the Sabbats, and that is simply with the forked staff (stang) as your altar. The stang is stuck into the ground, a circle is delineated about it, and it is decorated with a wreath of natural flowers or greenery pertinent to the season. With a candle at the base of the stang and a cup for your wine, all is ready. It is easy to carry your materials in a belt with pouches for herbs, salt, and cakes, a flask of wine on a thong, and another thong to hang a wooden cup. This can be draped over the prongs of the stang if belts with pouches are not desired. The wreath can be left behind on a tree branch or on the ground as food for animals if it is composed of seeds and berries.

I have found that there are times when I want an elaborate ritual, others when I want things relatively simple, and some when I skip the matter altogether. The conversation between the practitioner of the Craft and the Deities is ongoing and the rituals are for our benefit, not theirs-they do not need nor require them. These rites serve as a point of focus for raising energy and recharging our psychic batteries. Among Shiva worshippers in India, it is ideal to come to the recognition that rituals and ceremonies are totally unnecessary, which is how I feel occasionally. Just being out-of-doors, at the beach, or in the yard during a Sabbat time puts me into communion with the Lady and the Lord.

## **The Significance of Flames**

For someone starting into a new view of unity with the cycles of the earth, the stars, and the energies of the universe, the whole prospect of doing something different-such as choosing a Craft name-may feel strange or arouse feelings of uncertainty. There is nothing wrong or unusual about this. For centuries the Christian churches have tortured and murdered suspected Witches, filled society with a doctrine of damnation and hellfire for any non-conformity, and threatened anyone who dared to defy the standard with social and eternal separation. It is a very big and important decision for people to turn their backs on the terror that has been heaped onto their psyches over the years.

I spent many years practicing the Craft with a different Craft name. When I felt that one had become compromised, I simply made a new one and performed another initiation rite. The Craft name is the one by which you introduce yourself to the Ancient Ones when you first begin to practice, and this is done in a self-initiation ceremony. The term initiation (especially self-initiation) is one of those expressions that can have a very traditional or ceremonial connotation. Although some Pagans would not use it except in a coven setting, the expression of "self-initiation" is one that has been used by Scott Cunningham, D.J. Conway, Marion Green and other noted Craft writers. There is a distinct difference between an initiation and a dedication, and these terms have different meanings depending upon the focus of the people using them. In Chapter 5 of his book *Living Wicca*, Mr. Cunningham defended his use of this expression, and to be honest, I would never have

thought such a simple matter would need defending. He did an excellent job of it, though, and I refer any criticism of the use of these terms to his work.

To perform this rite you prepare as for a Sabbat, but for the observance portion, the initiation is done instead. The wording and gestures are best planned out in advance to keep your focus on all facets of the initiation. There is a sample ritual in Chapter 7 that works not only for the basic Green level, but for nearly any other Wiccan path. The name you choose for yourself is one you should reveal only to people you can trust, but for the most part (particularly for the solitary) it is kept secret. The problem with letting others know your name is that sometimes situations change, and then you may feel compelled to create a new name to avoid bringing negativity through association into your circle.

The use of a Craft name is fairly common in Witchcraft, and there are actually two kinds of names used (a Green element books rarely illuminate upon): the Craft name, which is one the practitioner chooses, and the working name, which is one bestowed upon the Whiten by the Lady and the Lord. There can also be a third, coven name if the Witch joins a group. Amber K in True Magick writes of having a number of names that fit her at different times. I have a Craft name, a working name, and a coven name (although the coven functions through correspondence and is eclectic), and have not found the use of a deity name desirable, but that is a matter of personal preference.

The Craft name is usually significant only to the person who creates it. It can be a flower, tree, gem, rock, or anything else of nature, or it can be more symbolic. Marion Green does not approve the use of deity names (such as Rhiannon, Cerridwyn, Isis, Herne, Horus, etc.) as Craft names. In my case, Aoumiel (Awm'mee-el) was constructed to express my feelings about the unity of the Goddess and the God, because I view the deities as equals and in balance with one another (Aum [Om] and Uma are the united "God" [El]). Even when friends pronounce my name "A-oh' me-el," I feel the essence remains, as Ao is the ancient name of the God, Uma (or OTO) is the ancient name of the Goddess, and El is the term for Divine Being. More than one Craft name can be used at a time.

The other type of name in the Green level is called a working name. Often the Craft name will be used in the association of other people interested in the Old Religion, but the working name is a special gift that comes after the Craft name has been used for awhile. Until a dedication the Craft name may double as the working name, but after a dedication, the Witch is given a new name that is always kept secret (until the working name is given by the Lady and the Lord, the Craft name may serve in magical functions). This working name is literally bestowed by the Lady and the Lord, and is their personal link to you and yours to them. The Craft name then becomes available for more public use. The significance of the working name is that the Lord and the Lady are telling you who you are. That is why it is kept secret-the name defines you.

I have read of the Craft name and study coming first and then followed by initiation, making one a full-fledged member of Wicca or a coven tradition, but I see the initiation as the beginning rather than the end product of study. This is the stage of learning the basics, of the Craft, and it is not the same as making a commitment to the Lady and the Lord founded upon that learning. A dedication is a conscious decision to do something meaningful with the knowledge gained after your initiation. I know there are others who have this same point of view as there are other Witches who tell me that yes, they have a Craft name, but also a working name that no one else knows. The Craft name is used in an initiation, but the working name comes from the dedication.

## **The Dedication Ritual**

The dedication ceremony can take place as early as a year and a day after your initiation, or many years later. I worked with two different Craft names in succession for over twenty years before taking the final plunge, as it were, into dedication. Afterwards, I wondered that I had waited so long-the practice of Witchcraft is definitely enhanced through dedication. The timing will vary with the practitioner, because only the individual knows when he or she is ready for this commitment. You have spent your time learning, practicing, and formulating your Sabbat and Esbat rituals, and becoming familiar with magic, the deities, and the elementals. When the time for a dedication is decided, it is a solitary ritual, for it is a very personal experience.

No one else can give you an initiation or a degree that places you in contact with the Ancient Ones, and it is in the self-dedication that you will come face to face with the Lady and the Lord of the Old Religion. Without a sincere desire to serve the Lady and the Lord, this step should not be taken. In this ceremony you put into practice the Wiccan adage of "perfect love and perfect trust" relating not to other practitioners, but to your relationship with the Lady and the Lord. You must trust them. This ritual should not be commenced until you have made a vigil and considered your reasons and what you want to achieve in making this connection. The vigil is your chance to question your motives, address your fears and hopes, and answer your doubts. You are moving from a worker of magic with the grace and love of the Lady and the Lord to a commitment to them. Until now, you have taken from them, and they have made no demands upon you, nor will they ever. But with the dedication, you are freely giving something back to them-your pledge and your unconditional love. My own dedication ritual is described in Chapter 7.

After dedication, whenever you call upon the Lady and the Lord you should do so in the working name they have bestowed upon you. The Craft name becomes the name by which you can associate with others of like mind and in your public work. But for your private rituals, you call upon them as "Your child, whom you have named (name)"

### **Travel Aids**

The thing to remember in doing a dedication is that now the connection is like a continuous conversation. Your needs and desires are filled almost before you can speak them or are even aware you have them. Divination becomes almost second nature, as this is their way of talking to you. When the need arises for them to tell you something, they will use whatever means are available. You may spontaneously see visions in clouds, smoke, fire, cards, water, the wind, crystals, and so forth. If you hear your working name, you will know they are contacting you. And they will respond whenever you call upon them. Elaborate rituals are not needed, although some kind of meditation will help you learn to focus your attention. A simple mental call will elicit a response. Most importantly, they will be your loving Mother and Father. Listen to what they say.

For some practitioners the use of a power animal, a magical animal who aids you in your travels to the Otherworld, is involved. By meditating upon your desire for such an animal and asking for a power animal, or simply by thinking about having one, you connect with the deities. They will respond when perhaps you least expect it. I tried to choose the sort of animal I felt drawn to but could not come to any decision, so I put the matter out of my mind. A few months later, I had a very rich and musical dream in which I called upon the Goddess and called for the animal I wanted. A great number arrived all at once and I chose one, or perhaps we chose each other, and the animal's name dwelled in the back of my mind until I realized what it was. The dream was filled with song, which I crafted into a poem the next morning. Now, I can call upon my companion for aid in divination and travel to the Otherworld at any time. But not everyone has or wants a power animal-the choice is always yours.

The elementals, too, are close to you and are your kindred. They will aid you and be there for you when you need them. Do not feel that everything must be serious, however. I have heard the laughter of the Lady and the Lord, and I have teased and been teased back by the elementals. Yet always, there is respect. With the elementals, you are dealing with great powers-the forces of nature as wild winds, thunderous rains, lightning or consuming fires, and rugged, tumultuous earth. Do not perceive of these great powers as little creatures, for that is to understate who they are. The elementals are Forces, and they do not take well to being diminished. Remember who and what you are working with: that is why one should not "summon" or "banish" the elemental powers at a circle. They are called upon to guard and witness the rite, and when the ceremony is over, they are blessed and released in peace.

### **Giving Proper Thanks**

Another practice I have always followed that varies with a number of Wiccan traditions is that neither the Lady and the Lord nor the elementals are thanked. My mother used to be very annoyed whenever someone used an expression like "Thanks be to God." If required to copy this form in a Mass, her tone was always distanced, as if she were verbally having an inoculation and was looking away with a grimace. This prohibition of saying the word "thanks" or "thank you" is not a lack of courtesy or gratitude, but can be found in ancient fairy motifs, foremost among them being that it is insulting to thank the Other People. This sensitivity is easily carried over

to the elementals because, like the Other People, they are also aspects of the Lady and the Lord who are the source of all life and all form.

The reasoning for not saying "thank you" lies in the fine nuances of relationships. By thanking, you put yourself apart (rather than being connected in oneness) and turn a gift into a finalized mundane transaction. It is as though you have dismissed them. However, this is a viewpoint that some (or even many) people will not accept, so you must make your own decision intuitively. For myself, it is the heritage of my mother and her mother that I have passed along to my own family. Curiously, when I discussed this with my husband and my daughter, they told me that they too felt thanks were awkward and counter-productive, so perhaps there is indeed more to instinct than formats.

It is significant to make a distinction here. I am not saying that you should not feel gratitude for the presence and assistance of the Divine, no matter what form is involved. I am saying that reams of "thank yous" are not the same as feeling gratitude. With gratitude there is an inner warmth that they can feel emanating from you, but with verbal "thanks" mere form can be served, whether felt or not. I have read Sabbat rituals as presented in a number of Wiccan books that are rife with the words "thank you" and after awhile, it becomes rote and unfeeling. Doing these rituals Sabbat after Sabbat can blunt the intended effect and make the words meaningless. You can use these popular words if you feel comfortable doing so, but try coming up with alternatives that help you express your emotional ties and inner sensations. By eliminating "thank you," you will be forced to describe what it is that you are grateful about. The Other People in legend appreciate being appreciated, but dislike a dismissive thanking.

### 3. WITCHES AND HERBS

Witches have a history of being feared and persecuted for their special relationships with nature, being seen as people with "scary" powers that few others possess. This was not always the case; *The Witches' Almanac* quotes Robert Graves as saying that natural occult power exists in one out of twenty people, and Colin Wilson, a British author, was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying five out of every one hundred people were natural Witches. Wilson went on to say that this was so normal no one seemed to be concerned about it until the Church began its persecutions in the thirteenth century.

There is an excellent video (broadcast on The Learning Channel) called *The Burning Times*, in which the history and possible causes for the Witch burnings in Europe are covered. It convincingly suggests that the so-called religious cases were a mockery of human intelligence and a thinly disguised cover-up for the real cause. The cases were political events designed to wrest power from independent women who had wealth or property, prevent women from being educated, and place women under the domination of a legal male guardian. For example, the use of midwives was curbed so that only male doctors, whose education was actually inferior to that of the country herbalist Green Witch, would dominate in the field of medicine. Religion of this persecutory sort served to elevate an elite ruling class, and had little to do with the Divine.

Today, churches decry a woman's right to abortion as the murder of infants, but for four centuries, churches both Catholic and Protestant tortured, hung, and burned to death millions of women and children, including infants, as Witches. The figure of nine million killed is frequently seen in Craft writings, but cannot be substantiated. Nevertheless, this terror devastated the population of Europe, and in some cases is known to have wiped out entire villages with the cry of "Kill them all and let God sort out the righteous!"

As then, the matter today is not one of faith, but of domination and authority. For people who believe that abortion is the only cause of the Fundamentalists, a quick look at some Fundamentalist literature makes their agenda clear. It includes far-reaching controls on society, including the banning of contraceptives, enforced Christian faith in public schools, outlawing of Wicca and Paganism, restrictions on the Constitutional freedoms of the Bill of Rights, and inclusion of religious tests for the holding of public office (which is specifically prohibited in Article 6 of the Constitution). For Fundamentalists, the idea of creating God's heaven on earth—a

concept that denies God's ability to do anything on his own—would require the destruction of the Constitution and the establishment of a dictatorship.

## **The Importance of Herbal Knowledge**

In modern times, what has remained of the herbal lore of the Witch is being painstakingly rediscovered and compiled by numerous herbalists. The medical profession is once again opposed to people having the right to approach their health needs through the use of herbs, and severe restrictions on the sale of herbs have been imposed around the United States. For the most part, herbs can be acquired in health food stores, but for the past fifteen or so years, the employees have been forbidden by law to aid the buyer with any information about the benefits or uses of herbs. While something like bulk senna tea is available, the information that too much tea will cause severe diarrhea (it is used as a laxative) is withheld. Likewise, the information about what combinations of teas will promote menstrual flow and which ones can induce abortion is also withheld. By doing so, herbs can then be portrayed as dangerous, and articles can be written about people developing ailments because they misused or overused an herb.

## **Case Study: Herbs as Contraceptives**

It would undermine the power of the predominantly male-dominated medical profession for ordinary people to have an understanding of herbs and their uses. Yet, if a pregnant woman reads in one book that tansy tea is good for morning sickness, she needs to know that it is described in another book as good for inducing menses—hence, a possible spontaneous abortion could result depending on the strength of her tea and the amount consumed. Some books discuss dangerous herbs, and the reader must use caution as serious injury might ensue since a strong dosage could result in anything from no effect to menses to abortion to death. A number of common herbal contraceptives were covered in the March/April 1994 issue of *Newsweek* article on ancient contraceptives and abortion techniques, "Ever Since Eve...Birth Control in the Ancient World." Here it was stated that in rural America, ingesting a teaspoonful of seeds from Queen Ann's Lace (a common weed with lacy white flowers) stirred into a glass of water after sexual relations is still a country practice. Contraception was not officially illegal in the Catholic Church until 1869, but as early as the first century C.E., the approach of male physicians was inclined against abortion. Nevertheless, population control was being discussed in the ancient world as beneficial to society.

The natives of an isolated Amazonian Jungle tribe only have children every three years because that is all they can feed and support, so they end unwanted pregnancies with herbs. But modern Americans are forbidden this knowledge because of the imposition of Judeo-Christian religious codes, despite the alleged freedom of religion. The insidious undermining of freedoms due to laws based on religious beliefs has resulted in Americans being denied access to the simple French drug that terminates pregnancies with only a pill, taken in the privacy of the home. There would be no need for abortion clinics with the availability of this pill, and private decisions affecting their bodies and their lives would again be in the hands of women. There is a promise of releasing this pill in America in a few years, but already the price being projected is exorbitant. In Europe, it is affordable.

## **Educating Yourself about Herbs**

For those who want herbal information as part of their personal education, there are books available on the subject and courses through correspondence at some local colleges. But for that same person to then tell others about the herbs is to risk a charge of practicing medicine without a license. So the Witches of today may suggest acetaminophen to a friend with a headache and no one complains, but recommend an herbal remedy to someone, and you are culpable under the law. The ramifications of all this have caused public schools to forbid students bringing any medication at all to school—including any kind of over-the-counter headache or menstrual symptom remedy—to avoid the possibility of lawsuit should any adverse reaction take place on school grounds. Self-medication has been presented by the medical profession as highly dangerous and reckless, yet people have a history of self-medication that spans the millennia.

For further study about the medical uses of herbs, I recommend *Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*, *Jude's Herbal Home Remedies* (by Jude C. Williams, M.H.), and *The New Age Herbalist*. For a wealth of

magical information about herbs, I recommend Scott Cunningham's *Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs*. The Green element of the Craft is basically an herbal one, and herbs are used both for medicinal and magical purposes. Almost any spell or charm is improved if herbs are worked into it. For practicing the Craft, a basic garden of favorite herbs is a must, even if this means potted plants. The very contact with Mother Earth and green growing things is a source of renewal of energy and power for any Witch.

Most herbs prefer sandy, well-drained soil, but there are some that thrive in damp, water-retaining soil. If you do not have both types in your yard, as is most likely the case, you can get around this problem by planting your herbs in raised herb beds filled with the appropriate soil. Planting and harvesting tips along with sun and water needs (and even some arts and crafts suggestions) are in many herb gardening books. Starting seeds in cups with bottom drainage holes is easiest, and then transplanting the seedlings into the garden.

## A Witch's Herb Garden

Since there are reliably good books on herbs, how to grow them, how to use them, and what crafts can be made of them, I shall not focus on these matters. Instead, I want to consider the magical use of herbs. Many herbs can be purchased by mail order and at occult supply stores, and Appendix B lists stores I have found good for ordering herbs, oils, and various other supplies. There is nothing wrong with being a busy Witch and ordering supplies from a reputable source, but of course it is always more rewarding to make your own oils and grow, collect, and store your own herbs. I have done it both ways, and, as in all practice of the Craft, the magic comes from within the practitioner—the supplies are an aid in focusing that magic.

The Witch's garden should contain certain basic herbs. The individual knows what use the herbs will be put to and should plant with this in mind. Depending on how much you feel you will need, the plots may be small or large. Some Witches create herbal crafts for others or grow herbs for distribution at shops, requiring large gardens, while others have more simple needs, and maintain smaller gardens. The following lists give examples of herbs found in an all-around versatile Witch's garden:

agrimony	angelica	avens
basil	bay	betony
birch	broom	burdock
catnip	chamomile	chives
cinquefoil	coltsfoot	comfrey
coriander	dandelion	dianthus
dill	elecampane	fennel
feverfew	garlic	gentian
heather	hops	hyssop
lavender	lemon balm	lemon
	balm	verbena
lovage	marigold	marjoram
mint	mugwort	mullein
nasturtium	oregano	parsley
rose	rosemary	rue
sage	St. John's	savory
tansy	Wort	thyme
trefoil	tarragon	valerian
	vervain	
woodruff	wormwood	yarrow

Trees, shrubs, and flowers useful for their particular properties and as ornamental accents may include:

- alder
- hawthorn
- oak
- elder hazel rowan

- foxglove
- heather
- willow

## Herbs and their Qualities

Some common cooking spices do double duty as herbs that can be utilized in the Craft. Using these herbs fresh in food preparation adds magic to a meal, and can make it part of a ritual. By learning what uses you can make of herbs in magical practice, the creating of spells begins to follow a pattern that works for the individual, yet is based upon accepted attributes. Scott Cunningham's *Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs* is a very useful tool, particularly if you desire to match the spell you want to create with an herb by its characteristics, planetary and elemental associations, and so forth. I rarely give very much attention to astrological relationships as regards the herbs themselves, but many people do. My listing of herbs and their uses tends to be more succinct. The following is an herbal listing I keep in my spellbook. **Caution:** *Be careful with poisonous plants since even inhaling the smoke may be dangerous.*

Herb	Quality
acacia	burn for altar offering, aids psychic powers, meditation
agrimony	protection, returns spells to their sender, promotes sleep
alder	whistles entice the Elemental Air
allspice	burn for prosperity
angelica	sprinkle about the house to ward negativity, protection, divination
anise	purification, protection, entices spirits to aid in spells
apple	bury in the garden on Samhain as food for the departing spirits, love (share an apple with the one you love), health, attracts unicorns
ash	wands, protection, leaves for prophetic dreams, prosperity
avens	purification, love
banana	fertility, prosperity (I mention this for those in tropical climates because the flowers are hermaphroditic and can be used as altar offerings for the Goddess and God as One— I use the image of Shiva Ardhanari for this aspect of the Divine)
basil	protection, wealth, love, repels negativity
bay	burn for psychic powers, purification, wish magic
benzoin	burn for purification, prosperity
bergamot	success
betony	burn at Litha for purification, protection, to be rid of nightmares (put in a pillow under your own pillow), to send away despair (sprinkle around doors and windows), psychic awareness
birch	protection, purification, wards negativity
blackberry	protection, health, prosperity, pies for Lughnassadh
blackthorn	returns evil to the sender



borage	tea aids psychic powers, carry leaves for protection
briar	add to tea for clairvoyant dreams
broom	purification (sweep the circle), hang indoors for protection (fairies do not like this plant, and by working with the devas you may also come to loathe the musty scent of broom)
burdock	wards negativity, purifies, protects (can be used in washing floors or wear the dried root strung on red thread)
cardamon	burn for love spells, use in love sachets
carnation (Dianthus)	protection, altar offering for the Goddess, strength
cassia augustifolias (Indian Senna Leaf)	Caution: Tea not to be taken during menstruation or pregnancy (this tea will induce both menses and diarrhea, and if used to bring on menses or to overcome) come constipation, may be followed up after the desired effect with a tea of China Black, chamomile, and rose hips)
catnip	love and cat magic
chamomile	meditation, rest (drink in tea), purification, calmness, prosperity, incense for the God
cherry	chips burnt at Sabbats, creativity
cinnamon	burn for spiritual and psychic powers, protection, success
cinquefoil	prosperity, protection, purification, divination dreams
citron	eat to increase psychic ability (the traditional Yule fruitcake usually includes citron in the ingredients)
clove	burn for wealth, purification, and to ward negativity
comfrey	root or leaves for healing, carry for safe travel
coriander	health
cumin	prevents theft, burn for protection
dill	seeds draw money, leaves for protection, flowers for love
elder	<b>Caution:</b> <i>Seeds are poisonous.</i> Wards negative thoughts when used as wind chimes, blessings, wood not to be burned as it is sacred to Hecate, see fairies in these trees at Litha, flowers may be used as an altar offering, berries may be made into Esbat wine, the flowers may be added to a candle spell addressed to Hecate during the new moon
elm	attracts elves, love
eyebright	tea for aiding mental powers
fennel	protection, sacred to the God, hung over doors at Litha
ferns	burn indoors for protection, outside for rain feverfew wards sickness, wards accidents in travel
foxglove	<b>Caution:</b> Poisonous, although digitalis comes from it. Grow in the

	garden for protection of house and yard
frankincense	protection, blessing, spirituality, meditation, power
furse/gorse	burn at Ostara for protection and as preparation for any conflict
garlic	sacred to Hecate, flowers for altar offering, cloves for protection
ginger	love, success
hawthorn	powerful wands, fertility magic, protection
hazel	string the nuts on a cord and hang it in the house or ritual room to invite the help of plant fairies, used for wands, healing, protection, luck
heather	red to start or end an affair, white for protection, purple for spiritual development, use at Samhain to invite spirits to visit
hops	health, aids sleep
hyssop	purification, wards negativity
kelp	wind spells, protection, psychic powers
lavender	attracts elves, burn for purification, peace, use in bath for purification, burn at Litha as offering, love, psychic awareness
lemon balm	success, health, love (soak in wine for three hours, remove and serve wine)
linden (lime tree)	bark used for protection, leaves and flowers for immortality, good fortune, sleep, and love
loosestrife	purple restores harmony and brings peace (can be sprinkled in the corners of rooms or given as a gift to bring about an accord)
mace	burn for psychic power
marigold	marriage spells, clairvoyant dreams (in a pillow), mixed with water and rubbed over the eyelids to see fairies, protection, enhanced psychic powers, pick in full sun
marjoram	love, protection, wealth
mint	protection, prosperity, altar offering for helpful spirits
moonwort	divination, love, prosperity
mugwort	divination, rub fresh herb on crystal balls and magic mirrors to increase their strength, pick on full moon night
mullein	protection, divination, health, courage
mustard	health, protection, and fertility
myrrh	protection, wards negativity, burn for purification and consecrations (usually combined with frankincense)
nutmeg	burn for prosperity nuts and cones use to tip wands for fertility magic
oak	the God, wands, burn leaves to purify the atmosphere, use galls in

	charms, acorns draw money, burn wood for good health
oats	wealth, offering for the God
orange	peels for love, incense for good fortune, divination
parsley	purification, protection
patchouli	incense for drawing money, fertility, earth, Underworld
pecan	prosperity
pepper	use in amulets or grow for protection, wards negativity
pine	brush outdoor ritual area with a branch to purify and sanctify, burn for cleansing, pine needles used in money spells
rosemary	burn for purification, wards negativity, protection, love, health, grown to attract elves, blessing, consecration
rowan	wands and amulets for knowledge, incense of leaves and berries for divination, fires to call upon spirits for help, grow for protection of the home, inspiration
rue	blessing, consecration, protection, use in altar oil, health
sage	protection, wisdom, health
St. John's Wort	burn at Litha to send away negativity, wear for invincibility, health, willpower, gathered at Litha
sandalwood	burn for protection, full moon Esbats, wards negativity, spirit offering
Solomon's Seal ( <i>dropherry</i> , <i>sealroot</i> )	an offering to the elementals for their aid, protection
star anise	burn for psychic power, good fortune
straw	attracts fairies, do not burn magic-infused straw as that will bring ill fortune, can be used as an image, to protect an area (when no longer needed, release and toss to the wind)
tansy	health
thyme	wards negativity, burn for purification and healing spells
trefoil	decorate altar, protection, luck, when taking one, leave a bit of ginger or milk poured into the ground as payment to the fairies
vervain ( <i>verbena</i> )	gather/burn at Litha, altar offering, love, purification, draws riches, creativity, wards psychic attack
vetivert	love, money, wards negativity
wheat	fertility, wealth
willow	burn bark with sandalwood for divination, love, protection
woodruff	add to Beltane wine to clear away barriers, protection, success, changes, psychic awareness

wormwood ( <i>absinthe</i> )	<b>Caution:</b> <i>Poisonous</i> . If burned, use in well-ventilated area, preferably outdoors, evocation, divination, and scrying (stronger when combined with mugwort) at Samhain, protection, sacred to the moon
yarrow	divination, love, happy marriage (a wedding bouquet), wards negativity, defense, protection, gather at Litha
yew	<b>Caution:</b> <i>Poisonous</i> . Yule symbol of death and rebirth, used for dagger handles

## Herbs and the Moon's Cycles

In planting and harvesting herbs for magical use, the phases of the moon play an important part in your schedule. For planning purposes, most calendars designate the days of the new moon, first quarter, full moon, and last quarter (an almanac will also have this information).

Plant flowering annuals and above-ground crops with exterior seeds (such as wheat) when the moon is waxing between the new moon and the first quarter. Between the first quarter and the waxing full moon, plant above-ground crops with interior seeds (such as peas). Root crops, bulbs, biennials, and perennials (such as most herbs) should be planted between the waning full moon and the last quarter. Nothing is planted between the last quarter and the new moon.

Many people not only plant during the right phase of the moon, but under the proper astrological sign as well. Using the moon in relation to astrological signs is often featured in almanacs. Since the information is a common feature of Wicca, you should know that the moon remains in an astrological sign about two and one-half days, and again an almanac is your best source for this information. Fruitful signs, used for planting and pruning for growth, are Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, Taurus, Capricorn, and Libra. The barren signs, used for weeding, cultivating, and harvesting herbs, are Leo, Virgo, and Sagittarius, with Aries, Gemini, and Aquarius for harvesting herbs and roots in particular.

I have found from experience that conditions vary according to what region you are in, so I have gone by the phase of the moon and how nature prompts me for my planting and harvesting. The order of harvests is determined by the plant's natural growth cycle, and weeding and pruning come as required. This is based on the natural interaction of the earth, moon, and sun for the signals of seasonal changes. The generic nature of the Green level of the Craft allows for the incorporation of astrology for people who like more ritual in their lives.

## Herbs for Incense and Candle Magic

Herbs are often burned for incense during a spell or ritual. Charcoal blocks are available for this purpose in gift and candle shops as well as occult supply stores, but there are times when the herbs are burned in candles that are consecrated to a particular work. This herbal listing shows uses for incense or candle magic. **Caution:** *Remember, wormwood is poisonous if burned, so use good ventilation.*

quality	herb
balance	basil, chamomile, comfrey, mullein, woodruff
blissing/consecration	chamomile, dianthus, elder flowers, fennel, mint, oats, rosemary, rue, vervain
cleansing/purification	avens, betony, benzoin, burdock, clove, hyssop, lavender, mullein, parsley, rosemary, thyme, vervain, wormwood, yarrow
creativity	vervain
courage	mullein, rosemary

divination	bay, cinquefoil, marigold, moonwort, mugwort, mullein, orange peel, thyme, woodruff, wormwood, yarrow
encourage changes	linden, purple heather, woodruff
energy/power/strength	cinquefoil, elder flower, fennel, St. John's Wort, vervain
fortune/justice	bay, bergamot, cinquefoil, lemon balm, orange peel, star anise, vervain, violet, woodruff
happiness/peace	jasmine, lavender, rosemary, vervain
healing	cinquefoil, comfrey, coriander, hops, lavender, lemon balm, mullein, mustard, rosemary, rue, sage, St. John's Wort, tansy, thyme
love	avens, cardamon, dill flowers, ginger, lavender, linden leaves, marigold, marjoram, moonwort, mustard seed, orange peel, vervain, vedvert, wormwood, yarrow
meditation	acacia, chamomile
money	basil, bergamot, chamomile, clove, dill seeds, mint, moonwort, nutmeg, oats, vedvert
protection/defense	betony, birch, burdock, cumin, dianthus, dill leaves, fennel, fern, marjoram, mint, mugwort, mullein, mustard, parsley, rosemary, rue, sage, vervain, white heather, woodruff, wormwood, yarrow
psychic awareness	bay, betony, burdock, cinnamon, elder flower, lavender, mace, marigold, star anise, woodruff
releasing negativity	betony, clove, hyssop, mugwort, rosemary, St. John's Wort, thyme, vervain, vedvert, yarrow
sealing/ sending positive energy	Wormwood. <b>Caution:</b> <i>Poisonous if burned.</i>
spirit contact/blessing	lilac, purple heather, mint, Solomon's Seal
strength/willpower	rosemary, St. John's Wort
wisdom	sage

## Witches and Trees

Besides herbs, trees are also used in the Green practice. They are grown for a variety of purposes: wands, staffs, and stangs (the forked staff) are made from them, and the bark, wood, leaves, flowers, and fruit are used in spell work. The following is a list of trees and the properties for which they may be utilized:

Tree	quality
alder	water magic, strength
apple	love, spirit food
ash	study, health, enhances magic, besom, stang
birch	purification, blessing, health, beginnings, besom

elder	cleansing, offering
fir/pine	prosperity, birth and rebirth, stang
hawthorn	purity, protection, wand, attracts fairies
hazel	wisdom, all-around Witch's wand
holly	enhances magic
ivy	fertility, love
mountain ash (rowan)	protection, enhances magic, stang
oak	fertility, power, balance, protection, success, stang
poplar	success
vine (grape)	happiness
willow	moon magic, wishing, spirits, death passage, besom
yew	psychic awareness, spirits, death passage

### Days of the Week and Trees

Trees also have traditional associations with days of the week, certain deities, and other aspects of Craft and spell work.

day	tree; deity; associations
Monday	willow; Hecate (crone); elder, willow
Tuesday	holly, cedar; elves; elm
Wednesday	hazel; Lady & Lord; rowan (mountain ash)
Thursday	oak, pine; Lord; oak
Friday	apple, myrtle; Lady; birch
Saturday	alder; fairies; hawthorn
Sunday	birch, laurel; Witch's tree; hawthorn

Ash, oak, and hawthorn grown or found together form what is called a Fairy Triad, where the fair folk may visit and may be seen.

### Herb Collection and Storage

Herbs should be collected on a dry day, preferably cut with your bolline. Tell the plant why you are taking a piece and ask for permission. You should either leave something in return or give the plant your blessing, however your herb garden plants are likely to be more generous and less interested in receiving a "gift" because they know you tend them. Nevertheless, it never hurts to be polite to the energies (*devas*) that inhabit and empower the plants. To retain the magic properties, do not set the cutting on the ground. A garden basket over one arm is very useful. Tie the herbs in small bundles and hang by a string in an airy, dark place to dry (I use red thread or embroidery floss to enhance the power of the herb). Leaves and flowers without stems can be dried in a muslin bag, although I have used paper sacks with equal success. After a week, the herbs should be ready to be crumbled, minced or ground, then stored in the dark in tins or in bottles with screw-top lids. I save

larger sized bottles from ready-made sauces and jams for re-use in storing my herbs and teas in a cupboard away from light.

## Herbal Treatments

The spellbook you create for yourself should contain a listing of herbal treatments and characteristics. Some may be used internally, others are only for external treatments. There are herbs to stimulate appetite and digestion, others that are tranquilizers or calmatives. Herbs can be used as astringents, laxatives, expectorants, and mild sedatives. The best place to *look* for information on how to use herbs for medicinal purposes is in a book on herbal remedies. *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* has a listing of properties and equipment, and while my focus here is on magical herbal use, my spellbook also contains references to medicinal uses. Witches normally study all aspects of herbs to be able to apply that knowledge. *New Age Herbalist* also works well as a reference.

## Medicinal Terms

Tree	Quality
decoction	add boiling water to the herb for extraction (teas)
infusion	pour hot or cold water over herbs for extraction
maceration	steep in alcohol or oil (olive is best) and shake at intervals for extraction
percolation	like coffee percolators, only with herbs (or use special equipment)
filtration	like coffee filters, only with herbs (or use special equipment)
clarification	melt and skim or filter
poultices	mix crushed herbs with water and cornmeal into a paste and place on affected area (used for swellings, boils, sores)
salves	mince herbs with vegetable fat (or lard) and beeswax, cover and place in sun or low oven for four hours, strain through cheesecloth and let set in a clean container (do not remelt)
composition powders	mix dry herbs as medicine for flu and fever
syrups	dissolve brown sugar and add to herbs until sappy, then strain through cheesecloth into a clean bottle and store
simples	steep herb in hot water for twenty minutes (do not use aluminum)

## Herbal Baths

To make an herbal bath, combine the minced leaves/flowers in a jar, then place two or three tablespoons inside a cotton or muslin bag (sufficiently porous for the herbal essence to pass through but still prevent the leaves from scattering into the bath water) with a drawstring. Tie it off and place inside the tub as you fill it with water. You may want to add salt for purification baths. Herbal baths may consist of combinations of chamomile, clove, heather, hops, lavender, lemon balm, marigold, mint, pansy, rose, rosemary, and savory. Think of the benefits of the herbs you are using and call upon the energies of the plants to cleanse, energize and revive you as you bathe.

## Dream Pillows

One of the popular magics for herbs is fashioning Dream Pillows. These are little pillows stuffed with herbs to affect a desired result and placed under the pillow of the person to be affected. I have made pillows for everyone in the family and vary them according to need or special request. They make lovely gifts for Imbolc. The color of the pillow varies as do the herbs depending on the purpose for which it is made. Combinations of colors can also be used. For Imbolc, the typical herb mixes stuffed into the pillow are mugwort, rosemary, and hops, or lavender, mugwort, and rose. Herbs for dreaming should be collected during the waxing or full moon.

The colors for the pillow material (cotton is best for herbal containers as it is a natural plant fiber) are white for meditation; lavender for psychic growth and divination; green for balance; pink for emotional love; purple for intuition and spiritual development; light blue for meditation and understanding; and yellow for clairvoyance and divination. I like to make each side of the pillow a different color: yellow/purple for divination and spiritual development; green/white for protection and peace; blue/white for understanding and peace; yellow/blue for divination and understanding; yellow/green for divination and balance; and pink/green for emotional love and balance.

## For Relationships

<b>COLOR</b>	<b>association</b>
amber	develop Witchery skills
black	ward negativity, remove hexes, protection, spirit contact, the universe, night, truth, remove discord or confusion
blue (dark)	the Goddess (representative ritual candle), Water Elemental, truth, dreams, protection, change, meditation, impulse
blue (light)	psychic awareness, intuition, opportunity, understanding, quests, safe journey, patience, tranquility, ward depression
blue ( <i>any shade</i> )	health
brown	Earth Elemental, endurance, animal health, steadiness, houses and homes, physical objects, uncertainties
gold	the God, solar energy, power, physical strength, success, achievement, mental growth, skill sought, healing energy, intuition, divination, fortune
gray	non-nature-type fairy magic such as communication with the fairy realms, travel to the Otherworld, vision quests, veiling, cancellation, hesitation, neutrality
green	Lord and Lady of Greenwood, Earth Elemental, herb magics, nature-type fairy magic (such as blessing a garden), luck, fertility, healing, balance, employment, prosperity, courage, agriculture, changing direction or attitudes
greenish-yellow	to negate discord, sickness, anger, jealousy
indigo	meditation, spirit communication, karma workings, learn the ancient wisdom, neutralize another's magic, ward slander
lavender	spiritual development, psychic growth, divination, sensitivity to the Otherworld, blessings
orange	the God (representative ritual candle), strength, healing, pulling things to you, adaptability, luck, vitality, encouragement, clearing the mind, dominance



pink	honor, morality, friendships, emotional love
purple	power, spiritual development, intuition, ambition, healing, progress, business, spiritual communication, protection, occult wisdom
red	Fire Elemental, strength, power, energy, health, vigor, enthusiasm, courage, passion, sexuality
silver	the Goddess, lunar magic, meditation, psychic development, success, balance, wards negativity
<i>variegated</i>	inner development through relaxation and introspection
<i>violet</i>	self-improvement, intuition, success in searches
<i>white</i>	the Lady and the Lord together, full moon magic, purity, protection, truth, meditation, peace, sincerity, justice, warding of doubts and fears
yellow	Air Elemental, divination, clairvoyance, mental alertness, intellectual growth, prosperity, learning, changes, harmony, creativity

### **Herb Significance**

Besides Dream Pillows, there are other types of dream charms using herbs. Various herbs are conducive to producing specific results:

<b>herb</b>	<b>usage; Results</b>
agrimony	sprinkled under the pillow (hereafter abbreviated as U/P); calms and brings healing sleep
anise seeds	(U/P); spiritual protection
ash leaves	(U/P); insightful and prophetic dreams
bay leaves	(U/P); dreaming of the future
bracken fern root	(U/P); dream solutions to problems
buchu leaves	burn at bedtime with frankincense for guidance dream
catnip	drink as warm tea for restful sleep and healing dreams
cedar	burn at bedtime for spiritual healing, cleansing, and protection
cinquefoil	(U/P); guidance in love and insights to the future
frankincense	burn at bedtime to dream spiritual growth and insight to the future
heliotrope	(U/P); divination

### **Herbs in Rituals**

#### **As Offerings**

Herbs may be used as tokens of esteem and respect for the deities and energies of the Craft. The Goddess may be honored by herbal offerings at those phases of the moon in which her identity is that of maiden, mother, or crone. I do this to relate to a particular aspect of the Lady through the visual appearance, texture, and scent of

the appropriate herb. The act of dropping the herbs into the flame brings the focus of the ritual to the altar and stimulates the intimate bond between the Witch and the greater deity aspect. It is a gift rather like saying, "All things, including myself, come from the Lady and Lord, and I offer back to you a portion of what I have gathered from you." In the Bible, the gift of Cain was rejected by the Judaic god because at the time the Bible was written (625 b.c.e.) it was a gift recognized as being suited to the Goddess. As plants of various kinds have customarily been offered to the Lady, herbal offerings can be especially meaningful for their particular significance and properties.

### **In Sabbat Rituals**

During the eight Sabbats, some herbs are burned and others are used as altar offerings and decorations or hung about the ritual area.

<b>sabbat</b>	<b>related herbs</b>
Samhain	heather, mullein, patchouli, and sage may be burned; acorns, apples, pumpkins, oak leaves, straw, broom, dittany, ferns, and flax may be decorations
Yule	bay, bayberry, chamomile, frankincense, rosemary, and sage may be burned; holly, juniper, mistletoe, moss, oak, pine cones, cedar, evergreen, and blessed thistle may be decorations
Imbolc	basil, bay, benzoin, and celandine may be burned; angelica, myrrh, yellow flowers, and white flowers may be decorations
Ostara	celandine, cinquefoil, jasmine, rose, tansy, and violets may be burned; acorn, crocus, daffodil, dogwood, honeysuckle, iris, lily, and strawberry may be decorations
Beltane	almond, ash, cinquefoil, frankincense, marigold, meadowsweet, and woodruff may be burned; angelica, bluebells, daisy, hawthorn, ivy, lilac, primrose, and rose may be decorations
Litha	chamomile, cinquefoil, elder flower, fennel, lavender, mugwort, thyme, and vervain may be burned; hemp, larkspur, pine, rose, St. John's Wort, and wisteria may be decorations
Lughnassadh	cornstalks, heather, frankincense, and wheat may be burned; acacia flowers, corn ears, hollyhock, myrtle, oak leaves, and wheat may be decorations
Mabon	benzoin, marigold, myrrh, sage, and thistles may be burned; acorns, asters, ferns, honeysuckle, milkweed, mums, oak leaves, pine, and rose may be decorations

### **In Noon Rituals**

The new or crescent moon represents the maiden aspect and is a time for personal rituals and meditations, setting new goals, and doing wish magic. The herbs that may be used at the start of these rituals are jasmine, myrrh, rosemary, or vanilla, burned in a white or silver candle. During the full moon, the mother aspect may be honored with ash, gardenia, lotus, oak, palm, or rose, burned in a red or green candle during a ritual for acknowledging successful workings, completions, and honoring the energies or spirit guides. The waning or dark moon represents the crone aspect and is a time for banishings, purgings, letting go of bad habits, removing obstacles, divination, and purification. The herbs that may be used at the start of these rituals include frankincense, elder flowers, or willow, burned in a black candle.

During a particular moon ritual, the altar may be prepared with the above suggested herbs in the color of candle listed, but if you are performing a specific spell or other magic for a particular purpose at an Esbat, you may want to show your respect for the Lady first, then use candles and herbs appropriate for the work you have in mind afterwards. There is a great deal of flexibility in the Green level of the Craft, and the Witch is encouraged to do what feels right.

## In Timing Rituals

For some people, the need to get as much positive alignment as possible leads to concerns about the proper day to do a spell, the time of day, and the planetary influence. The Green element has a moon and sun orientation rather than an astrological one, but since it is the base level of any Craft practice, it can be adapted, or overlaid, with the use of favorable days, hours, and signs. The normal reality, however, is that rituals are usually very simple, and these factors really do not enter into consideration. I have felt a need for a spell and performed it, then out of curiosity checked to see if the timing was appropriate, and I have never found that it was not. There are many ways to approach the timing of magic workings, and a listing of days and hours can be easily manipulated to suit your needs whenever they arise. Nevertheless, since this is a common feature of Craft practice, I do keep a fairly standard schedule for reference should I feel inclined to use it.

## Days

<b>days</b>	<b>associations</b>
Monday	<i>(planet)</i> Moon <i>(colors)</i> silver, white, gray <i>(herb)</i> moonwort <i>(influences)</i> dreams, emotions, clairvoyance, home, family, medicine, cooking, personality, merchandising, theft
Tuesday	<i>(planet)</i> Mars <i>(colors)</i> red, orange <i>(herb)</i> basil <i>(influences)</i> dynamic energy, matrimony, war, enemies, prison, hunting, surgery, courage, politics, contests
Wednesday	<i>(planet)</i> Mercury <i>(colors)</i> yellow, gray, violet <i>(herb)</i> lavender <i>(influences)</i> communication, teaching, reason, divination, skill, self-improvement, debt, fear, loss
Thursday	<i>(planet)</i> Jupiter <i>(colors)</i> blue, purple <i>(herb)</i> cinquefoil <i>(influences)</i> health, honor, luck, riches, clothing, money, legal matters, desires
Friday	<i>(planet)</i> Venus <i>(colors)</i> pink, aqua, green <i>(herb)</i> thyme <i>(influences)</i> love, friendship, social activities, strangers, pleasure, art, music, incense and perfumes
Saturday	<i>(planet)</i> Saturn <i>(colors)</i> black, indigo <i>(herb)</i> mullein <i>(influences)</i> self-discipline, life, building, doctrine, protection, freedom, elderly, destroying diseases and pests
Sunday	<i>(planet)</i> Sun <i>(colors)</i> yellow, orange, gold <i>(herb)</i> St. John's Wort <i>(influences)</i> individuality, hope, fortune, money, work, power, healing, promotions, strength, spirituality

## Hours

An almanac with a magical focus will have a schedule of the hours of the day (after sunrise and after sunset) showing what planet rules when for each day of the week. The sequence is Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, then repeat, beginning on Sunday; the same sequence begins on Monday with the Moon, Tuesday with Mars, and so forth so that each day, the first hour after sunrise is ruled by the planet of that day, and you progress through twenty four hours with the first twelve being the after sunrise hours, and the second twelve being the after sunset hours. You can make up your own chart with the days of the week across the top, and the hours of the day listed down the side, then simply start in the sequence shown for each day. You can

adjust your workings according to what hour it is after sunrise or sunset, because the times are not equal but twice a year. Once you have the chart made, the use is easy.

### **A Witch's Spellbook**

You may have noticed that I refer to my spellbook rather than to a Book of Shadows, as is most common in Wiccan traditions. There are actually two distinct books that form the backbone of my approach to the Craft—the spellbook, which contains the information gathered over years of practice and experience from which spells, charms, and rituals may be derived; and the Book of Rituals, recognizable as a facet of the Wiccan Book of Shadows, which contains the rites for Sabbats and Esbats. Rites of Passage and individual Sabbat celebrations can be found in Chapters 7-16, but you really should not attempt to leap into rituals without knowing the basics and basis for them. The spellbook is a useful tool that the Witch composes, rather like a recipe book, under different headings.

I like to use bound and lined journals with decorative covers that can be found in almost any bookstore. I use small tabs (stationary and business supply stores carry these) to index the pages. The book will acquire a friendly, useful feel about it as you fill it with pertinent information. You can select the cover that appeals to you and expresses what you want to achieve in the Craft. I have never liked the solid black books often associated with Witchcraft simply because the Green elements are those of browns and greens, flowers and herbs, sun and moon, sky and earth. My spellbook is brown with a green, leafy vine around it and a red-orange rose in the center, but my Book of Rituals is green with clusters of gold leaves and red roses in the corners.

Besides these two books, I also keep a book of divinations and a journal that acts both as a dream diary and a record of impressions from other events, such as meditations and visions. Most Witches keep dream journals, divination records, and descriptions of their encounters with the Otherworld for reference, and I highly recommend the practice.

### **A Witch's Relationship with nature**

The Witch whose practice is centered on the Green level feels close to the growing things of the earth and frequently talks to plants, insects, rocks, and all the creations in nature. The animistic and pantheistic aspect of the Craft makes this a logical step, albeit one that has often been used by other people with varying degrees of hostility. The non-Witch will curse at weeds, for example, whereas I will scold them and remind them that they have the whole yard to play in, so stay out of the herb garden. When I pick weeds out of the garden (I never cut them, but pull them out roots and all), I simply toss them onto the ground where they quickly take root and live quite happily. To me, weeds are not pests, but more like mischievous children playing hide and seek among the herbs, waiting to see how long it will take me to notice them.

With trees, I have found that some are more receptive and predisposed to communing with people than others. Some trees need to get to know the person close by them before bothering to respond. I have encountered trees that are rather aloof, and others that are quite content to be visited and talked to. But there are a few trees that effuse love and affection for humans, and these are a joy to be near. Generally, however, once a tree recognizes that you care about it and are not exploitative, it will blend its energies with you. The devas of the plant world bond with people who care about them, and you will be changed so that wherever you go, the green growing things will recognize you are a friend and reach out to you with their energies.

## **4. GREEN LIVING**

There is a difference between practicing magic and living the Green level of the Craft. In the first case, the individual studies to master a number of rituals in order to enter a different state of awareness when attempting

to manipulate external energies in the performance of magic. In the second case, the very life of the individual is an ongoing magical experience highlighted with special bursts of magical power.

## **Ceremonial Magic**

The modern fascination with ceremony composed of strict rules and regulations for the practice of magic can be traced back to Medieval and Renaissance writers of magic books called grimoires. These were the early Ceremonialists who wrote extensive and complex rituals by which the Adept could contact the higher realms and effect magic (Gonzalez-Wippler in *The Complete Book of Spells, Ceremonies and Magic* gives some examples). The rituals themselves, however, relate to angels, demons, devils and the Son of God. They reflect not an ancient tradition, but a relatively recent one dating back to the Judaic heritage of around 1000 to 600 B.C.E.

## **The Aryan Influence**

I discuss the historical background of the invasions of various Aryan tribes from Central Asia, circa 2000 to 1200 b.c.e., and how the Aryan influence altered religious expression in the lands they conquered in Appendix A. What is important to remember here and in the practice of magic is that the angels, demons, devils and rulers of various realms are derived from the ancient gods and goddesses of conquered peoples. For myself, that knowledge makes it impossible to practice a completely ceremonial type of magic. In order to call upon an archangel, for example, the magician must subscribe to some of the beliefs of the relatively more modern religious systems. This does not mean the system cannot work, only that in order for it to work, the practitioner needs to accept and follow the basics of the Aryan methodology that emphasizes the power of deities who may be described as being of a social class (rulers, priests, and warriors) rather than of nature (the Lady and the Lord, matter and energy of the foundation level).

The politicization of religion is the heritage of the ancient Aryans. It has left its mark in modern faiths through a subsequent pattern of clerical elitism and dominance, with the subservience of the community of believers enforced through ritualized dogmas and doctrines. The word "Aryan" should not be interpreted as a negative term despite its misuse in modern contexts of racial prejudice and ethnic bigotry, since all modern mainstream religions are Aryan-based. The conflicts that occur between these faiths are mainly the result of the degree of emphasis given to Green-level concepts in the different sects. The original purpose for changing the religious practices of a region was to ensure control by a ruling invader over the conquered people.

The persecutions and wars of religion that have been, and still are, the hallmark of Western history were unknown prior to the migrations of the Aryans. This aggressive advance of people was possibly due to overpopulation and a successful change in societal organization meant to deal with the problem. Beginning around 2000 B.C.E., the arrival of these people into the southern reaches of the Indian subcontinent, the Near East, and the Mediterranean gave birth to the faiths of Hinduism, the classical Greek pantheon, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all of which then fought among themselves (for each group had, and most continue to have, numerous sects and denominations) and with each other over which doctrine was the true faith. The answer, of course, is "none of the above" and "all of the above."

## **The Green Influence**

The Green-focused Witch turns away from artificial creation and instead embraces the primal religion that honors the natural forces active in the creation of the world. Although there are many people who feel Ceremonial magic is a valid approach to magic, anyone who studies history and understands the derivation for the rituals of Ceremonialism is unlikely to be able to continue to use the system with any degree of success because knowledge, which is the gift of the Goddess, alters the perception. Joseph Campbell was unable to remain a Catholic after his study of world mythological patterns, and numerous historians set aside religion after discovering the origins of various faiths, so it should not be considered unusual for a person who rejects mainstream religions to also reject a magical system that has connections to those beliefs. My purpose here is to attempt to locate the elements underlying even the magical systems based in the modern faiths and bring these to the foreground.

## Craft History

The beauty of the Green practice is that laughter and exploration are not destructive to the atmosphere created for magical work. Indeed, the Lady and the Lord thrive on laughter and want their children to be happy. Yet even in Witchcraft there is a different sort of problem, similar to the ritualistic approach of Ceremonialism, that needs to be addressed for a balanced view of the Craft today and how it connects to the Green elements of the ancient past. Numerous articles and a few books on the subject of the origins of Wicca have been, and will undoubtedly continue to be, written over the years. The real question brought forward by these writings is not how the Craft developed or what its origins are, but how well it can stand up to analysis and historical research. If people fall away from mainstream faiths because those religions could not stand up under critical review, why should people approach magic and the Craft and not give these the same degree of scrutiny? How a person responds to the development of the modern Craft will affect how (or if) a person practices Witchcraft and magic.

Each individual needs to find a personal satisfaction in what is done for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual development, and in doing so, to paraphrase Joseph Campbell, each person will come to know what bliss is being followed.

Many people who were members of the fashionable secret societies of the Victorian Age became influential in the area of Witchcraft. By the early part of the twentieth century, they had taken Ceremonial aspects and applied them to the Craft, and adapted or created dogmas like the Charge of the Goddess (I envision Athena on horseback racing down a hillside in battle gear with her spear pointed at a startled supplicant, but I tend to have a droll sense of humor), a poetic Witch's Rede (which has been criticized for its artificially quaint language) containing the Law of Threefold Return (in contrast to a karmic view of one-for-one), the Witches' Rune, and the Fivefold (or Sevenfold) Blessing.

Early people involved in the Witchcraft revival wrote books, lectured, created traditions, and some even authorized covens based on a system of initiations by degrees. In this system, the highest degree was obtained through sexual union with a Priest (or sometimes a Priestess) of the organized coven tradition. They pronounced themselves to be Kings and Queens of Witches, wrote "Witch's Bibles," and became so well recognized in the media that it became accepted that there were only certain kinds of Witchcraft—Gardnerian, Alexandrian, and the creations of several other individuals. These were complete with ceremonies that might include nudity and sexual relations among the coven members, which now looks rather dated. Meanwhile, Witches all over the world had been quietly going about their business, privately practicing the Craft. Suddenly, they and their children were not considered "legitimate" although they had not even sought recognition. A few writers of Witchcraft books made this distinction, and for a long time, there were people who actually believed that either there were no solitaires or family practices, or that if there were any, they were not "real" Witches because they had not been initiated by the leader of a recognized coven tradition. It has only been in recent years that the solitary Witch has regained recognition and acceptance within the established Wiccan community.

The village witch, hedge witch, cottage witch, and even the kitchen witch are all direct descendants of the Green practice of Witchcraft—the Old Religion. It can be considered irrelevant when some twentieth century coven traditions boast of a chain of initiations back to Gardner if you consider that there have been and still are practicing Witches all over the world who have never heard of Gardner, much less care about any initiation he might have wanted to bestow. I have heard from family tradition Witches who find the coven requirement of a chain of initiations for "legitimacy" as anything from amusing to rather insulting, but I have also heard from newcomers to the Craft who are confused about whether or not they must subordinate themselves to a coven leader in order to be a "real" Witch.

The notion of "real" and "unreal" Witches should not be a factor for the practice of the Craft, and it certainly does not relate to the Green elements of the Craft. The Witch is one who is united with the Goddess and the God, and that is a personal matter. This is rather like Christians differentiating among themselves between who is merely Christian and who is born-again Christian. Different, individualized approaches to the Craft are not encouraged when there is an attitude of exclusivity, and recent proposals of creating a Wiccan orthodoxy have resulted in a need for further introspection on the meaning and purpose of Witchcraft as a religious expression.

## Core Traditions

The coven traditions of this century have certainly made a significant contribution to modern Wicca, particularly in the way of literature and ritual content, so that almost all Witches in westernized societies are familiar with such standards as the Charge of the Goddess and the Witch's Rede. How these coven formats affect the Green level is a matter worthy of consideration. The main items I have examined, which form the core of most modern Wiccan traditions, are the Wiccan Rede, the Charge of the Goddess, the Witches' Rune, and the Fivefold (and Sevenfold) Blessing.

### The Wiccan Rede

Bide the Witch's law ye must,  
In perfect love, in perfect trust.  
Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill:  
An ye harm none, do what ye will.  
What ye send forth comes back to thee,  
So ever mind the Rule of Three.  
Follow this with mind and heart,  
And merry ye meet, and merry ye part.

This has its origins with Gardner, but perhaps only in the rhyming of the ideas. The criticisms leveled at the pseudo-archaic language is one of those little things that annoy people about the Craft of today—it seems to be built upon a false foundation that was first presented as literally true, then re-defined as based on a real code, but finally accepted as the start of a new religious application that is just as valid as any other new creed. Yet, from my point of view as a historian and as one having a family heritage of Craft usage, I find it offensive that because the truth was not stated at the outset, it may now be completely lost.

The original implication that the Rede as written above was a secret passed down through the ages (and therefore "legitimate") and that Gardner was sharing this ancient secret with people has sullied the genuine underlying truths. Because my Brazilian mother and grandmother used the same ideas contained in the Rede, I am inclined to believe that Gardner based his writings and teachings on a genuine Craft guideline. Therefore, his innovation of creating a litany for the benefit of others who sought directions for experiencing the Craft themselves has been erroneously labeled as a new creed. From the Witch's perspective, it is much better for such articles of faith as the Rede and the Charge to be accepted as literary creations for a larger revival of the Old Religion than to pretend that these are the original ancient litanies. The Gardnerian tradition, as an example, then takes on no different an aspect than that of a contemporary Christian denomination like the Christian Scientists or the Universalist Unitarians. Accepting this as the case, only the stilted language employed may be an annoyance. Today, there are other versions of these litanies in wide use which are re-phrased in modern language forms, some better than others.

The deities of the Craft are not stuck in the seventeenth century, but I believe that the use of old language forms comes, for the most part, from a desire to emulate the style of the King James Bible (which is criticized as flawed by translators). The reason for doing so is the same reason the King James version has remained popular despite the newer, more accurate translations: the air of "legitimacy" wrought by time, not because it is right, but because it is old from a modern perspective.

My mother and grandmother were very practical people who considered themselves Catholics, yet they also held onto spiritist traditions. I learned the rules of magic in plain terms, but the Green elements may be expressed through the Rede without difficulty because the essence is drawn from the same source (except for the Threefold Return). In examining the Rede, I will compare it line by line with what I call the Rules of Conduct, although my mother did not give these any title—she merely told me the rules repeatedly over the years. I can still hear her low voice patiently repeating the rules to me:

For "Bide the Witch's law ye must," she said, "Be careful what you do." For "In perfect love, in perfect trust," she said, "Be careful who you trust." For "An ye harm none, do what ye will," she said, "Don't use the power to hurt someone because—" for "What ye send forth comes back to thee," she concluded with, "what is sent

comes back." ("Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill" and "So ever mind the Rule of Three" were not used.) For "Follow this with mind and heart" (which reflects the Green level use of magic), my mother stated simply, "To use the power, you must feel it in your heart and know it in your mind." For "And merry ye meet, and merry ye part," my mother told me that Grandmother admonished her, "Never use the power against someone else who has the power."

The "merry meet" line appears to be a poetic version (based on older language forms) of the code among pre- and non-Gardnerian Witches to respect one another. This implies to me that Gardner did have genuine Craft information to work with and had made an effort to compose it for general use. This is an element of relationships—if a person has the power (is a Witch) then that person is actively connected to the Divine, so another person so connected would be damaging their own power by working it against one so connected. Since my mother's background is different from Gardner's, it could be that the Threefold Return was a verbalization of this connection between the Witch and the Divine. By working against someone, the Witch could incur a return not only from the individual but also from the Lady and the Lord. The bottom line is that Witches do not perform magic against other Witches because the repercussions would be on the sender.

Should a student try to set one Witch against another (I know of such a case), the Witch will contact the other. Together they will share information and both will disconnect from the student. Usually this situation only arises if the seeker turns out to be not ready for instruction, perhaps because of immaturity or emotional instability. By withdrawing from the seeker, the Witch gives the individual time to mature or to get personal problems under control. There is not any real danger from discontented people throwing magic around in a fit of temper because the negative power always returns to the sender. The two Witches in the above scenario were not afraid for their own safety but rather for the welfare of the student, who was in danger of self-harm through a desire to have power over other people.

Because the Gardnerian version of the Rede is widely accepted in the Craft, it is an acceptable expression of a basic element of Pagan systems. Although I feel that the threefold aspect is reminiscent of an Aryan threat—severe retribution from the unapproachable God should the faithful deviate from the laws of the clergy—the fact that Gardner may have been a member of the Ceremonial magic order called the Golden Dawn might explain why he has this element in *his* Rede. The other possible interpretation of the Witch incurring a return from the Craft-connected recipient as well as from the Lady and the Lord makes this usage understandable on a more natural level.

### **The Charge of the Goddess**

This first appeared in Charles Leian's 1897 book *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches*, and was lifted for part of the more familiar version found in Gerald Gardner's *Book of Shadows* and used throughout modern Wicca. Leian's "Charge" was later given a poetic ending by Gardner. The first section is written in the first person as from the Goddess herself, and tells Witches to meet in secret monthly, preferably during the full moon, to adore the spirit of the Queen of all Witches and there learn to work magic. To show they are really free from slavery, the Witches are exhorted to be naked, to "dance, sing, feast, make music and love" in her praise. This is a reference, then, to mil moon Esbats rather than to Sabbats.

The problem with this doctrine is the time period in which it was written—the era of Victorian moral and societal strictness when secret societies flourished primarily as an escape from the oppressive social atmosphere. While the Charge is an instruction for freedom in life, it is also male-oriented, referring (as an example) to joy in the heart of man. Even with a Goddess voicing the Charge, the focus is on males, not females, and not both as equals.

Because the Charge is a product of its times, only the bits of generally accepted aspects of the Goddess (such as her giving knowledge of immortality, not demanding sacrifice, and being the mother of All) are relevant, and the rest, in stilted language, is already outdated. The second part of the Charge, which demonstrates Gardner's Craft connections, is more reasonable as it reminds the seeker that those who look for her outside themselves must first find her within, "For behold, I have been with thee from the beginning; and I am that which is attained at the end of desire." From the perspective of the Green level of the Craft, this is the only part of the



Charge that is especially meaningful and indicates again that Gardner was incorporating an authentic Witch tradition.

### **The Witches' Rune**

Used to raise power at a coven meeting by some traditions, and relating to Christian concepts of heaven and hell, the Witches' Rune does not appear to be a Green element. The references to the use of a sword and scourging also reveal this Rune to be Ceremonial in nature. Witches of the Old Religion did not have swords, and it is unlikely they practiced scourging. However, the latter inclusion could be related to nineteenth-century British tourism discovering the fresco scene at the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii depicting as yet unidentified rites (although some Wiccans tend to attribute them to Dionysus and Arianna—Leiand's Aradia, perhaps?). Having seen these particular wall paintings myself, I am more inclined to consider them related to the resurrection cult of Cybele and Attis. The entire Villa of Mysteries contains depictions indicating a cross-section of a number of diverse resurrection sects, from Isis to Dionysus to Cybele. This last one was very big in the Roman Empire from circa 150 B.c.E. until it was outlawed by Christian lawmakers in the time of Constantine. Scourging was also a historical aspect of convent life in some of the stricter Catholic traditions (there are paintings in Mexico of nuns praying as they walk in a circle with each nun whipping the nun in front of her).

The call of "Eko, Eko" is reminiscent of the call of the Bacchantes of Dionysus, "Evoa!" (from which may come the Latin word *evocare*, meaning to summon or evoke). The names added to the Rune are not Wiccan but are based on Ceremonial demons and archdemons (fallen angels who rebelled against God). To use the name of Lucifer as the brother of Diana (they were supposed to be Aradia's parents) and then say he was kicked out of paradise for his arrogance shows the unfortunate extent of this infiltration of Christian ideas into the Craft. Lucifer was actually quite simply the Roman God of the Morning Star, Venus. Here again is the androgyne quality that the early Christian Church hated, with Venus seen as both female and male depending upon whether it is the Morning Star or the Evening Star. Because the Morning Star equates to Lucifer, Gonzalez-Wippler equates Lucifer to Apollo, which is not far off as the typical parallel between the God and Goddess with the sun and the moon or Apollo and Diana.

### **The Fivefold and Sevenfold Blessing**

I have already mentioned the Fivefold (and Sevenfold) Blessing in the sense of Victorian escapism, but there are some later variations to this Blessing which make it more balanced than the original. From this blessing comes the familiar expression among Witches, "Blessed be." This is often used as a greeting or as a farewell. The blessing can be accompanied with a hug and kiss, and/or anointing with oil. This is the Fivefold Blessing:

Blessed be thy feet, that bring thee on this path.  
Blessed be thy knees, that kneel to the Lord and Lady.  
Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be.  
Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty and in strength.  
Blessed be thy lips, that speak (utter) the sacred names.

The Sevenfold Blessing begins by asking for a blessing from the Goddess, and adds a blessing for the eyes to see her path and for the nose to breathe in her essence. It drops the blessing for the knees, and changes the womb to the loins. Depending on the tradition, the blessings move from feet to lips or lips to feet.

The obvious problem with these blessings is that unless a generic form is used, only females are being blessed—presumably by a male priest. Again, this demonstrates the age in which these litanies were created, but that does not mean the Blessings should be discarded. The Blessings today vary between Craft traditions and practitioners. The central theme of blessing is found throughout ancient religions, and can be considered an appropriate expression of a Green element underlying the various systems.

One main difference in my approach to the Divine as learned from my mother is that there is no ritual kneeling before the Lady and the Lord—they made us to stand upright in their presence, and the Green altar of ancient heritage was apparently not a low one, but at a comfortable height to stand before. To determine what place any

altar has in the basic level of the Craft, you only need to consider that even if it is an Aryan invention, it had to have come from a time when the Green elements were in use because high altars were used prior to the advent of those later Aryan faiths that tried to eliminate the natural (Green) level.

The Witch who focuses on the Green element may sit to meditate or to enjoy cakes and wine after a ritual, or kneel before a shrine in meditation if so inclined, but the knees ought not to be perceived as bending before the Divine if we accept that we are the Divine and the Divine are us. That is the key to being one with the All. The kneeling aspect is a holdover from Ceremonialism and the ritual Aryan distancing of God (as seen in the Catholic Mass, as an example). With my own practice, the body is being blessed (without the kisses) for while it has many independent functions (breathing, heart beat, nervous system, and so forth) it works with and contains the spirit of the Witch:

Blessed be my feet, that take me on my path.  
Blessed be my knees, that support me before the Divine.  
Blessed be my abdomen, that gives me inner strength.  
Blessed be my breast, that holds my heart true to them.  
Blessed be my lips, that speak the secret names.

To this can be added:

Blessed be my eyes, that see the beauty of their love.  
Blessed be my mind, that seeks their knowledge and wisdom.

The traditional greeting of "Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again" came from the expectation that Witches were secure in each other's company ("perfect love and perfect trust" also reflects this certainty). They could not always say the same about other people. Since this Gardnerian form is a commonly used expression of a Green element of the Craft, I feel free to use it also.

### **Other Green Codes**

It is unfortunate that so much fantasy writing depicts the practice of the Old Religion in terms of evil and good Witches attacking each other. This continuation in popular reading materials of presenting magic as something that leads to abuse and brings danger to innocent victims only serves to raise the level of paranoia and hysteria directed at the Craft and its devotees. There are many people who have no idea what the Craft is all about, and there is the danger of such tales being accepted as literal truth in substance rather than as simple entertainment.

Besides the commonly recognized rules of Witchcraft, my mother instilled in me other codes that can be found in the Green level of the Craft worldwide and even in the Pagan-based "superstitions" of Catholicism. The most important thing for a seeker to remember is that in Witchcraft, the practitioner is one with the All, so the rule most strongly emphasized is that the connection is there for positive or negative energy.

I remember my mother drilling into my consciousness that "If you say negative things, you will draw them." In our household we never were allowed to invoke "bad things," even when these were simply figures of speech. Any slip of the tongue was met with a sharp rebuke. But the lessons of childhood are well-learned, and this is one that will be most useful to the seeker in later years, for it is an exercise in self-control.

The other matter my mother was cautious about involves the negative drawing power of others who are not connected, but are careless. My mother referred to this as "bad eyes" and meant that someone was looking at another person with jealousy, envy, or simple spitefulness, and spoke things that were perhaps not intentionally meant, but had that effect. Other people have told me of similar warnings in their own families, but usually the ethnic background was Italian. I suspect that this is another Pagan superstition prevalent in the Catholic Church, particularly among Latin peoples.

The only way to know when the bad eye was being given was by the way you felt when the person looked at you or made a comment. My brother was in Vietnam, due to return home, and my mother had told an elderly neighbor how glad she was that he was finally returning. The neighbor, being crotchety by nature, commented,

"Well, if he makes it." My mother immediately saw the negative power of those words and threw her own energies into lighting candles for his protection and called me to do the same. This may well have saved my brother's life, for on *his* departure he stepped on a land mine that failed to explode and then the helicopter he boarded was shot down, but he nevertheless made it home safe and sound. She kept the candle vigil going until she knew he was out of danger.

Normally, a word in return can negate the power of an ill-conceived remark. If the person is obstinate and does not want to let the remark be turned away verbally, then you may send the negativity back to the sender by making the sign of the horns (for the God) and visualizing the energy sent back through the horns of your fingers (index and little finger extended, rest curled into a fist). The best way to do this is to let the miscreants think they got the last word in, then send it back when they are not looking. The other option is to do a quick candle spell, or if the offense took place in your home, burn frankincense when the person leaves to cleanse the air of negativity. You may even want to open the front door and "sweep" out the negative energy with your besom after you have let the incense do its work.

Earlier I mentioned the Bacchantes, and I feel that the possible inclusion of their call and other aspects of the Cult of Dionysus in Wicca is significant. The reason for this is that much of the Green level came into the ancient European continent from the Indus by way of Asia Minor. The path leads around the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and into Western Europe, but also from Asia Minor across Greece and into Eastern Europe. Thrace is located in the Balkan Peninsula (Slavic lands) north of Greece, and the ancient, pre-Olympic deity of Dionysus was honored there as a Homed God of life, death, and rebirth.

The very name of Dionysus has been traced back to Shiva by several historians, particularly Alain Danielou in his book *Gods of Love and Ecstasy, The Traditions of Shiva and Dionysus*. The significance of this lies in that my mother and grandmother, Brazilians of Celtic-Iberian descent, used a Portuguese pronunciation of the Thracian Moon Goddess Bendidia (*Benedida*) in some of their spells. The connection between Celtic-descent Witches and Thrace is hinted at in Gardner's *Book of Shadows* and makes it clear through the common usage of these ideas even in Brazil that his Wiccan litany did have a basis in Witch practices, some of which had been affected by Christianity over the centuries.

One spell involving Benedida that I learned as a child was to recover lost items. When I complained to my mother that I could not find a toy, she showed me how to get it back (she presumed that it was "borrowed"). You can imagine my delight to watch her dramatically write the name "Benedida" on a piece of paper, crease it, wave it through the air and snap it closed. As she continued to wrap up the paper she solemnly intoned: "Benedida, I have you here and I will not let you go until you return the missing toy." She held the paper tightly in her fingers and then placed the wrapped paper carefully (so as not to let Benedida escape) under the leg of a heavy chair. Then she told me to look again for the toy. Needless to say, I was ecstatic when I easily found my toy. For several weeks, I gave Benedida a run for her money as I tried the spell over and over!

The other spell involving Benedida is a traditional one for New Year's Eve. We would sit at the dining room table with a cut-up pomegranate and strip of white paper folded lengthwise in half awaiting the chiming of the clock for midnight. With each chime we would take a pomegranate seed, bite it, say: "Benedida! Bring me money!" then lay the seed in the fold of the strip of paper and fold it over. It didn't matter if the clock beat us to the twelfth chime or not, the rest of the paper was then tightly folded up and tucked inside our wallets to remain there as a money-draw for the year.

With the second spell, the use of the pomegranate shows the relationship of the Moon Goddess (Benedida, or Hecate) helping the Earth Mother find her daughter, Persephone, as well as the association of the realm of Hades with riches. The first spell shows the relationship between the Moon Goddess and the fairy folk (who like to borrow things from the people they live around). I tend to view Benedida as a crone figure—rather like a grandmother—who is wise to the location of objects in any plane and traverses the regions of the Realm of Shadows.

## **Family Lore**

As you can see by my examples, when you are living Green the lore is passed along according to need. Sometimes I got lucky and heard a story about a spell Grandmother did when Mother was a child. My mother told me about a time when she was a child and a friend of hers came to visit Grandmother because she had a terrible case of hives on her legs. Her friend told my grandmother that she had made fun of another little girl, and the girl had taken a mouth full of cornmeal and spat it at her legs. Afterwards, the hives appeared and itched beyond endurance. Grandmother was never called a Witch, mind you, but people knew who to see for spells and charms as well as for herbal cures. She told the child to get a pan of water and sneak up behind the girl who had spat the cornmeal, then dash the water at the girl's legs. My mother's friend did this, and the hives disappeared. In this case it was not a matter of finding a salve for the hives, but of negating an energy that otherwise would have returned to harm the girl that had sent it. Thus, my grandmother worked for the benefit of both children.

My mother was a source of Green Craft wisdom gently handed down to me as folk traditions without any name given. I realized much later that things we were doing were things other people said Witches did. The two times we found a nearly full-fledged bird fallen from its nest but unable to fly, my mother put it in a shoebox and fed it minced worms and water with an eyedropper until it was ready to fly away. When she would chide me for a wrongdoing that I was sure she could not have found out, she would tell me, "A little bird told me." And I never doubted her.

Although my grandmother always maintained an herb garden, my mother did not. Instead, she relied upon the magic of flowers. For security around the house, she would plant a variety called hen and chicks at the front of the house. If she wanted to move, she would plant bonina, a green bushy shrub with small, trumpet-like white flowers in which a single large round seed would form that could easily be harvested for spreading the plant. If you did not want to move, then someone else should give you this plant as a gift and you will stay put. Although my mother enjoyed one house we were in, she loved the bonina so much she planted it anyway. Sure enough, within a year we were moving again and she said she wished that she had not planted the bonina. This time she did not take the seeds along with her, and although she never planted bonina again, she continued to move around for many more years.

Mother stayed connected to the Lady through the working of the soil and the gathering and storing of the harvest. We once had a vegetable garden in one house that yielded quite a lot for canning; this was another passion of hers. At another house there were grapes to turn into jellies, and after another move, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and vegetables. No matter where she lived, she always had green plants around the house to tend and they thrived under her care.

My father was always interested in the local plant and animal life wherever we lived, and I felt he was a naturalist at heart. So I collected plants and leaves to identify them and tape them to shirtboards for reference, or kept track of what I saw in my natural surroundings with the aid of bird, flower, animal, and sea life guides. It was my mother who taught me to set out milk for the fairies, but she was a little wary of the Other People. I generally set out milk on days when it seems appropriate, and wine or Irish Whiskey on full moons, and sometimes these days we will use amaretto or some other liqueur.

With the Green level of the Craft, the inclusion of the fairy folk is a natural extension since you are dealing with herbs and plant devas (energies, fairies). You can tell that you have attracted the fairies to your home when things disappear for awhile then turn up unexpectedly. They are very curious and will borrow things to use or to examine, but will return them in due time. Sometimes they will even leave gifts. When my daughter was a child, she found a perfect little "teacup" made of stone. I told her to keep it safe as it was a fairy cup, and she did for many years. One day the cup simply disappeared from her room and she was very upset about it. I told her the fairies must have wanted it back and would probably leave something else for her. Sure enough, she soon found a pretty engraved golden ring that fit her finger exactly. I like to think that she has the Blessing of the Sidhe (pronounced "Shee"), the Other People.

Another aspect of Green awareness involves looking at the moon, the rising and setting sun, and the clouds on nearly a daily basis. When you get up early in the morning, go outside and look at the clouds in the early dawn. In the evening, watch the clouds as the sun sets. Often things will appear that others may not notice or consider "real," but for the Witch, everything is "real" in one form or another. I have seen black unicorns race across the

sky and I have called upon the white unicorns to herd them away from where I live. These black unicorns are portents of negative energies racing to sow discord and storms where they have been drawn, but the white unicorns will come when called upon and chase away the black ones.

This is similar to seeing the Wild Hunt, the fairy host of the Lord of Shadows, racing across the sky. Danielou and Joseph Campbell relate this Celtic figure to tales of Dionysus and *his* wild entourage of maenads and the equally wild group (the "bhaktas," who Danielou links with the Bacchantes of Dionysus) that follows Shiva. To read the legends of both is to again see the transference of a common element from the Indus to Thrace and into Europe. I know when I see this apparition to note the direction in which they ride and avoid that place, for that is where their destination lies, and again, you can expect to hear about discord and storms from that area. Many people have become too sophisticated in the modern world to give any notice to the warnings and signs that are offered us. Some of this is due to Biblical scoldings against knowing the signs of the sky, but those injunctions were created specifically to undermine the practices of the times in which they were written. I am not the only person who reads the clouds and sees the Wild Hunt, but I mention these things here for the benefit of those who do so and would like a little confirmation that this is a normal Witchcraft practice.

The Witch who is focused on the Green element of the Craft frequently talks to plants and animals with the expectation that they will understand and respond. Part of living Green requires that the union between the practitioner and the rest of the earth is accepted. There is no room for tearfulness, doubt, or negativity regarding what nature has to offer, and from this comes the ability to feel the presence in all things. Divination of any type—looking at the clouds, moon, sun, stars, crystals, mirrors, cards, water, and so forth—becomes a daily activity that is a communication with all of nature and the Lady and the Lord. There is no dogma as this would limit the conversation and make it a script rather than spontaneous expression. The rules, such as they are, are practical guidelines for everyday living. The Craft is not meant to be a forum for self-promotion to a community of followers, nor is it a means of feeling important. By being part of the All, egotism is subdued.

In living the Craft, the practitioner is willing to teach anyone who sincerely wants to learn, but this is not a route to power and domination or fame and fortune. It is instead a way of life that brings peace and contentment in nature. The elementals form a part of each person as body, intellect and intuition, passion and energy, and the waters of life. Our contribution to all of this is our spirit, which is part of the spirit of the Lady and the Lord. We belong to our world and to our universe, and it is within us all. Because each person relates to the Divine individually, I do not feel that there can ever be an orthodox book of rules, litany, dogma, and rituals. Even the names of the Divine will vary from person to person as each Witch subscribes to a pantheon that has meaning to the individual. No belief is needed because the individual meets and communicates directly with the Lady and the Lord.

People can limit their scope by focusing on the Lady and the Lord in relation to the earth, or widen their view to see them as the united power that stands behind the very creation of our universe. The single entity called the "One Initiator" by Dion Fortune and described as "too ephemeral to define" by Marion Green is in fact recognizable as the Divine Androgyne aspect of the Lady and the Lord united. It is the 30,000-year-old image of Shiva Ardhanari (half male and half female) which then split apart to form the energy and matter of the universe and all that is within it. This imagery has been carried into numerous ancient cultures, and can be found in the modern Bible with its confusing reference in Genesis of "Let us make man in our image." The implication is that of a Dual Deity, and the word should be "humanity" rather than "man." The translation over the centuries has changed the word "side" into "rib" (Stone) so that the true first human of mythology was in fact an androgyne fashioned after the androgyne image of the Lord and the Lady in union, then separated for the sake of companionship.

Because the Green-level Witch is attuned to the tides of the energies of the Earth Goddess and Sky God, the celebration of Sabbats or even Esbats is not necessarily according to the calendar, but according to what feels right for the individual. The point to remember is that these celebrations are not done for the Lady and the Lord, but for ourselves. They do not need or require worship and offerings. You do not need rituals when you can simply let your own energies blend and flow with those of surrounding nature to communicate with the Divine. When you read about Craft practice, by all means try out different techniques and find out how other Witches do things, but always follow your own star and find your own path.

## 5. MAGIC

Magic is a basic part of the Craft, but it does not have to be the same as the religious aspect. In other words, Wicca may be considered a religion with a Goddess and a God that uses magic in a religious framework. Witchcraft may also have a religious application through the practitioner's connection with the Goddess and the God, but the magical practice itself may be religious or it may be a form of folk magic in which personal power is used in conjunction with natural objects to effect changes. This latter type of magical practice is what allows a person of any religious background to work magic without being Wiccan.

For some people, having the best of both worlds is being able to conduct spells while still being a member of a mainstream religion or without being committed to the Lady and the Lord. I practiced the arts of Witchcraft successfully for many years before I introduced myself to them in a self-initiation ceremony, followed later by a dedication to the Lady and the Lord. In this primary level of Green Witchcraft practice, I was sometimes associated with Christianity and other times I was unattached to any religious system, but always I could use the power through natural objects to effect magic from spells to divinations.

My maternal background made magic without affiliation with the Lady and the Lord an easy matter since both my mother and her mother were nominally Catholic and practiced folk arts. For them, the Lady was Mary and the Lord was Jesus, but they were Mary-oriented and had little to say about or to do with Jesus. The difference between them and me came about when I detached myself from the trappings of Christianity and became a practicing Witch. Even then, I was not a Wiccan because I put off the religious aspect of the Craft for many years.

### **Witch or Wiccan?**

I see the Craft as functioning in three levels. Witchcraft can work as a folk practice under the cloak of a mainstream religion; it can be a practice of natural magic without reference to the Lady and the Lord; and it can be a religion in which magic can be practiced through union with the God and the Goddess. Today I can be called either a Witch or a Wiccan, but as I belong to no particular tradition I would use Wiccan only with reluctance. In that sense, I see Wiccan as not quite what I am; Green Witch or Green-level Witch is more to the point. In the Teutonic system I might be called Seidhr and I would not object, for that is the name for the practitioner of the Green level in the Northern system.

Scott Cunningham prefers the word *Wicca* and would question anyone who claimed to be a Witch to find out if the person meant "magician" or "devotee of the Goddess and the God" by the term. To me, the word *magician* connotes a practitioner of Ceremonial magic, which is neither Witchcraft nor Wicca. The Green-level Witch who is dedicated, then, performs magic through the Goddess and the God and through the elementals and the devas. When it comes to identifying yourself or your path, you need to decide if you feel Wiccan, Witch, or Magician is the better description.

The Pagan community today makes a distinction between Witch and Wiccan, but even the term Wiccan is fairly recent. The usage came about after a number of books had already been written on Witchcraft by members of traditions. The Witch's Sabbats have become merely the Sabbats, but I have yet to see them referred to in print as the Wiccan's Sabbats. The word *Wicca* is considered masculine by some, and the word *Wicca* is sometimes used to indicate the feminine, but for the most part, the Craft as a religion is called Wicca and its practitioners are witches. They may also call themselves Witches, so the terms are sometimes interchangeable depending on the magical and religious context, so it is a matter of personal choice.

### **The Practice of Magic**

Candle magic is the most basic form of magical practice. It can be highly complicated, with the candle anointed with an oil that is scented by herbs to draw upon the power of the herb devas and prepare the candle to a magical purpose, inscribed, dedicated, and lit with some appropriate ceremony. Or it can be very simple, with merely a prayer [and the lighting of the candle before an image or in a special place. For my mother, the lighting of candles before the image of the Goddess as described by Catholicism was the primary purpose for going to church. She did many of her candle magics in the incense-heavy and solemn atmosphere of shrines, but others were done in her home, sometimes before a beautiful, slender Thai image of Buddha that looked very much like an image of Shiva Mahayogi (*Great Teacher* or *Great Ascetic*, depending on the usage). These yogic images of Buddha, based on the earlier Shiva images, are an orthodox Vedic version of the Dravidic tradition. Nevertheless, I was surprised to discover at the end of her life that she had been familiar with Shiva since her youth and was thus pleased that I was drawn to this image of the God.

I have read in some guide books of the importance of doing a purifying bath and dressing in ceremonial robes before beginning a candle spell. I like to do this for a Sabbat or an Esbat, but under ordinary circumstances I have found that in actual magical practice the intuitive sense dictates what is necessary. There have been times when I felt I wanted to do a very formal spell and so I have done a ritual bath and dressed in ritual clothing, but there are times when magic is practiced on the spot or on the go, as it were. I might come home from the grocery store and suddenly have an urge to light a candle at the permanent altar. I never question intuitive impulses, but follow them through and feel the better for doing so. This is something that develops over time from practicing the Craft so that it becomes part of your everyday life. When you are comfortable in the Craft, things will simply come to you. Being a Witch doesn't mean hanging about all day looking portentous. Jeans and a tee shirt are just as appropriate for spell work as a ritual robe. For a Sabbat or an Esbat, the robe may still have to be set aside depending on where, how, and with whom you are celebrating (the Green level of the Craft may be family oriented, after all).

One of the first things I noticed when reading about the practice of magic is the number of injunctions given to people to watch what they eat: to avoid sugar, bleached flour, and meat, and to consume plenty of fruit and vegetables. *This* is sound advice for good health, but it really does not affect your magic ability if you like to eat things with sugar, bleached flour, or even meat. The key to all good health programs is to observe moderation in what you do. You may be an epicurean and still be a Witch. Indeed, the namesake for this facet of good living has been sadly maligned for centuries. The first name given by Christians to the Devil was not Lucifer, but Epicurus (this was not the practice or philosophy, but the man personally). Since being so identified in early Christian history, the philosophy of this man has been distorted and denounced to this day. He was an early scapegoat for the pious ascetics. Epicurus did not say that people should be hedonistic and overindulge themselves in all manner of extravagant eating, drinking and sexual behavior. He did teach that life is meant to be enjoyed, but all things in moderation lest the enjoyment fade. The same applies to Witchcraft. If you feel you are entering a severe religious order that requires self-depravation for magic to work, you are missing the picture. Enjoy your life without feeling guilty, but be responsible and exercise a healthy moderation in your enjoyment.

When doing magic that is a communication with the Goddess and the Horned God, the elementals, and the devas, spontaneity is part of the joy. The Green practice can be an ongoing connection once the dedication is performed, so there really is little point in making too much of dietary restraints. The Green level is not the same as Shamanism, which in its true expression requires the seeker to experience near-death fasting and exposure in order to better communicate with spirits. The original purpose of Shamanism was to help the sick by entering the spirit world to fight spirits of the dead over the sick and dying. This practice exists in some forms of Buddhism, but still is not quite the same thing as Witchcraft. Although Witchcraft and Shamanism share certain elements, as with contacting a spirit guide or a power animal, overall the focus of Green Witchcraft involves union with nature.

### **Native American Images and Magic**

As a note of interest, there are many Wiccans who like to incorporate Native American imagery into their rituals—perhaps to reach something identifiable as "New World" or "American"—but I personally do not feel this is a proper connection to make unless a person is part of this heritage. The Native American people have a different, unique, and personal culture that most Americans can only romanticize or fantasize about, and to

incorporate their motifs into Witchcraft always seemed shallow to me. I recently read an article by Andy Smith, co-founder of the Women of All Red Nations, in which she called such borrowings a kind of spiritual abuse and genocide to the Native American culture (*Feminist Bookstore News*). While her position is strongly against the use of Native American spirituality, the use of drumming, for example, is also very Celtic, and indeed the large, shallow, moon-like drum of both cultures (as well as North African) hint at a link to the ancient past of humankind. Feathers are also used in a variety of cultures, but when it comes to the appropriation of Native American spiritual themes into Wiccan practices, the effectiveness of this eclecticism will depend upon the practitioner. As for how a person expresses spiritual feelings, it really is not in the province of any one person to dictate to another what can or cannot be used.

## **Types of Magic**

The other aspect of ritual and ceremony that is widely written about involves the type of magic used. The white Witch/black Witch (and sometimes gray Witch) concept evolved from applying Ceremonial uses of magic practice to Witchcraft, but these really are not applicable. If you are a Witch you do not send out negativity because it will simply rebound upon you. Anyone who claims to be a Witch and practices black magic is actually alluding to images based on mainstream religious concepts rather than Witchcraft. The dark side of nature is in balance with the light side in order for the natural world to function. This includes the Lord of Shadows, the Wild Hunt, Kali, the Dark Mother, and the Morrighu. A Witch does not fear the Dark because it is part of the Light. But to say one does black magic infers the practice of evil. Again, this is a mainstream concept that labels black as evil and white as good (and presumably gray as something in between). The Yin and Yang of Oriental systems is much more applicable to the Witch. To attempt to draw upon Darkness to harm another is simply not good karma, and not a "Witch thing." A Witch would not want to endanger his or her personal power with negativity. The Lord of Shadows is the one who gives us rest and cares for our dear ones who have passed on. The Dark Mother is the Lady leading us from this world into the next to rest before rebirth. A certain perspective is needed when it comes to describing magic.

## **The Components of Ritual Magic**

1. Choose the timing of the spell.
2. Outline the ritual and prepare the tools and materials.
3. Purify yourself.
4. Purify the working space.
5. Create a sacred circle.
6. Have an invocation.
7. Perform the ritual observance.
8. Raise and direct energy.
9. Earth (ground) the residual power.
10. Take some refreshment.
11. Acknowledge the Lady and the Lord.
12. Release (farewell) the elementals.
13. Open the circle.



This may sound complicated, but it only reads that way. In practice, the whole process becomes as simple as a morning routine or having a friend over for a visit.

## **The Significant Circle**

The circle is used to keep the power you are building up from dissipating, so you can focus and send it to perform the magical task assigned. Often there is no delineation of the circle except that which is envisioned, or the quarters of north, east, south, and west may be designated by candles, stones, or whatever nature provides. I have used pine cones, but usually there are objects that can be associated with all the elementals that can be placed around the circle. Although many people insist that all magic must be done in a circle for protection, the actual purpose is to gather and focus power. The idea of protection comes from the Ceremonialist practice of summoning demons (or angels, which can be equally dangerous, according to Gonzalez-Wippler) and needing to keep them at bay.

If the living area is aspersed from time to time, blessed, censed and kept part of your practice, however, a natural, larger circle is built up. Like the advantage the kitchen witch has with being in close contact with the tools of the trade on a regular basis, spell work in the normal living area permeates the atmosphere and the furnishings so that it effectively becomes the circle. Again, the Craft is approached from the perspective of conversation and so the Divine, the elementals, and the devas may be addressed without the construction of a circle. The practice of working with a circle is recommended, however, so that the groundwork is properly laid until experience is built.

## **Magic Preparations**

If the candle magic is something prepared for (rather than a spontaneous need) the spell plan and tools should be readied. The practitioner may bathe with an herbal mixture of rosemary, lavender, and thyme placed in a muslin pouch and secured with a tie-string in the bath water. Another combination of herbs that works well adds basil, fennel, and vervain to the other herbs already listed. I also like to burn a vervain candle close to the tub, but a white candle may be used instead of a scented one. This is a time to wash off the mundane cares and to center oneself. A relaxing herbal bath allows one to invoke the devas of the herbs and draw upon their powers while focusing on the unity of the individual with the earth, the Deities, and the universe. Robed or sky-clad (nude) is up to the individual, and then it is time to cleanse the ritual area.

For this, a good besom is best. There are those who feel a besom of broom is needed, but for me this is unacceptable simply because I like to encourage the presence of the fair folk, and they abhor the odor of broom (as do Γ). As a result, straw brooms or grass brooms are fine for indoors, while in the wilderness, any leafy twig found on the ground will work well. Many stores and craft shops carry the old-fashioned "witch" broom made of straw or grass as a home decoration. Sweep the circle area with the besom from the center to the outer edges, moving clockwise (deosil) around the circle while envisioning and chanting that negativity is being swept out and the circle is being cleansed.

The easiest way to do candle magic is at a permanent altar or shrine, but if you need to set up an altar each time you work a spell, you may find the procedure as shown in Chapter 7 time-consuming. For any immediate need, it is unnecessary to go through a lengthy ceremony. Simply gather the tools and materials you will need, including a snack and cup of something to drink, cleanse the space, light the incense and candles, and go from there. The next step is to create the circle. With the athame or your power hand, point to the ground at the north and move in a circle to east, south, west, and back to north envisioning a blue light coming from the tip of the athame or your hand delineating the circle. *You*. may want to say something along the line of:

***This is the boundary of the circle, around me, through walk and floors, above me and below me as a sphere is the circle cast and consecrated to the Lady and the Lord that they may manifest and bless their child, whom they have named*** (working name, or Craft name if you have not yet received your name from the Goddess and the God). ***This circle is charged by the powers of the Ancient Ones.***

Call upon the elementals at the quarters and ask them to attend the rite, guard the circle (you don't want interruptions), and lend their aid. Greet the Lady and the Lord and welcome them to your circle.

The candle should be dedicated and inscribed to the Lady and the Lord by saying so and by using the athame to trace into the wax the runic letters of the Goddess (Беркана) and the God (Соуло). Then inscribe the letters that reflect your aim in the use of this candle. If runes are unacceptable to you (I use them as a kind of shorthand), the symbols of the Goddess and the God may be used instead, along with symbols that reflect your intentions. The Goddess is represented as the phases of the Moon: )O( and the God is represented with a circle and a semi-circle at the top to look like horns: Теллн. Love could be a heart; luck a cloverleaf; strength a tree; happiness a smile; wealth a stack of coins; and health a caduceus (staff with 2 snakes entwined—it symbolizes the medical profession, so you would have to envision it as meaning good health). The color of the candle is derived from the color list in Chapter 3, and the runic equivalents are listed later in this chapter.

Anoint the candle with an oil of consecration (some recipes are in Chapter 6) and set it in a holder that will not catch fire. I sometimes use a small cast iron cauldron, or a votive holder that is a fired clay pot set upon a metal tripod. Whatever you use, remember that the holder itself will get very hot, so not only should you not touch it once the spell has begun, but the surface upon which it sets must also be protected. I have used anything from a thick wooden pentacle to a trivet, so it depends upon what you have available and what feels right to you.

As you perform the spell, you must envision the actions you take as leading to the completed goal so that by the time you have said all the words and added all the herbs to the candle's flame, the process is seen as accomplished, and your final words will show it as done. To raise the energy you may simply chant the spell, which may alter your breathing and be an additional way to raise energy, or chant and dance around the circle. The chanting and/or dancing continues until you feel the energy building up to a climax. When you feel it is time, send the energy to perform its task, then ground the residual energy by stooping down and placing your palms on the floor (or ground if outside) and letting the leftovers run out.

If you do not ground the energy you may feel nervous and agitated for several days, or you may feel suddenly dissipated and listless. To perform magic, you need to take care of your needs and not drain yourself of your own vital energies. Let the candle burn and take some refreshment—the "cakes and wine" ritual is good for this as it gives you a settled feeling. Although any kind of food and drink can be used, I like a corn muffin or multigrain biscuit with a zinfandel, golden chablis, or a fruity sangria, depending on the spell being worked.

When you have finished the refreshments, it is time to acknowledge the Deities, bid the elementals farewell, and open the circle. I like the rhythm of "Love is the law and love is the bond," but I sometimes say instead, "Through love are we bonded one to another; may that bond never be severed." The use of the word "we" can mean the practitioner and anyone else joining that day (if you are doing a spell for someone, as an example), but I use "we" to mean the Divine and myself have met here. I use either in my rituals, but each Witch may create a ritual that is personally meaningful. Even so, it is good to know some of the formats used by other Witches.

Hold the athame over the altar and say:

***Lady and Lord, I am blessed by your sharing this time with me; watching and guarding, guiding and aiding me here and in all things. I came in love and I depart in love.***

Raise the athame in salute and say:

***Through love are we bond one to another; may that bond never be severed. Merry have we met, merry do we part, and merry will we meet again. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again! The rite is ended, the circle cleared, so mote it be!***

Kiss the athame blade and set it on the altar.

The elementals are blessed and farewelled at the quarters, with arms opened and wand in hand raised, then closed, then lowered at each point, and say:

*Elemental Earth (then Air, Fire, and Water), depart in peace with my blessings, for we are kindred, thee and me, and though you leave, you are always part of me and I of thee.*

Take up the athame and move widdershins (counter-clockwise) around the circle (north, to west, to south, to east, back to north) to open it. As you open the circle and say the following, envision the blue light being drawn back into the blade of the knife and into yourself (I like to conclude with the knife blade flat against my forehead to "seal" the energy within me) and say:

*The circle is open yet the circle remains as its magical power is drawn back into me.*

Let the candle burn for an hour, then put it out with a snuffer (rather than blowing it out) and watch to see how the flames go out. With herbs in a candle, there will often be sufficient flames that pinching out the wick is not recommended. Look at the melted wax and herbal residue to see what message is left from the spell. I have seen the flames turn into a blue, lightning-fast swirl that spun around the cauldron and zipped off into the direction the spell was sent before going out, and I have seen the results of the workings indicated in the remains of the candle. From this you can determine such things as when or how the spell will take effect. There are any number of possibilities, and while certain designs can be regularly interpreted in a particular way, the intuition of the practitioner is what counts the most in this (and any) form of divination.

### Runic Tables

<b>rune</b>	meaning	Purpose
	wealth/good fortune	prosperity/power/creative energy
	physical health/vitality	strength/courage/health
	protection/overcome resistance	protection/willpower
	ancestor/the God	wisdom/healing power/ occult power
	journey/quest/defense	decisions/taking control
	purging fire/energy controlled	gift for skill/knowledge
	union/power given & received	partnership/agreement
	joy/comfort/blessing	happiness/success/peace
	the unanticipated	protection thwarted
	a need/constraint	defense/self-control/restriction
	Standstill	delaying defense/rest period/ stop slander
	harvest/year's cycle	gestation/cyclical change/time
	channeling	Otherworld communication/ dynamic & outgoing
	evolving karma/bidden forces	sudden luck/discover secrets
	Protection	protection/shielding

sun wheel/wholeness	vital energies/centering
order/victory/success	justice/legal matters/success
Goddess/fertility	invoking/emotional stability/ new starts
trust/motion	safe journey/adjustments/ astral travel
self perfected	self-improvement/communication/meditate
life energy/flow/water	
God/fertility	
breakthrough/twilight	between two worlds/ invisibility
possession/ancestral power	status/invoking ancestors
good fortune	Favorable outcome
love	to attract/express
Sun God	invocation/energy
travel	productive journey

The following symbols are sometimes used along with the runes, and you may create your own symbols as you see fit.

Divine in Union/wealth	invoke the Divine/attract gains
Orderlines	bring calm/order out of chaos
Healing	spiritual/physical health
Protection	protection of possessions by the elementals
Protection	protection of possessions by the Triple Goddess

It must be noted that the element of karma is very much in play with "the unanticipated" rune (Ж), meaning that protection is thwarted. This rune is usually found in other books with the caution that it is not really to be used, but in the interests of knowledge and understanding, it is presented here. The idea behind it is to deprive an opponent of self-protections against your own magic, but this is a Ceremonial magic application and has no place in a Witchcraft whose power comes from the Lady and the Lord. Use it and your own protections would be blasted, so the net result by either a magician or a Witch would be the same: a dropping of your own magical defenses. To use this rune in this manner would be a violation of the Rule of Conduct, "Never use the power against someone else who has the power." Witches don't do magic against other Witches and again, the reason is based upon Karmic retribution.

For those who follow a Northern Path, the "ancestor" rune (h) is also the rune for Odin. But since Odin is not part of the Green level of Witchcraft, this meaning is irrelevant and is not used here. Instead, it is seen as reflecting the ancient wisdom of the Goddess and the God which is generally taught to their children intuitively. The rune is therefore useful in spell work for guidance in learning the Craft. The "/" in the meaning and purpose columns means that either meaning may be applied. There are individual runic colors, but I use the color relationships listed in Chapter 3. The purpose for using the runes is the key guide to choosing the appropriate

color for the item on which the runes will be inscribed. The Celtic Ogham or other symbols drawn from a magical alphabet (Buckland offers several examples) may be used in place of runes.

## Candle Magic

Candles may be used for offerings, meditations, communion with the Lady and the Lord, spells, divinations, or several of these uses combined. When herbs are added to the candles, they empower the use even more and aid in focusing and directing the energy sent by the practitioner.

Although a ritual format for candle magic has been given in this chapter, candles may be lit as a simple reverence: a kind of reminder to yourself that the Goddess and the God are in your thoughts, and you are in theirs. Sometimes we may become so wrapped up in the activities of daily existence that we forget to pause and remember the Divine around us and within ourselves. When this happens, I find that I have a sudden desire to "re-connect" and I light a candle at the altar. This sensation of wanting to re-connect comes from the need to refresh the bonds between ourselves and the Divine from time to time. The act of lighting a candle and saying a word or two such as, "I honor thee, Lady and Lord, and ask thy blessings upon me and mine," brings the body's energies back into focus. That is why I never question the desire to light a candle when I feel it because I understand intuitively that I have been too caught up in the mundaneness of life and need to remind myself of my connection with the Ancient Ones. It is a moment of physical pause and spiritual reflection, resulting in a feeling of well-being.

Once a candle spell is conducted, divination is the completion of the process by which the practitioner can determine when the spell will produce results or any other message pertinent to the spell work. The following list is an example of the kind of interpretations generally accepted for various images. These may be applied not only to candle magic, but any other workings that involve divination, such as tea leaves, clouds, and dreams. Again the intuitive perception of the individual is the most reliable and has precedence. As you gain experience, you will be adding to your own list of interpretations, but tills list is meant as a starting point.

## Symbolism for Divination

symbol	meanings
acorn	youth, strength, man, small start for large accomplishment
airplane	travel, new projects
anchor	voyage, rest, problem solved, security
arrow	news, disagreements, direct action
basket	gift, security, comfort
baby	new interests, security, new beginnings
bees ( <i>hive, comb</i> )	fertility, industry, community, self-sacrifice
bell	celebrations, news (good or bad depending on other indicators)
bird	psychic power, flight, luck, friendship end, communication
boat	discoveries, travel, companionship
book	wisdom, learning
bottle	celebration, success

broom	Goddess, purification, healing, end of a problem, changes
bridge	crossing to new endeavors, transition, partnership, travel
butterfly	the soul, spiritual contact, frivolity, insincerity
castle	financial gain, security, inheritance, life of bounty
cage	isolation, restriction, imprisonment, containment
camel	long journey, need to conserve energy or goods, relocation
cat	wisdom, spiritual access, female friend, domestic strife
car	local travel, movement in business affairs
cauldron	Goddess, transformation, endings/new beginnings, vitality
candle	illumination, innovation, inspiration
clock	time indicated for a spell's completion, change
chair	relaxation, pause, comfort, entertainment
clouds	mental activity, thoughtfulness, problems, hidden obstacles
coffin	end of a matter, lengthy but not serious illness
clover	good fortune, success, rural location
cow	money, property, comfort, tranquility
cradle	newcomers, beginning of a new idea or project
crescent	Goddess, wish granted, newness, freshness
cornucopia	Goddess, abundance, fertility, prosperity, protection
cross	(Solar— +) God, nature works with power; (Roman—+) suffering, conflict
cup	love, harmony, close friendship, gift
dagger	complications, dangers, power, skill
distaff	creativity, changes, sexuality
dog	fidelity, friendship, companionship, faithfulness
duck	plenty, wealth, success
elephant	advice needed, obstacles overcome, good luck
egg	increase, fertility, luck, creativity, new start, hoarding
eye	introspection, awareness, evaluation, spirit

fan	indiscretion, disloyalty, things
fence	hidden, inflammations retention of possessions, defense, isolation
fishes	riches, luck, sexuality, productivity
flag	warning, defensiveness, identification with group/ideals
flame, fire	purification, change, domination of the will
flower	marriage, unhappy love affair, passing joy
glove	protection, luck, aloofness, nobility, challenge
gate	opportunity, advancement, change, new directions
gun ( <i>any type</i> )	power to gain goals, discord, slander, infidelity
hammer	hard work rewarded, building, creativity, fortitude
hat	honors, rivalry, independence, self-assertion
hound	advice, help given, companionship, trust
heart	love, pleasure, confidence, strength of will
harp	contentment, spirituality
horns	God, fertility, spirituality, forces of nature
horse	travel, strength, work, grace, power
horseshoe	protection, luck, start of a new enterprise
hourglass	caution, passage of time
house	security, authority, success, comfort
key	understanding, mysteries, opportunity, gain, security
kite	warning for caution, new ideas
knot	restrictions, marriage, bindings
knife	duplicity, misunderstanding, direct action
ladder	initiation, rise or fall in status, connections
lion	power, strength, influence, ferocity, pride, domination
lock	protection, concealment, security, obstacles, sealed
man	visitor, helpful stranger
mirror	reversal, knowledge, karma

moon	the Goddess, intuitive wisdom, guidance
mountain	hindrance, challenge, obstacle, journey, steadfastness
mouse	poverty, theft, frugality, inconspicuousness
mushroom	shelter, food, business complications, fairy contact
nail	labor, construction, unity
owl	wisdom, spiritual communication
palm tree	respite, relief, security, protection, blessings
parrot	gossip, flamboyance
peacock	luxury, vanity, baseless pride
pineapple	hospitality, good things hidden by harsh exterior
pipe	truth obscured, concentration, comfort, ease
purse	monetary gain, possessions kept close
ring	eternity, containment, wheel of life/year, wedding
rose	love, lost or past love, fullness of life, healing, caring
salt	purity, stability, cleansing, grounding
scales	balance, justice, careful evaluation
scissors	duplicity, arguments, separation, division, strife
shell	Goddess, emotional stability, luck, artistic ability
ship	travel, news, material gains, romance
skull	consolation, comfort, personal hurts, endings and a new life
snake	God and Goddess, wisdom, immortality, knowledge, prophecy
spider	good luck, industry, entrapments, secrecy, cunning
spoon	luck, sustenance, the basic needs of life secured
sun	the God, success, energy, power
star	good luck, divine protection, opportunity, success, destiny
swan	good luck, love, evolving beauty, noble spirit
sword	power, strife, conflict, overcoming adversity
tree	blessings of nature, good fortune, stability, power, security
turtle	fertility, security, defense against obstacles, slow gains



umbrella	temporary shelter, limited protection
unicorn	purity, nature, fairy blessings, Otherworld intervention
well	blessing from the Goddess, inspiration, spirituality, health
wheel	completion, eternity, season/life cycles, rebirth, gains
windmill	business dealings, factors working together for one goal