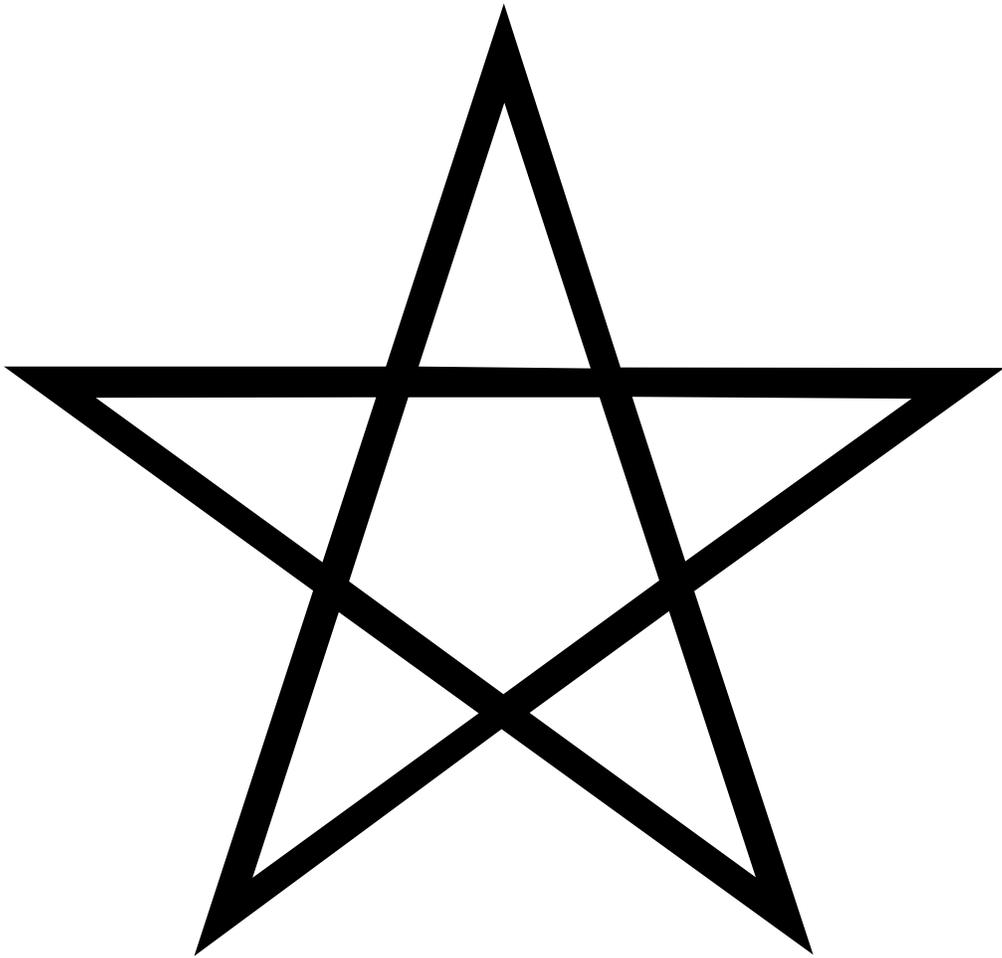


# WICCA

*The Ancient Way*



Wicca  
the Ancient Way

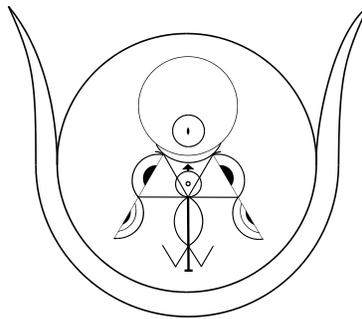
Janus-Mithras ☉••

Nuit-Hilaria ☉✧

And

Mer-Amun ✧✧

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Special Thanks to:

Odin ☆☆☆, High Priest, Isis Sothis coven  
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For sigil design.

#### NOTE TO THE ON-LINE EDITION:

So much of Wicca is passed on today by people who are completely unaware of any ultimately valuable meaning and the profound wisdom hidden in the mysteries of Wicca. In fact, very few "witches" know why it is important to *be* a witch in the first place. There are so many Wiccan books available, and yet no book (including this one) can ever convey the actual initiation into and personal experience of this profound wisdom. In the face of what passes for Wiccan teachers, or is normally found in books and on the Internet today, it is incredibly rare to find someone who teaches Wicca from the most profound level instead of the usual agricultural goddess / huntsman god, new age drivel.

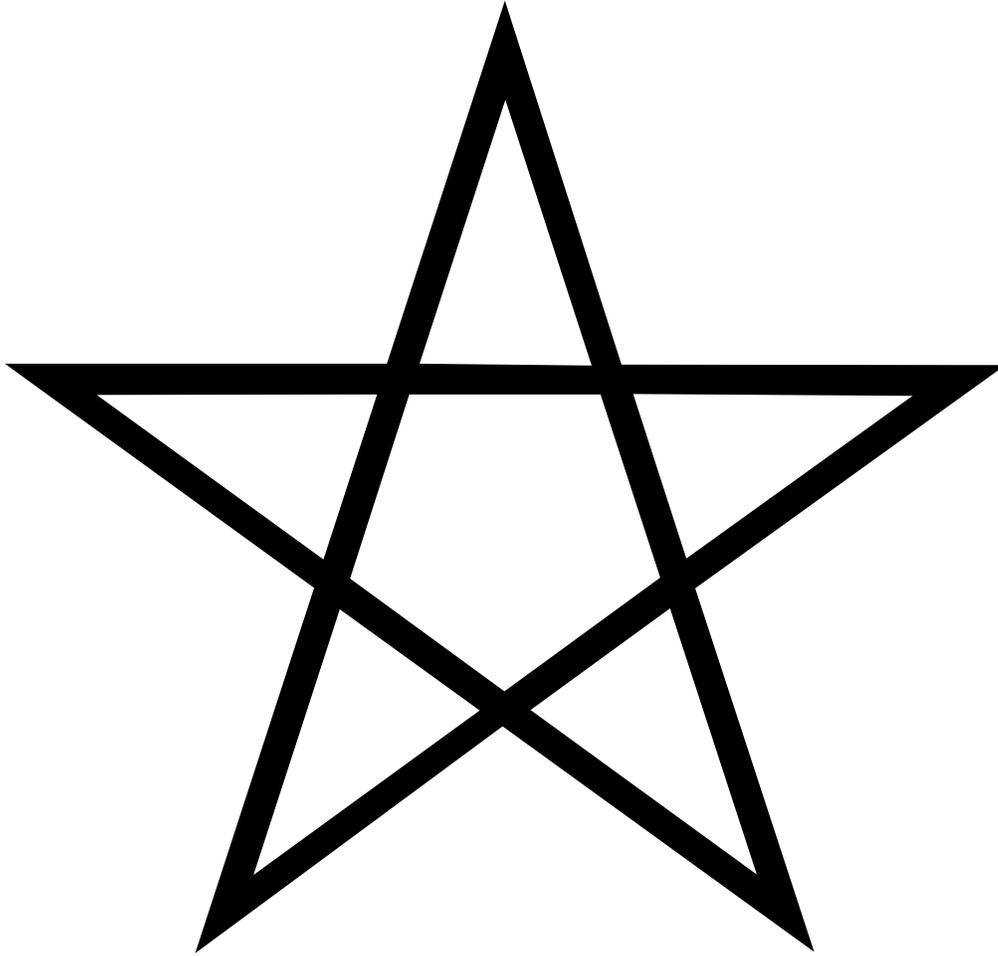
It is to my inestimable amazement and gratitude that such a being as Janus-Mithras actually appeared in my life, seemingly out of the blue (actually, out of a cloud of moonlit moths!). To my further inestimable luck, such a being became as a father to me throughout my adult life, and is one whom I will always love more than can ever be expressed. It has been solely through decades of his careful and persistent efforts, despite my dull stupidity, distractions and stubbornness that I, like his other students, have been given the unbelievably rare and precious first-hand, personal experience of the highest Truth embodied in Wicca and other Liberating traditions.

When I simply wrote a little of what he had taught us, and called it "Wicca, The Ancient Way", I was astonished to find that he insisted on my being given credit for any of it. While three people are credited with authorship: Janus-Mithras, Nuit-Hilaria and myself: Mer-Amun, in reality everything came from Janus-Mithras (his notes, written papers, oral guidance, and mind-transference). Anything I might have penned was only the repetition of things that Janus-Mithras had taught us. The three names are accredited only because Janus-Mithras, our teacher and the founder of Isis Urania, insisted that it be that way.

## FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the reader with the existence of a living, initiated and Traditional mystery religion. It was written over the past few years, partly as a reaction to misconceptions and misrepresentations outside and inside the Craft, but mainly to convey clearly the tenets and teachings of the Wicca, what it means to be a “Witch,” and what our goals are. Hopefully this little book will give the reader a glimpse of Traditional Witchcraft from the inside, as the Initiates themselves see it. In this way, we sincerely hope to banish some of the common misconceptions and general ignorance on the subject of Wicca.

Please bear in mind that it is not the purpose of this book to go into any detail at all concerning the actual practices and techniques of the Traditional Wicca, for these are Secret and revealed only to initiates of the Craft.



EIGHT WORDS THE WICCAN REDE FULFIL:

“AN IT HARM NONE,  
DO WHAT YE WILL!”

## PREFACE

The now passing Aeon or Age of Pisces has seen western man almost completely lose his working knowledge and direct experience of the Mysteries and replace it with Faith and superstition. As the Sun moves into the sign of the Water-Bearer, Aquarius, The Awakener, mankind finds Faith alone to be insufficient. Thus he begins again the search for the Old Gods, for the “Knowledge of the Spirit Eternal, and Certainty, not Faith.” In his innocence, man has always looked outward to the external world and his own projections for Truth. All religions, sciences and technologies arise from this tendency. But the more answers we find, the more questions we ask. Unsatisfied and unfulfilled with our answers, we have become more and more fascinated by our own projections and further from our Goal.

But the rhythm of the New Age now grows to a louder, more distinct beat, and as Understanding grows, man turns away from his invented gods and looks deeper into himself to find Reality and the meaning of Life. And so it is: the Old Gods move upon the Face of the Earth once again in Power and Presence, as mankind prepares for his Journey unto the Kingdom of Our Lady, Queen of Infinite Space, whose name is also Understanding.

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## THE ATTITUDES AND QUALITIES OF A TRUE WITCH

*By Janus-Mithras*

A Traditional Witch is someone who has dedicated herself<sup>1</sup> to the service and worship of Our Lady and the Great Mother Goddess of Many Names and Many Forms, and of the Great Horned One, Her Consort.

Among other things this involves the cultivation of certain attitudes and a particular approach to Life, in a style reflected by the Natures of the Goddess and the God themselves. These attitudes are clearly depicted in the Ancient Legend of the Goddess in her descent into the Underworld.

The Legend tells of how, being immortal, without beginning and without end, eternally delighting in the joys and beauties of Life, She always out-lives her companions to see them wither and suffer and pass away. In spite of Her great powers and abilities, the time comes when She can no longer enjoy life with the ever-present knowledge of its inevitable end, so out of Love and sorrow and unbearable compassion for all Her Creatures, She descends into the forgotten depths of the Underworld to search out Death Himself, to find the root and cause of all this suffering.

Our perfect example is the goddess Herself and unless you have Her motivation, you have no business in Wicca, or calling yourself a Witch or "Wise One." Thus She instructs Her children each month: "No other Law but Love I know, by naught by Love may I be known, for all things living are Mine Own, from Me they come, to Me they go." Although the legend of the Goddess could be called "merely mythological," in a very practical sense it is more real than any story of a historical figure, because it represents the Eternal Quest of Man and the eternal Spirit of Love and Goodness for the Benefit of all.

There are four things or qualities that make a Witch: a sense of wonder, unquenchable curiosity, undaunted courage and boundless love born of the feeling of Oneness with all things.<sup>2</sup> Hence the mottoes so often heard in Wiccan circles: "Rush in where angels fear to tread: the Gods are with you!" "As a man thinketh, so is He." "If you think small, you become small." "Remember the Passwords: Perfect Love and Perfect Trust, so trust the Universe and be at Home everywhere." "If you imagine and fear 'I will get trapped,' of course you will get trapped. Fear not, and you won't."

Trust the Ultimate Power, which is everywhere, always with you and which in fact is you. Feel its Presence everywhere, always surrounding you in every atom, in every cell, beneath your feet, on the ground you step on, in the wind kissing your cheek, in the sky above you, in the millions of creatures of its Universe – it is this certainty, this awareness of the Ancient Presence, that will give you the courage and the Joy to go everywhere without fear and without troubles. It is this knowledge which is the secret of the Craft's survival through the Ages and through the "Burning Time."

"YOU ARE NEVER LESS ALONE THAN WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE ALONE."

"FEAR NOT, FOR FEAR IS FAILURE AND THE FORRUNNER OF FAILURE."

The Higher teachings of Wicca are for the serious student, who above all, desires to know and search for the Mystery of her own Being and to know that she is one with the All-Being, the Divinity immanent within all. She thus searches to awaken latent spiritual powers that exist within herself as the God Incarnate which she is. This will change her whole life, for she will then dedicate her knowledge and abilities to the Welfare of all Beings. This Knowledge is the natural heritage of all people.

Wicca is not magic, though magic is one of its manifestations, nor is it a religion per se but a philosophy that can be found at the root of all Religions and Philosophies as the Science of Life.

Wicca is not acquisition of Powers either psychic or intellectual, though both are its tools and its servants. Neither is it the hedonistic pursuit of happiness as a man usually understands the word; for the first step is sacrifice and self-analysis, the second, the renunciation of the Lower Self for the Higher Self.

The aware Wicca does not reject the world from fear of it. She holds it firmly in her grasp and wrests from it its secrets. Then finally escaping from the unconscious drifting and compulsions of a humanity which has not yet realized itself, she is then the Illuminated Mistress (or Master) of Herself, whether developing all her powers, or transcending all Creation and remaining magnificently aloof at her will.

In short, it is the Art of Living as a Divine God -- Life HERE and NOW in the MORTAL body. It is simply the Art of living in a very natural joyful manner.

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<sup>1</sup>The use of a particular gender anywhere in this book is neither intended to exclude nor emphasize one or other sex. Also the word "witch," meaning "wise," implies no gender at all and can apply to both women and men.

<sup>2</sup>An illustration of these qualities is expressed throughout "Love" by Leo Buscaglia. Fawcett Crest Books (1972).

## THE GODS OF THE WICCA

*by Nuit-Hilaria and Mer-Amun*

The Wicca's approach to the Gods is unique. Probably the most striking fact is that there seem to be two deities as opposed to the One, or the basic pantheon of 360 gods found in other religions. The truth is illustrated in an old saying of the Wicca: "All Gods are One God, and all Goddesses are One Goddess, and both are One." In other words, the Witch recognizes that the One Universal Organism has many different aspects, or modes, or moods; but that all are really variations of two main archetypes, Male and Female. So you can see that a Witch's ideas about monotheism are neither in contradiction nor in complete agreement with other religions.

Another unique aspect of the Wiccan Gods is that there really is no traditional iconography as in other religions. The Witch, in looking to her Gods sees no fixed traditional image, but instead looks to what is around or inside her at any given moment. The Witch is constantly aware that the very ground she steps upon, the wind that blows through her hair, and the warmth of the Sun are all very much alive and as aware of her as she is of them. When a Witch prays to her gods, she speaks not with faith to some vaguely imagined and remote idea of what God must be like; she speaks with certainty to that Ancient Presence she feels and sees everywhere, in everything. To the Witch, all the same ordinary everyday things we take so much for-granted are the Gods. The Witch knows what to look for.

To most people in this day and age, it seems strange to behold such devotion to seemingly imaginary ideas as Gods and Magic. To put it as one man did, "How can you worship the Moon in a day when Man has been there and walked upon it and sees it for what it is?" Aside from the ignorance of the fact that Witches no more worship the Moon than a Catholic does a crucifix, the question illustrates the general superstition and lack of understanding that most people have of "Gods" and "worship."

To begin with, the Wicca call their Gods, "The Old Gods." Again, apart from the historical implications, this implies the root or basic ideas upon which, and from which all gods came to be.

Now, regardless of any logical approach to the reality of the Gods you may wish to take, in a sense the Gods are at least far more real than you or I, since we might hope to last eighty years on the earth if we are lucky, but the Gods have been here most obviously in the minds of men for thousands of years past and to come. They have influenced men's thoughts, and actions, his politics, society and mental growth from the beginning of time with far more power than any single human being would wield. So the Gods are a reality on earth whether we like it or not, whether in the way we think or not.

If you must resort to a psychological explanation of the idea of gods, you will come to the persistent character in human nature that tends to objectify, and personify that which it fails to comprehend, about itself and its environment. Human nature tends to worship what it would most like to be, and in the act of worship, learns to be like it.

If you really think about it, if you sit back and stop reading for a minute and just listen to all that's happening around you; if you look at the fascinating spectacle before your eyes, and try to see it all as One Big "Thing"; you will find you cannot escape the feeling that IT is all alive somehow, that there is

intelligence and purpose behind it all, and most important, a feeling of multiplicity of lives and happenings and places and things. Somehow, you can't get rid of the feeling that there is an over-all pattern behind everything – the way everything in nature seems to have the quality of duality, for example. A single day has its night and day aspects. There is sleeping and waking, wanting and not-wanting, seen and un-seen, earth and space, pleasant and unpleasant. This pattern is like a presence, an Omnipotent, Omnipresent reality that we just cannot deny or even ignore.

You see, the Gods of the Wicca are not merely symbols of Hunting and Agriculture. To think so would be ignorant and even superstitious; and it may seem surprising to some, but superstition has no place in the mind of a Witch, especially when dealing with matters of the Craft. No, to the Witch it is the other way around. Hunting and Agriculture are only two very primal symbols for the Gods. With the proper perspective we can take a more sane and exact approach to an understanding of the Gods by asking ourselves what the Ancient Huntsmen and Farmers meant by saying that He is a lot like hunting and She a lot like farming.

In fact, we can do even better than that by simply acknowledging the fact that any God is a living embodiment, or personification if you wish, of an Ideal. It follows that the Gods of the Wicca are the living fact, the omnipresent, omnipotent living reality of the system that is Wicca; the patterns and laws, the love and intelligence that make up all things. Indeed, they are the Ancient Parents and authors of all things, the living Organism that is everything. When we see these truths as they appear in humanity, we say the Gods are "human-like" in qualities and so describe them. When we see these truths in Nature, we say they are the Gods of Nature and when we see these truths in the cosmos, we say the Gods are Cosmic.

To worship a god, then, is to devote time and effort to an ideal. In this perspective, a Witch is someone who has devoted, or consecrated her whole life to living out and being the human-like embodiment of the ethics and laws, the love and intelligence that make up all things. A Witch is someone who has totally dedicated herself to the loving service of all around her, of every person, of every thing. She has sacrificed her life to her Gods.

So the Gods are the living embodiment of a religion, and to worship them is to take on a particular way of life. This is true of all religions. It is the nature of Man to be religious, and to choose his own God, in his own way; and there are many to choose from. Some have chosen to worship Fame, others Fortune or Power. Most have chosen "ME" and "MINE." Few choose and the Wicca choose: Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.

## THE MIGHTY ONES

*by Janus-Mithras and Mer-Amun*

The subject of the Mighty Ones is a fascinating and very little known teaching of the Craft, but one which is fundamental to its tradition. Indeed, it is through this aspect of the teaching that the Craft transmits its own roots and history and expresses its *modus operandi*. As a matter of fact, it is even possible to gauge the purity of the lineage of any particular “branch” of Wicca by its devotion to, explanation and application of the teachings of “The Mighty Ones.”

In a general sense, the Mighty Ones are five great orders of beings, children or emanations of the Great Mother and her consort, the Horned One. As such, they are extremely important not only in an over-all sense but in the daily life of a Witch, for they are the messengers and servants of the God and Goddess, and in a deeper sense, their ever present immediacy. For this reason the individual Witch enjoys a very close and personal, day-to-day relationship with the Mighty Ones, always working in and through their presence and with mutual loving support. It is with the deepest devotion and respect that they are summoned to Guard and to Witness all the sacred rites of the Craft.

Actually, the term “Mighty Ones” is a general one, as stated before, and includes many different types of beings. At the bottom of the ladder are the Elementals, the crude, basic awareness of the Elements themselves: the Four Great Hosts of Nature. Next, the spiritually awakened intelligences of the Elements, identical to the Archangels and Angels of the Judaeo-Christian systems. Beyond these are “The Mighty Dead,” all the great and powerful Witches who have ever lived, and like the Goddess Herself, have made the sacred Oath of Eternal Return for the welfare of all that lives – the Sacred Oath to watch, to help and to teach all those in need, and to come to the Brethren when properly called, as was taught of Old. Beyond all these are those great and exalted beings called “The Watchers”: the Sleepless Guides and Guardians of Humanity whose deepest concern and constant work is the evolution and the happiness of Mankind. And finally, the greatest, mightiest of all, are none other than the Goddess and God, with their boundless Power, Love and Wisdom.

Traditional Wicca teaches that it is the constant Work of the Mighty Ones to provide and maintain the elements of Nature. It is taught that these great beings emanate or incarnate in and as the whole scale of Nature and its Forces, from the first Cosmic Explosion or Orgasm to the tiny oxygen producing unicellular organisms that make life possible. If we understand this properly, then we begin to see how they are not only the cosmic field of Creation, and the contents thereof, but also the Guides and Guardians of it. Legend has it that “The Dread Lords of the Outer Spaces” descended upon the Earth about fourteen million years ago, when Man was little more than a faint ethereal being, bringing with them as gifts the seeds of civilization, agriculture, and religion. The Legend tells us that they are still here today, Watching, Guiding and stimulating mankind out of his childhood, always teaching the Ancient Wisdom. It is to celebrate as well as participate in this very real on-going process of Guidance and Inspiration that Traditional Witches always salute the East to begin their rites, paying loving homage to these great beings and to the long lineage of ancient and modern Witches who have handed down the Teaching, for Tradition tells us that the Wisdom came from the East.

## THE TRAINING OF A WITCH

*By Mer-Amun*

The training of a Witch involves the study and practice of magic, but let us make it clear that magic in the common sense has nothing to do with Traditional Witchcraft or being a Witch. “Magic” is actually a much misused word under which we tend to file any process we do not understand. For example, an airplane is awesome magic to a superstitious savage in the jungle, but to us, it is a case of straight-forward aerodynamics. A Witch does not harbor superstitions. To a Witch there really is no “magic” at all. There is the certainty of the way things are. Ironically, this idea comes close to the original meaning of the word Magic. It comes from the Persian word “magia” meaning “Wisdom” or “seeing things as they really are.” In training to be Wise (The Traditional meaning of the word Wicca), one undertakes the study of the way things really are, and this seems at first like magic, because of its profound simplicity and its marvelous beauty. It is here that one learns the techniques to know the One Organism which is the Goddess and the God together. It is here that one searches, investigates, tests and explores the nature of the Mind, both one’s own mind, and the Universal Mind, since the Traditional Wicca teach that they are inseparable.

Moreover, would-be Witches are taught that the key to all magic is the use of magical “triggers,” to trigger specific mental powers that we all have, and use daily, as the Divine Beings Incarnate that we are. These are triggers to get the Mind involved: triggers to set a goal, to fix belief, to fire enthusiasm and to establish stability. There are many different triggers available, from the twinkling of an eye to whole complex systems of words and symbols, like the Mystical Qabalah. But remember, such systems are not what Witchcraft is really about, traditionally. They are perhaps triggers or pointers to what being a Witch really means.

The training of a Witch today often does involve the study of the Hebrew Qabalah among other things. This might seem to be a digression from traditional Witchcraft, but in both an historical sense and a practical sense, it is quite the contrary.

The coming of the Christian crusades drove all who held firmly to the practice of a sound pre-Christian belief into the hills – Witch and Jew alike. This was a time of great astonishment for both the Witch and the Qabalist as they compared Iggdrasil (World Ash) with Otz Chiim (Living Tree). They must have been amazed as they saw the “Witches Ladder” of 40 knots, leading from heaven to earth, and the Qabalistic Hierarchy of 40 Names from God to Man. The Qabalists had 10 “Emanations,” the Witches, 10 aspects of the Goddess. Even visible in museums today are the similar markings on equally ancient ritual blades of the Qabalist and the Witch. Even the oldest, most holy legends of the Gods were similar enough to wonder at. This was clearly a re-establishment of a long forgotten alliance.

But the Traditional Witch makes such use and belief in the Qabalah as a Jew never could, since the Jewish religion denies even the most fundamental concepts of the Qabalah. A Traditional Witch learns the Qabalah like a language, a precise and accurate language magical language of symbols, of triggers. The Qabalah is used simply because its style is well suited to Western temperament, being deeply involved in our cultural roots, and because it is complete, easy to use, and precise enough for the

intellect. It is also easier to learn owing to the bulk of published literature on the subject. The most important and practical reason for learning the Qabalah, though, is in preparation for the use of Wicca's own traditional magical system which could seem overly alien and complex to someone inexperienced with a magical language, without a working frame-of-reference with which to explore. With a properly structured magical language, there is no more guess-work, none of the uncertain vagueness that usually obscures the mystical and the occult. The, one begins to really see what an amazingly magical and awesome thing the whole of Creation really is, without the clouds of uncertainty and ignorance blocking the view.

Generally, one studies and practices for one year before being accepted for initiation. In that year, one is expected to acquire a firm acquaintance with the Mystical Qabalah<sup>1</sup> and to practice various techniques for strengthening and exploring some basic mental abilities. This means almost constant thought and research on the subject, and at least one half hour of earnest practice each day. With this solid grounding, one begins his course through the Three Degrees of the Wicca.

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<sup>1</sup>Although salted with the authors personal views and prejudices, "The Mystical Qabalah" by Dion Fortune offers a comprehensive introduction to the system. Earnest Benn Ltd. 25 New Street Square, London EC4 3JA.

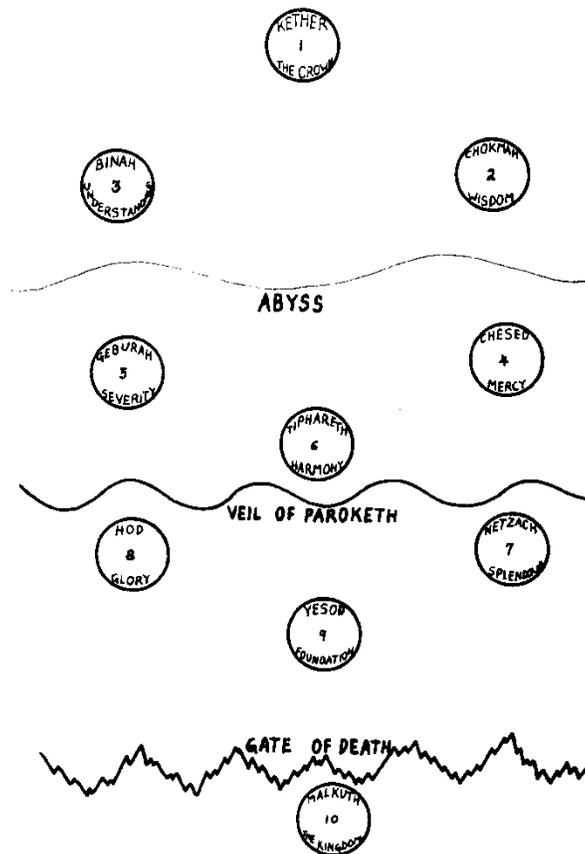
# THE THREE DEGREES

*By Janus-Mithras, Nuit-Hilaria and Mer-Amun*

Wicca is the world's oldest Mystery Religion and although it has changed through the centuries, the basic teachings, fundamentals and the modus operandi still remain the same (in the more traditional covens). The words Mystery Religion imply a system of traditional teachings about the mysteries of the Divinity, Nature and Man. (Mystery in this context meaning: Truths known only by insight and revelation and not by the senses and/or logic.)

As with all true mystical-magical systems, it has a central myth or legend which contains in allegorical language and symbols the main theme of the cult, embodying motivations, attitudes, and sacramental practices (sacrament: outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace), which are gradually revealed and explained to its followers as they progress through the traditional Three Degrees.

The Three Degrees are actually three stages of the candidate's development from the darkness of ignorance to the spiritual light of her identity with the Gods. And these three steps or stages correspond to very well known occult concepts, for example: the three horizontal Paths of the Tree of Life of the Qabalah – Peh, Tech, and Daleth; the three Chasms in the Tree: The Gate of Death, the Veil of Paroketh, and the Abyss. They also correspond to the three Sephiroth of the Supernal Triangle as well as the Three Principles of Nature (Alchemical Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury).



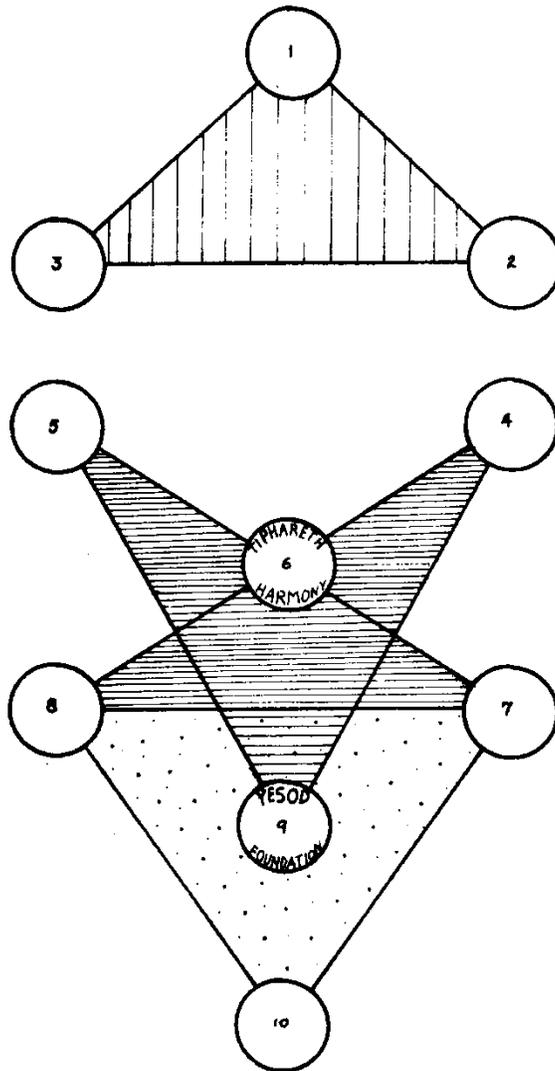
Each Degree is said to be sacred to or under the rule of the Ancient Gods themselves: the first to Aradia, and the second to Kernunnos, the Great Horned One. The third Degree embodies their inseparability as the Ancient Harmony, from which they never depart and which is their real meaning, upon which we mortals in our blindness and ignorance project the fiction of Him or Her, Male and Female, and so on, making God in our own image.

There are very Ancient and well known symbols for these Three Degrees. To the First Degree: the Inverted Triangle, symbol of water and of the Yoni, the female organs of the Great Mother Goddess. To the Second Degree: the Inverted Pentagram, symbol of the Horned One. It has the obvious shape of a Goat's Head, although in Victorian occult circles it became popular to describe it as an evil symbol, and a symbol of Black Magic. This may be true when considered from a certain level since the top point of the Pentagram, usually symbolic of consciousness, seems now obsessed or overwhelmed by the elements, and thus symbolic of spiritual inertia. The oldest and more traditional interpretation, which justifies its ancient usage as a symbol of the Second Degree, is that of the Inner Journey or the search within oneself. This is also a form of inertia, but in a much higher sense it symbolizes the point in our spiritual evolution at which we abandon all outer crutches and props, and surrender ourselves to and try to learn from the deepest layer of our minds, or in more mythological terms, the Ancient Horned One, God of Wisdom, Father and Teacher of Gods and Men. The symbol of the Third Degree is an upright Triangle, symbol of Spirit and of Fire, but not earthly fire, not even the fire of mental activity, but the True Fire, the fire of Wisdom that consumes all dualities of seeker and sought, worshipper and worshipped, of male and female, in the single non-dual, ever-present orgasm of Naught.

These three symbols have also certain colors attributed to them. To the Inverted Triangle of the First Degree, the red color is ascribed: the red of blood, menstrual blood, virgins blood, the blood of childbirth, of manifestation, of the cosmic desire of "That," which being ever Naught, still desires to be Many, while remaining unconditionally Itself. To the Inverted Pentagram of the Second Degree, symbol of the Great Horned One, is attributed the color black. (In some modern covens the color black has become blue or sometimes green.) This is the Black of Sleep, of Death, of Winter, of Cosmic Space, the Blackness of the Unconscious, and of the Underworld of the depths of our minds, to which we must descend just as Our Lady Herself has done. Also like Her, we surrender all our Jewels and Veils, meaning our likes and "dis-likes," our fixed opinions of what Reality is or is not, our wrong views of the Gods themselves; most importantly, we surrender the Crown of our ego. All these must be surrendered completely at the feet of the Great Horned One, if we wish to learn the secret of Life and Death and of Love, the only True Magic. To the Upright Triangle of the Third Degree is attributed Pure Brilliance, symbolic of the Mystical Union of non-dual Awareness, ie. Pure Consciousness.

1 <sup>st</sup> Degree	2 <sup>nd</sup> Degree	3 <sup>rd</sup> Degree
 ARADIA Red Rajas Alchemical Sulphur Binah Peh Gate of Death	 KERNUNNOS Black Tamas Alchemical Salt Chokmah Teth Gate of Paroketh	 ANCIENT HARMONY Brilliance Sattvas Alchemical Mercury Kether Daleth The Abyss

The shapes or forms of these three symbols are embodiments of the work and realization expected of the candidate in his course through the Three Grades. The secret key to the meaning of the symbols is in the Tree of Life. The Inverted Triangle of the First Degree for example is placed upon the Sephiroth marked by the numbers 10, 8, and 7, with 9 or Yesod at the very center of the triangle. This obviously points out the nature of the work in the First Degree, which is the attainment of realization and harmonizing of the four elements, both within ourselves, and in the world around us, for only then are we ready to travel to the Underworld of our Minds. The Inverted Pentagram of the Second Degree is placed upon the Sephiroth 9, 8, 7, 5, and 4 with 6 or Tephareth in the center of the Pentagram. Notice that the Beard of the Goat, which is usually the topmost point in the Pentagram, symbolic of consciousness now penetrates the Inverted Triangle or Yoni of the Mother, both uniting in the Sephirah Yesod, the Foundation of the Universe, while the horns, ancient symbols of magical power touch the Sephiroth Chesed and Geburah, the extremes of Power: Mercy or Compassion, and Justice or Severity. The upright Triangle of the Third Degree is placed across the Abyss, beyond manifestation, upon the Sephiroth marked with 3, 2, and 1.



Before one can build this secret life and initiate the inner journey of the Wicca, he must first have set his feet firmly on the Ground, and have established a strong outer life in the ordinary world as a sound basis in which to perform the Art. This means having a life well enough defined that the aspirant will find himself able to do the regular practice and study required of a Witch. This also means being free enough from the influence of friends and activities that might hinder his growth by repeatedly forcing him into situations and states of mind out of which he wishes to grow, for they will be the great greatest hindrance and under their influence Initiation will do little but upset his life and cause much pain.

Besides having a solid ground to work on, a person must also have developed certain attitudes in his first year of training, without which true Initiation is impossible. These attitudes stem from the Passwords of the Wicca: Perfect Love and Perfect Trust. He should have a fairly close and open relationship with the High Priestess and High Priest as well as the trust in them that is so necessary to really make anything of what they teach. Likewise he must have clearly demonstrated a deep personal love for the Old Gods and the Craft as a whole. In fact he must really love the Old Gods enough and trust them enough to be

willing to sacrifice his present way of life, and the things in it, for Initiation will certainly change his life, not so much from the outside but from the inside. Initiation will bring only pain and hardship if he is not willing to give up his present way of life for that of the Witch and the Ways of the Gods.

This means the aspirant must have more than a sense of the awesome consequences of traditional Initiation and the conviction that this is what he wants; he must have gone beyond these things to the feeling that he has ultimately no choice in the matter but to grow, to move on, beyond the "ordinary" life of people. He must be willing to turn his back on that life forever. The student who holds such attitudes is indeed already Initiated and truly one of the Brethren of the Craft; indeed how strong these convictions are determines how much of a Witch one will be. It is in celebration of this last step on the path of evolution, the first step homeward, that the ceremony of Initiation is performed, and the powers and Titles of the First Degree are bestowed.

As an Initiate of the Mysteries of the Wicca, the candidate now takes it upon himself to make a deliberate effort to grow and learn, or in other words, to try constantly to serve the Goddess more and better with each day. The Initiate then spends at least one year and one day of careful self-examination through many techniques and on many levels. Here he gets to know his way around the intricate pathways of his personality, finding the pressure points and learning about how they act and react from different angles. Here he becomes acquainted with some of the powers of an Initiate, testing them out and slowly growing accustomed to them. Here he begins the hard and tedious work of renovating his life-style, his habits, his attitudes, and his goals, conquering and transforming them to aid him in his quest for the Goddess.

When the Initiate becomes proficient at the four Skills of the Art, (study, discipline, magic, meditation = know, will, dare, keep silent) the results become quite apparent. He acquires a kind of maturity, a kind of quiet confidence in himself, in his life, and in the Craft. Although the wonderment never ceases, being a Witch is no longer so special, or out-of-the-ordinary. The Craft has for him become the ordinary every-day life, and he has truly become a Witch right down to the simplest routines of daily life. He is no longer human in the ordinary sense.

More important, the Initiate gains some very profound insight into the nature of the Goddess and the God, into the nature of Perfect Love and Perfect Trust. Through his work as an Initiate, he finds himself unable to ignore the needs of humanity around him, and becomes increasingly aware of his powers to help them, as well as the enormous responsibility this presents. He finds himself helplessly dedicated to using his powers and his understanding to help those who have not these things. Striving to do this to the best of his abilities, he develops a growing sense of helplessness, of the dream-like illusory nature of all phenomena, whether sad or happy. With the comforting Presence of the Old Gods, a relaxed, almost indifferent attitude comes of all this, giving a kind of effortless strength and clarity of mind and the reassuring feeling that, although there are many problems and unbearable pain all around, although there is indeed much work to do, somehow everything is going to be perfectly OK, and it's all like a dream in the end anyway.

As a Master of the Skills of the Craft then, his thoughts turn to those of the Craft as a whole, for the meaning of it all. His life and his personality being purified and wholly dedicated to the Craft of the Wise, he becomes a living embodiment of the ideals and ways of the Craft. Thus, the Initiate becomes a "Holder of the Tradition" and an Initiate of the Inner Mysteries. This is celebrated by the ceremony of his Elevation to the Second Degree in which the Sacred Power of the Tradition is transferred to him, and he is given the Magical Keys to the Tradition of the Craft.

Now as a Master of the Craft, the Initiate begins a new line of exploration, much the same as in the First Degree but he explores now the powers responsible for the Universe around him, from behind the scenes, beyond appearances. He explores the uses of the keys he is given, unlocking the symbolism of the Tradition and the meaning of it all, revealing the Ancient Wisdom that was placed there long ago. Step by step, veil by veil, mystery after mystery is revealed to him as he descends those ancient steps, closer and closer to the root and cause of all things, the Great Mystery.

Probably the time has not yet come when an adequate description of the Third Degree can be given, but in symbols, this much can be said:

As the last veil is parted, and the Final Mystery revealed, he comes to the cataclysmic realization that there is no real existence, that everything is like a dream, a colossal illusion. And as the entire Universe crashes at his feet, even the Gods are fading to Nothing, the Craft itself is recognized as a Shadow.

There he sits upon the Mountain of Ashes, the entire Universe consumed. The Single Eye still alight with the reflections of the Fires of the Universe He has crushed, He gazes about Him at the Naked Splendor of Her who hath no Beginning and no End. All Her Veils now removed, He sees that there had only ever been Her, that all is ever as a dance, the play of Love, and always unto Her. Trust and Love rising to new heights, he recognizes Her as the One Source of all the desire in his Heart, His whole reason for being, that it was always for Her alone that he had fought and searched for so long, in so many ways, in so many places. He loses Himself with the realization that he also has been, from the beginning of eternity, as empty and illusory as everything else. Then, as the "Dew-Drop slips into the Shining Sea," the ecstasy of their Union becomes a Brilliance surpassing a Million Suns, and there is only Her, in Her many Names and many Forms. There is only She "who is the Beauty of the Green Earth, the White Moon among the Stars, the Mystery of the Waters, and the Desire of the Heart of Man." Their passion Moves as One upon the face of the Waters, the eternal play of love which manifests itself as Infinite Space, and the Stars, and the Desire deep within the Heart of Man.

"For Behold, I have been with thee  
from the Very Beginning,  
and I am That which is attained  
at the End of Desire."  
(Book of Shadows)

## THE PROTECTORS OF THE CRAFT

*by Mer-Amun*

This subject is indeed a little known, and even less understood part of Traditional Wicca. Built into the tradition are safeguards and protectors of all kinds, preserving, defending, and enhancing the teaching and its followers.

For the traditional Witch, fervent love and devotion to the Goddess and God, will afford the greatest confidence and inner strength for they are the living embodiments of Perfect Love and Perfect Trust, the ideals upon which the whole of the Craft is based. In other words, the ultimate safeguard and protection will lie in a balanced application of Perfect (unconditional) Love and Perfect (unrestricted) Trust which both arise from the feeling of oneness with all things. Indeed, by contrast, hatred and paranoia, will invite trouble as quickly as they will enrage a dog. Since these principles of Love and Trust are the central theme behind the Craft and its teachings, any contradictory ideas or forces are by definition effortlessly and ruthlessly excluded and barred completely from the brotherhood and from the teachings it carries.

Perfect Love and Perfect Trust: these are the Passwords of the Wicca, the Passwords of the Seven Gates of Hell attended by the Seven Guardians of the Ancient Wisdom. Through these Gates, by virtue of Her boundless Love and complete Trust did the Goddess herself penetrate, rushing in “where angels fear to tread” to the very depths of Hell in each of its four aspects. Thus must we also pass, if we are to become truly Wise.

Following her example of trusting love of all things, traditional Witches are friends of the creatures of darkness as well as those of light. The Owl and the Black Cat, the Bat and the Toad are all sacred symbols to the Wicca. They believe there are unseen creatures that live in the rocks and trees, or even in the walls and floors of your own home. There are Creatures that live in the breezes and draughts, the streams and lakes, and even in the light rays by which we see. To the Witch, the world is alive and aware, watching and listening from a billion eyes and ears. Among these, the Wicca have as friends and allies, countless armies of unseen entities, both natural and artificial, that live like thoughts and emotions in the One Cosmic Mind. These are Mental Beings, or even “Astral” Beings if you wish, seldom with physical bodies of their own, but finding expression through the lives and actions of humans and animals of a sympathetic nature. Some are light, happy and free, others are dark, dangerous and angry.

As protectors and defense, the Craft has mental traps and fierce mind-entities that devour and destroy the hidden aggressions and greed, the lust and envy of the hateful; obsessing and taking with them people who choose to nourish such thoughts and feelings. Of the artificial type are certain kinds of Elemental Servitors and Mind-Forms that are lovingly prepared by the Wicca and given a life and a will of their own to carry out specific goals. Among the Natural are the negative, destructive aspects of every god and every spirit entity that, like all destructive entities, cleaves and rots itself away, taking with it anything similar that happens to be near. Only those with the Passwords may withstand them and be purified thereby; others will rot with their own negativity.

Among the most interesting of Natural protectors are those born from the tendency of a Group-Mind (such as a household, a coven, a city, country or race) to solidify and manifest different aspects of itself, including the natural defensive and self-preservative instincts. In the same category, but on a larger scale are certain Mind-forms and entities that have evolved out of the Tradition as a whole. Some of these are very, very old beings – older, larger, and concerned with even more than the entire Earth, if we believe the legends of the Watchers, who come to Earth to teach the Ancient Wisdom. Such embodiments of the self-cleansing instincts might, for example, sometimes act like a fever when the Group-Mind is infected, producing a seemingly self-destructive Purification by Fire as in “The Burning Time.”

Beyond these still, are huge, god-like entities that are expressions of the entire Universal Group-Mind itself, indistinguishable from our very “selves,” our very awareness. They watch and judge from the most intimate Points of View, cutting off the very life-blood of repression and stagnation, of death and ignorance (whether these be self-induced or not.) In much the same way, the unconscious mind itself provides reactions to attract or repel, thus guarding as well as guiding the aspirant on his path, and the Wise on his way.

The style of Wicca itself is a repulsive barrier to some, and a fascinating challenge to others. The darkness and the primal images are blinding and fearful to the unconfident, to the untrusting and hateful, but they are infinite possibility, freedom and laughter to those who are full of Trust and Love. By themselves, the images and symbols of Wicca, because of their negative public associations, effectively prevent anyone from using them openly or desecrating them for power or prestige.

The Craft is rich with unspeakable Secrets and Mysteries well guarded by the fact that they cannot be expressed in words to those who are unready, for they will not be understood. There are veils of vagueness and uncertainty, of symbols and paradox through which no analytical armor may pierce. Of course, this does not mean the rituals won't work for anyone who tries. They will indeed, but without the keys to Understanding, there is no control of what may happen, or when, or in what sense (ie. on what plane). Only those who see with their hearts will know for sure what lies in consequence, and until their hearts are awakened the others will wander in their own version of Hell, lost in the darkness of their own ignorance, which they themselves have invoked.

The popular, Outer image of the Craft is the first guardian that confronts the public. It forms an impenetrable barrier against those who have not the Wonder (that comes from unconditional Love), or the Daring (that comes from unrestricted Trust), to “rush in where angels fear to tread,” abandoning pre-conceptions to see for themselves what Wicca is. This Image becomes a barrier against those who do not have the motives of the Goddess, who are worried about their public image and personal comfort, placing self-centered ideals like their reputation above those of Truth, Trust and Love, and the welfare of all beings.

The make-believe Witches, sincere as they may be, are unable to pass the impenetrable barrier that is the Circle of the Gods because of their motives and their closed hearts. The Laws of Fate and Karma here build a rampart of the bodies of those who have fallen, as an example and a warning to those of

weak and selfish motives. They linger on the fringe of society wearing the costumes and masks of what they wish they could be. Their loudness and their shortcomings disgust and repel those critical or hostile to the ideals of the Craft. But these are perhaps the ones that crave Her loving attention most. So by building up their aspirations and devotion, meanwhile serving Her as protectors and guardians, they too learn slowly to overcome their shortcomings and eventually find themselves within the Circle of the Gods.

It is also true that the practice of Witchcraft amplifies in a person only That which is already there. Conscience, for example, is fortified and armed, passing judgment and sentence by defending and nourishing the true-to-heart yet cutting down and destroying the self-ambitious. Even when power is granted, the self-centered will always be their own first victim. Dare you invoke (the Laws of) the God of Unity, if you yourself be separatist? The strength of a force is after all, directed by the anchor to which it is attached. A weak anchor is swept away and the force comes to Nothing but the destruction of the anchor.

Because of all this, those who seek Wisdom and Power to command the forces of nature for themselves will never find it. Nature and Her legions will give way only when one has conquered and utterly destroyed any notion of a separate self, and has completely surrendered unto the Oneness of all things. Even then, nature follows not the command of the one person, but follows the One Will.

Whether you climb the Holy Mountain by the long and winding path of evolution, or the direct vertical path of the Wicca, you cannot storm the gates of Heaven and “get” god or his powers. God and Her legions will “get” you, for there is “That” in every man of which conscience is only a faint reflection: the Sun behind the Sun, the divinity in every one of us. There is that Greatest and most personal Guardian: the ongoing, irresistible urge of growth and change, and the desire to rise above and beyond what is merely human and animal, even should oneself get in the way. “That” is the Horned One in every man. “That” in everyone will every strive for what is higher, better, truer. “That” will stop at Nothing!

## THE GRAND SABBATH: ALL-HALLOWS EVE

*by Janus-Mithras and Mer-Amun*

Traditionally, Witches celebrate twenty-one festivals in the year. These include the thirteen Full Moon Esbats, sacred to the Great Mother Goddess of the Moon and to her seeming Play of Love, Life, and Light. In addition to these are the eight Sabbaths of the yearly cycle, sacred to the Horned God. These also correspond to the eight-spoked wheel of the Eight Ways to the Center. In other words, each of these eight symbolizes not only a path to, but a stage in spiritual growth. Although they are all equally important, Hallowe'en we call the Grand Sabbath, and it is given more prominence because it most clearly reflects the final message of the Wicca; also because it marks the beginning of the Witch's year. Outwardly it is a time when nature dies or sleeps, when another world begins to open up. Inwardly it is a time for reflection, for self-examination, for the mystical journey to the Source of all things.

The Grand Sabbath is celebrated at the time of year when nature seems to fall asleep and die. People tend to settle down to more peaceful activities such as reading or studying. A feeling of melancholy and the shock of change fills the air. In the forests, trees whose leaves turned color at the last Sabbath, the Autumn Equinox, now lose them altogether and stand bare and grey, revealing their skeletons, the hidden shape of all things. The sap has drained deep into the roots and growth has reached a minimum. Animals of all kinds are beginning their alternate life patterns as well; some settling in amongst the leaves and debris for a long and deep sleep, others alter their diet and metabolism and grow new thick coats of fur. Birds of the summer are gone, save a few, and the first snow falls in a delicate warning of the coming season. Food now scarce, the God of Death swings his Mighty Sickle in the cold of this first snow, and millions of plants, insects and animals die. Like the sap in the trees, all seem to have turned inward, withdrawing, abandoning the outer world of appearances. The whole of nature fades and one cannot help but feel the dream-like, transitory quality of things. The world has become a place where Awareness alone rules constant, a world of great change, transformation, death, and the deepest of sleep: the Kingdom of the Great Horned One.

As nature falls asleep, it seems that the veil between this world and that of dreams, of spirits and shadows grows thin, and a kind of twilight zone opens between them. A blanket of quiet reflection and wonder draws over the world, and we can feel the presence of loved ones who have Gone Before. At this time some of us can feel and see the great rejoicing exodus of souls stampeding across the sky from East to West led by the Horned One, God of the Great Hut: the Great Hunt of Birth and Death and Rebirth, of night and day and the constant transformation of all things.

For the Wicca (Wise), "All Souls Day" is not a day of sadness and mourning but a day of celebration and rejoicing for countless millions of beings who, in dying, turn their attention inward in unconscious homage to the Source of all things, the womb of the Great Mother. "Unconscious" because it is also a time of fear and sadness for those who don't know this, and so it is the custom among the Wicca to make loving offerings to spirits of all kinds (Trick or Treat!), offerings of Love and Peace and Vitality in an effort to calm them, comfort and guide them.

On this night the Cauldron is lit for the first time in the New Year and all the decorations for the rites are sacred symbols for the Horned God: Pine boughs and cones, Oak leaves and ivy. There is an extra candle on the Altar this night, a large red candle, the constant light of Awareness, the Sleepless Eye (eye - Aayin – Tarot XV, the Horned God), never blinking, like the eye of a fish (fish – Nun – Scorpio, Oct.21-Nov.21 – Tarot XIII, Death). This is the Fire of The Eye of Wisdom, the eye that burns and destroys all illusion and all Shadows.

“Let the Pumpkins candle glare,  
Burn the evil from the air,  
In the darkness, EVERYWHERE!”  
*(Hallowe'en Chant)*

“And after all the phantoms are banished,  
Thou shalt see that Holy and Formless Fire,  
That Fire which darts and flashes  
To the Ends of the Universe...”  
*(Chaldean Oracles)*

This is the Fire of Wisdom that fills the Cauldron, the womb of the all-encompassing Space-Mother.

At this Sabbath, the Horned One reigns Supreme. In this Sabbath only does She kneel at His feet to receive His blessing. This is the night of the Supreme Initiation when Death and Sorrow having reached their peak, Our Lady, overcome by compassion, descended through the Seven Gates of Hell removing all Her Seven Veils, even her Crown, and having given Her All, finally surrenders and kneels at the feet of Death Himself to the stokes of the Scourge of Suffering.

“Art thou willing to suffer in order to learn?”  
*(Book of Shadows)*

At this time the Sun is in Scorpio, meaning Death and Transformation. The sign is ruled by Mars (Mars – Peh – Tarot XVI, the Blasted Tower) and like the Blasted Tower, the Scourge (coming from the Latin word “ex-corrigia” meaning “to break fetters or attachments”) teaches us that by Law of Fate or Karma, all things must change and die, and that sorrow comes from the fetters of clinging to things which are fleeting and illusory:

“All sorrows are but shadows,  
they pass and are done,  
But there is ‘That’ which remains.”

As the veil between Life and Death grows thin and transparent to the eye of the Wise (Wicca), it becomes easier to see “That which remains.” We can then understand more fully the true meaning of the Goddess’s Amber (orange) and Jet (black) necklace of forty beads, which is the “Circle of Rebirth,” the continuous cycle of Life (amber) and Death (jet). So it is that on this night, the Circle Dance is led with the Stang, its two branches issuing from the single Staff of Consciousness.

To the Witch, Death and Rebirth are synonymous<sup>1</sup> and therefore Hallowe'en is a time of Great Rejoicing, for the beginning of a new life, a new existence, starting with the journey inward, back to the Source of all things. This turning inward, the Self-examination, the breaking of attachments, habits, and compulsions, the burning away of the shadows of ignorance and the return to Truth and Wisdom is the real message and ultimate meaning of Wicca and what this Sabbath is all about. This, then, is truly named, The Grand Sabbath.

“That which was never born can never die,  
So the Wise weep not, but rejoice.”

*(Book of Shadows)*

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<sup>1</sup>Excellent reading on the real meaning of death can be found in both “Death” and “Nothingness” by Alan Watts, from the “Essence of Alan Watts Series,” Celestial Arts, 231 Adrian Road, Millbrae, California 94030.

## WHERE TO FIND THE GOD AND THE GODDESS

<b>The Goddess:</b> Things that change, outward focus	<b>The God:</b> things that remain constant, inward focus
the Moon	the Sun
Summer	Winter
leafs, flowers, fruit, flesh	rocks, horn, hoof, bones
Life	Death
Compassion	Wisdom
Perfect Love	Perfect Trust
Objects of Awareness	Awareness
Object	Subject
All mental faculties, including (but not limited to) memory, imagination, emotions, thoughts, perception.	Consciousness

## AFTERWORD

*By Janus-Mithras, Nuit-Hilaria and Mer-Amun*

Reading this book has hopefully left you with a new perspective or view of the Craft and probably a sense of appreciation and wonder, but in spite of all the things you have read here the future of Traditional Wicca as it survives today is not only endangered but also very much in question. Some of the people who know and love the Craft best, who believe in it and truly understand it, seriously doubt if the system can or should continue in the present way of transmitting papers and explanations in secrecy, initiate to initiate, or whether everything should be published and made easily available to the public.

The reluctance many have to publishing the tradition arises from the nature of traditional Wicca itself. Unlike the neopagan Wicca movement, which was reportedly invented in the 1940's and 50's by Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente, (see "Crafting the Art of Magic" by Aidan A. Kelly, 1991, Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, Minnesota) the very old and unbroken traditional European lineage carries a profound system of self-realization. This system, though badly damaged through centuries of persecution, and corrupt or sloppy transmission, is comparable to Hindu tantra and Buddhist tantra (Vajrayana) in that it reveals the nature of mind and consciousness through direct and personal experience. In fact, highly respected practitioners of Hindu and Buddhist tantra who have been exposed to this tradition have called it "the Tantra of the West."

Contrary to popular opinion, Tantra does not mean sexual practice. Literally, the word has the following meanings: A loom, specifically, the warp, or weaving. The leading principle, essential part, main point, or characteristic feature of anything. A model, prototype, system, framework, doctrine, rule, or theory. A chapter or part thereof. A class of works teaching magical and mystical formulae.

Like Wicca, Tantra is a cleverly designed and carefully woven system of means and methods that can make use of every possible experience or activity to direct one's mind to the leading principle, the essential part, or the main point of everything: the ultimate nature of the mind itself.

The public misconception that Tantra means sexual practice arises from the fact that it, like Wicca, is among the spiritual systems that include specific sexual experiences (along with all other experiences) in religious practice. Sexual practice, however, like any other Tantric practice, is incorporated only under the discipline of very specific conditions. The conditions and methods for being able to use sex for spiritual practice demand a very rare type of student who has completely conquered any form of lust or desire. Because such students are almost non-existent, actual sexual practice is not common in Tantra, contrary to popular belief.

All of the teachings, initiations and meditations involved in a wisdom tradition like Wicca are attempts to trigger in the initiate the same ultimately indescribable, very personal experience which is the first-hand recognition of the nature of Mind or Consciousness. It is not possible to over-state the significance of this experience. In a sense, this experience is Wicca. Our entire field of experience is Mind: aware, alive, and responsive. The whole Universe, even the Gods themselves, are all manifestations of Mind,

and are governed by Mind (Habit=Karma). Through the perspective afforded by Consciousness, each and every one of us shares that same Mind so intimately that we experience it as our own mind. What we perceive to be our own individual mind is really a limited view of the Ultimate Reality, limited by the scope of our chosen perspective.

Direct personal recognition of the nature of the Mind immediately reveals the fact that we are all ultimately One Being, and have the potential for the realization that we are all immortal divine beings, even the parents of the Gods themselves, and the authors of the Universe itself. Most of us just don't know this, and in an unconscious expression of ultimate power and freedom, create for ourselves very convincing restricted existences. What is more miraculous: that a human being can become a god, or that the infinite Divinity that has created the whole universe can disguise itself, and believe itself to be a mere human being? We do not know who we really are, what we are capable of, and could make of ourselves if we wanted to. These are things real Witches want to learn about. Most of us certainly do not act like the divine beings that we really are. For example, as the "Parents" of every single suffering being in the Universe, most of us do not know how much we could be helping, by simply caring, if we really wanted to. These are things real Witches want to do.

"I wish to know, in order to Serve"  
*(Book of Shadows)*

This is what traditional Wicca is all about. Like all wisdom traditions, it exists only for the purpose of leading an initiate to Self-Realization, Enlightenment, or the Ancient Harmony as witches say. Without this purpose at its core, any mystery religion like Wicca becomes nothing more than folk superstition. The conceptual and philosophical teachings, rituals, meditations, magical practices, exercises and the unveiling of the mind's powers all provide the initiate with opportunities to "re-cognize" and to experience Divine Realization. Without this insight to apply in each type of magical practice, the rituals, meditations and powers cannot be fully understood, are empty shells devoid of their most valuable meaning and significance, and will therefore inevitably become perverted to the service of one's ego or self-serving individualistic nature. This occurs because people simply don't know any better, having habitually adopted the mistaken perspective, self-image, and life of insignificant and helpless creatures, who thereby find themselves in constant need of self-promotion for survival and comfort.

Many similarities can be found between some of the material carried in the neopagan Wicca movement and the older Spanish and Basque material in the European tradition. Perhaps Gerald Gardner, Dorothy Clutterbuck and Doreen Valiente did obtain most of their original material from a secret English traditional lineage as they had previously claimed. Perhaps they had some unacknowledged exposure to the secret European tradition whose material they translated from another language, thereby seeming to have written it themselves. Whatever the case, as the neopagan Wicca movement is bereft of an emphasis on direct recognition of the nature of Mind, which is the quintessence of European traditional Wicca - as the writer knows it - the differences cannot be more significant. This omission leaves the religious and magical practices carried in the neopagan Wicca movement at the service of the practitioner's ego to support pride, self-aggrandizement, feeling powerful, entertainment, "feeling good" and outright commercialism, often disguised as one's conscience or justified with claims of

altruism. It is wonderful that people find ways to entertain themselves and feel good about themselves and the world, but this approach of self-promotion and self-indulgence does not make people act and think more like the Gods. Instead, typical neopaganism promotes the utilitarian tendency of acting and thinking like ordinary beings that have a need to be more significant, to feel less helpless, and thus to act and think more like animals obsessed with survival and comfort. (Traditional Wicca is NOT about "nature worship.") Self-promotion is a horrible mockery of the divine beings we have always been. As unconditionally divine beings, we could realize that we have always been the authors of everything, and do not have to be slaves to anything - certainly not to our own habitually self-clinging and self-promoting animal nature! This slavery to habitual self-indulgence, self-restriction, and self-promotion is in direct contrast to the traditional Wiccan attitude.

"No more shall ye know slavery, who give true worship unto me."  
*(The Goddess - Book of Shadows)*

Strive ever to purify your body and Enlighten your mind, saying to yourself:  
`Now it is my life that I must shape as a carpenter shapes wood,  
and the thing to be formed is a union with the Gods and the Ecstasy of the Spirit, as  
Nothing to me is this body, as Nothing the parts thereof.'"  
*(The God - Book of Shadows)*

It is because of this essential difference in attitude that traditional initiates see the neopagan movement's characteristic self-indulgence, utilitarianism, and spiritual consumerism as the perverted "dark side" of the Craft. Spiritual consumerism is making magic and nature "work" for oneself, thinking "what can I get out of this?" It involves prayers like: "If I meditate or make offerings or say the magic words, please cure my cancer," or "please get me a job" or "please make me more comfortable." The urge to do this is very human, in fact all religions do this, but it is not the main objective of true religion. Spiritual consumerism is in direct opposition to the traditional Wiccan concept of the Ancient Harmony. One meaning of the Ancient Harmony is that, because everything is Mind, arises from Mind, and is directed by Mind, everything is Holy and everything is Perfect the way it is. To intervene with a limited individual perspective is to disrupt that Ancient Harmony. Adopting the Ancient Harmony as a way of life involves a type of Divine Surrender to reality. Divine Surrender arises from the Realization that we do not need to make ourselves more perfect than we already are. We need only recognize our true nature and our true capabilities. Such Divine Surrender to the Ancient Harmony involves prayers more like: "I offer Perfect Love and Perfect Trust. Please let me experience whatever I need to learn about life and my true self. Give me the strength to endure the suffering I may need to experience, the maturity of accepting the pleasant things without letting them spoil me, and the skill to help others do the same."

Even though the persecutions seem to be over(?!), Wicca's worst enemies are the witches themselves. The neopagan devotion to ideals opposite to traditional Wicca has made traditional witches wish to be all the more secret. They loathe to publish, support, and be associated with the neopagan movement. This is why so little is known by the public of the existence of a real ancient tradition of Wicca. Furthermore, due to the nature of the teachings, words cannot reliably convey the experience outside

the context of a personal friendship with each student, and an understanding of each student's character. It is only for this reason that traditional Wicca (and likewise all wisdom traditions) is said to be secret. These teachings are secret not because initiates wish to keep them from anyone, but because the conditions for being able to convey it are so personal. Due to the nature of the impersonal printed word, it could be said that any printed exposition of the Craft will be missing the essential point, and cannot help but be misleading.

Even if the entire corpus of traditional Wicca is not published, some feel that an attempt should be made to publish at least the explanations behind the system. The hope is to somehow make this overlooked, all-important direct experience of the nature of Mind, of who and what we really are, more available to everyone. It is hoped that with this experience more readily available, "witches" will turn away from using the Craft for self-pleasing, and that they will realize their true potential to be far beyond the petty and often ridiculous image they have built. A perfect commentary on the Craft would require exact printed instructions that, if followed carefully and with earnest, would eventually trigger the direct personal recognition of the Mind's true nature in a reader, something completely new to both neopagan and traditional Wicca. It is not believed that such written instructions are possible because words can only convey concepts, and the Experience is completely non-conceptual.

Furthermore, even if an aspirant should arrive at an experience of "realization" on their own, following printed instructions, a relationship with an experienced teacher is still needed to check and adjust the "experience" for the many subtle flaws that can and do occur. There are subtle levels of Mind short of the Ultimate that are very real and very powerful. For example, you could reach a stage in your practice at which you completely lose body awareness and your mind feels like an infinite ocean of light, and an ocean of consciousness. You could think "aha! I have directly experienced the nature of Mind." It is true that this experience does reflect a greater perspective of reality. After all, you really are a god of light, the ruler of an ocean of space. However, even in this experience you still haven't seen your true nature, because you are still limiting your perspective beneath your true potential. Your self-indulgence in always seeking what feels good will make this experience seem to you to be the ultimate, and become a trap that robs you of your true heritage. This is one of the many subtle corrections of character and perspective that only an experienced teacher can catch and help you adjust.

To satisfy the need for personal interaction with an experienced teacher, the Craft has operated for centuries by teaching initiates in private, initiate to initiate, or high priestess and high priest to a coven, but there is a very serious problem with this approach as well.

The problem arises from the fact that the Craft shows all the hallmarks of a badly damaged tradition; damaged by the well-known historical persecution, public misunderstanding, and maybe most of all by incorrect and sloppy transmission. Though all the traditional maxims and practices have survived intact, the traditional guidance and transmission of the explanations have all but disappeared. Certainly the Craft still fully embodies all the Wisdom, the teachings, and the magical formulae that a true wisdom tradition must have, but embodied in symbols and allegory where they can only be seen by those who already have the keys and know what to look for. This means that, without the guidance of a trained Holder of the Tradition, the true meaning remains veiled and unavailable, and the Craft then, is Silent.

Because of this, unless one is of the fortunate few, the tradition appears to be merely a simple, vaguely defined fertility cult involving nature worship, with more or less glamorous rituals, spells and beautiful prayers. Very few ever suspect the true meaning and the depth of Wisdom inherent in each carefully chosen word and symbol, behind the spells and rites. We have a lot of people who love the Craft very much, but very few who really understand it.

Since the papers alone, the spells, rituals, practices and maxims do a person little good by themselves, Wicca is then only as good as its' teacher. With good teachers and explanations being rare, and good students likewise, the opportunity to transmit the highest meaning and teaching becomes more and more scarce. We then have the present situation where people read books, buy capes and candles, call themselves "Witches" and proceed to act and speak in ways ranging from pernicious to just plain silly. This kind of thing has done more harm to the Craft than the persecution of the Middle Ages.

Because the teachings are Secret, and absolutely require explanation and above all experiencing, the Craft being mainly an Experience, the system in its present form can give an enormous amount of power to the teacher over a sincere aspiring student. Human nature being what it is, enormous and elaborate ego-trips of a more or less subtle nature can and do arise even unconsciously in Circles, whether traditional or not. Because so little is generally known of the real meaning of the Craft and the Wisdom it embodies, even well-meaning people who have a natural love for and attraction to the Craft unknowingly find themselves in very strange and sometimes even dangerous situations, all in the name of Wisdom and the search for truth.

The solution would seem to be to publish the complete corpus of the Tradition as it survives and now stands. If this is going to solve the problem, it will have to be done in such a way as to eliminate the necessity of a transmitter, and to formulate and organize group-work in a way that will remove potential power-trips and misrepresentations. In publishing, one would have to give the initiation rituals with their proper explanation and "inner work" (meaning the visualizations, formulation of thought-forms, and handling of energies), so that people could step by step initiate themselves, and by their own efforts, eventually arrive at that essential experience which is the recognition of the ultimate nature of Mind.

Each step would necessitate a lot of work in terms of meditation, visualizations and awareness of - and handling of - "magical" energies. For example, students would have to start from the very beginning, building their elemental contacts on their own. This is not difficult, but it does take a long time and a certain "knack". To complete the First Degree Initiation alone, if successful, might take students two or three years, because it wouldn't and couldn't be a single ritual. One would have to take the thirteen parts of the initiation and make each of them into a separate practice involving meditations, visualizations, and a lot of magical work, so that the student would really accomplish each step. In the published instructions it would be necessary to say things like: "after you have succeeded in attaining such-and-such realization or effect, then go on to the next practice or step". A student could no longer depend on someone else who had already done all this and has the ability to transmit the energies and bring about the experiences during the ritual, so that a great deal would be lost.

Supposing the work of the First Degree could be formulated and published in the above manner, what happens during the Second Degree, when the real Power of the Tradition is transferred along with the Secret Keys, empowering the student, now Initiate, to teach and continue the Tradition? The best and most obvious answer would be to tap the Inner Planes directly, provided the student-Initiate had the necessary knowledge and ability to do this, and even then, knew where to go and what to look for. If left to this kind of Inner Plane contacts, we could then have the same well-known situation as when the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn broke up: everybody claiming to have contacted the "Secret Chiefs" and claiming to be the only one with the real knowledge and keys! In other words, a complete disaster, and probably more harmful to the Craft in the long run than even the Inquisition.

It is true that the solution might be partly in the publication of the material but this course of action would be difficult as well as costly. Having the Beauty and Ultimate Reality about yourself and the Universe revealed, pointed out directly and then explained to you by a teacher, friend, and brother or sister who really loves you is one thing; reading about it in a book and practicing on your own is quite another. If the Tradition and its teachings are to be published and explained, this will have to be done by someone who speaks with an enormous amount of authority, understanding of the subject and love for all humanity, who has the necessary background as well as the insight, not to mention the literary talent, time and finances. Such beings have always been rare, and are especially so in these dark times, and the few that exist today have their hands full with the needs of the lost and suffering.

This is the present situation. With all these problems and uncertainties, how can Traditional Wicca best be preserved? By publishing everything, or by continuing to train Initiates, or both? Maybe there is no answer possible or even needed. Maybe what we are witnessing is a timely and necessary manifestation of the Eternal Law of dispersal/renewal, which the Craft itself emphasizes as the most obvious and tangible way the Presence of the Ancient Harmony can be directly experienced. Perhaps it is a manifestation of the Sacred Urge for growth and expansion that drives all things on and upwards, always accompanied by a break-down of the old forms, including those of the system of Wicca and even the Gods themselves.

Ultimately we must have "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust" that the effort invested, whether publishing, or teaching or both, will increase the Tradition's availability and improve the quality of the transmission, while keeping traditional explanations intact. Hopefully, this effort will open the eyes of those who are heir to the Tradition and are ready and qualified to receive it. Whatever the future holds for the Tradition, whether it survives as it now is, complete or incomplete, expanded and improved or misunderstood and degraded -- from the Highest Point of View, all this is of no consequence. For, as the Horned One, himself the Lord of Change and Death and Renewal, has taught us of old:

"There will always be  
The Sun and the Moon,  
The Infinite Sky with its Stars,  
And Union with the Gods."  
*(Book of Shadows)*