

Circle of Fire



A practical guide to the symbolism &
practices of modern Wiccan ritual

Sorita d'Este & David Rankine

Revised Second Edition 2008

Wicca: CIRCLE OF FIRE

A practical guide to the symbolism & practices of modern Wiccan ritual

by Sorita D'Este & David Rankine



*Guide O fire the seeker
On a path of illumination
On a path through the mysteries
Through the circles of time and space
Through the passions of a loving embrace
Truthful path of perfect will*

Mysteries from the cauldron spill

Revised & Expanded Second Edition 2008

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About the Authors



Sorita d'Este and David Rankine are the founders of the StarStone Network, a network of Wiccan tradition training circles and covens in the UK. Together they have facilitated many workshops, given lectures and written on a wide spectrum of esoteric topics. Sorita's interest in the magickal started through out-of-body and psychic

experiences as a child. Her interest in classical pagan deities and mythology was fueled by the romantic poets. David entered into the magickal world in the 1970's after reading Aleister Crowley's '*Magick*' and the classic handbook '*Techniques of High Magic*' by Francis King and Stephen Skinner. Interestingly, many years later, David would meet Stephen Skinner and enter into a very fruitful writing partnership with the very man whose work inspired him when he first started out. Sorita and David are both vegetarian, but whilst David adores macadamia nuts, Sorita prefers dark chocolate. They both like carrot juice, with fresh ginger!

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www.avalonia.co.uk

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the beautiful
members of
VITRIOL Grove
& all the hidden children of the
Stone of the Stars.
Blessed Be.

“Open your eyes and you will see that the door
has been opened and the world of the Gods lies
within: and your spirit, rejoicing in this vision,
will find itself drawn onwards and upwards.”

Greco-Egyptian Magical Papyri (Unknown

Translation)

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FOUNDATIONS

1. What Is Wicca?

Wicca encompasses an entire worldview and way of life, and is always there in the way you look at and interact with the world. It is an experiential system of magick, mysticism and spirituality that works with the divine as both masculine and feminine, whilst emphasising growth through balance and discipline. This balance, be it of light and dark, feminine and masculine, or active and passive, acts as a dynamic tension to create harmony and enable the individual to progress in their development through understanding their relationship with themselves and the world around them. It provides a spiritual way of life; its simple effectiveness and organic beauty combine to make its appeal grow greater as we move further into the twenty-first century, with its bombardment of technology and information. It is constantly growing and evolving, fulfilling

peoples' need for magick, mysticism and spirituality, whilst placing the responsibility for spiritual growth and fulfillment firmly back in the hands of the individual.

The History of the Tradition

Wicca, as an initiatory magickal tradition with Pagan spiritual philosophies and witchcraft practices, first came to the public attention in the 1950s at the hands of retired civil servant Gerald B. Gardner. It is however impossible to assign the actual origins of the tradition to an exact period in history - many claims and counterclaims have been made over the years, but what is clear when you examine the evidence of the practices found in the tradition today, is that the tradition we now call Wicca most likely did exist in one form or another prior to the involvement of Gerald Gardner. We explore the origins of the key practices in our book *'Wicca Magickal Beginnings'*, showing that some of the practices used today can be found dating back to 3000BCE, with many more seemingly

being derived from the magickal practices of the medieval and renaissance grimoire magickians, with a small amount of classical mythology, British and European Witchcraft, mixed with a little bit of Victorian Ceremonial magick.

It is clear from this that Wicca draws its inspiration from a range of practices, myths and symbols, from different parts of the world and different points in history. Merged together and synthesized to produce a beautiful and effective simple form of practical spirituality.

Goddess & God

The celebration of the feminine and masculine divine through the changing seasons of nature is at the heart of the Wiccan tradition, flowing through the ceremonies and beliefs held by those who practice it. The deities of the Wiccan Tradition can be viewed through the eyes of a variety of spiritual philosophies and religious systems, each considered valid in its own way. There is no one prescribed way in which it is expressed, thus

Wiccans might be monotheists, polytheists, pantheists, pantheists, henotheists, or a combination of these without any perceived contradiction. The feminine divine, or Goddess, is associated with the Moon, but also has stellar, terrestrial and chthonian associations. The masculine divine, or God, is considered to be animal horned and is associated with the Sun, forests, woodlands, animals and the underworld. Many practitioners today also describe the deities of the tradition as being part of an ultimate divine, a unifying force, from which the feminine and masculine divine permeate.

The Eight Sabbats

Wiccans celebrate the eight seasonal festivals which are better known as the Wheel of the Year. These festivals mark the changing seasons and bring practitioners to a closer understanding of nature.

The eight seasonal celebrations or Sabbats are:

Samhain (Halloween) October 31
Yule (Winter Solstice) December 21
Imbolc (Candlemas) February 1
Eostra (Spring Equinox) March 21
Beltane (May Day) May 1
Litha (Summer Solstice) June 21
Lughnasadh (Lammas) August 1
Modron (Autumn Equinox) September 21

Please note that the dates given here are as they are used within the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere the seasons are reversed and different from those experienced in Europe. As a result of this the festivals are usually reversed in order for them to fit in with the seasons within the locality they are celebrated in. Also keep in mind that the dates for the Solstices and Equinoxes may vary from year to year, so it is important to consult an astrological calendar for the exact dates each year.

As well as being celebrations or festivals, the Wheel of the Year Sabbats mark changes in all

nature, in animal and plant life. They also represent a mythical cycle of life experience for the goddess and god, which reflect the experiences of the human lifecycle, demonstrating the magickal axiom of *'As above, so below'*.

Esbats

The Esbats are the Full Moon ceremonies held by covens for conducting their business at and performing their magick. They may also be held at other times, such as the New Moon or Dark Moon if appropriate to the nature of the magickal work. In contrast to the Sabbats, Esbats are not celebrations in the same way as Sabbats, and instead are held to focus on results magick such as healing and devotional workings. Whereas in some traditions non-initiate guests or initiates from other covens are invited to celebrate a Sabbat, Esbats are usually only open to the members of the Coven conducting them.

Initiation

Initiation rites are usually practiced by those working within covens, during which the initiate is welcomed into the group and tradition in a formal ceremony. The new initiate also makes their own personal commitment towards both the tradition and the group known during such a ceremony, in addition to their commitment to the Goddess and God. Further initiations are undertaken to mark specific points during the cycle of learning and experience, which may lead to a person eventually moving on and starting a coven of their own.

There are three levels of initiation in traditions such as those now known as the Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions. These three levels of initiation are usually referred to as First Degree, Second Degree and Third Degree, with the latter being the final attainment which bestows the highest achievement. Most Wiccan Tradition covens work with a three degree system of initiation, with some having a fourth stage at the start which is usually called '*Dedication*' – being a dedication to the coven and to learning after

which the new member becomes a probationer to the coven, undertaking a period of study and integration before first degree initiation. A person undergoing this pre-initiation stage is sometimes also known as a Neophyte or Seeker.

High Priestess & High Priest

In Wiccan covens, the terms High Priestess and High Priest are used to describe the leaders of the coven. Such persons will usually be either second or third degree initiates, who have left the coven into which they were initiated, to start their own. The terms are not relevant to solitary practitioners, as they infer a role of responsibility to others. The High Priestess leads a coven of witches, not just in rituals, but also takes responsibility for their training and general spiritual welfare. The High Priest assists her with this role, taking an equal role in their training and development, as well as helping her with the organisation of rituals and other meetings. In some instances, a coven may have just a High Priestess or just a High Priest,

rather than both.

Self-Dedication

Solitary practitioners of the Wiccan tradition may make similar commitments to initiation in self-dedication ceremonies. During such a ceremony the practitioner makes a personal commitment to the Goddess and God and to themselves, towards fulfilling their own personal goals of exploring the Wiccan tradition as a spiritual and magickal path. Although this serves a similar function to that of initiation into a coven it is important to stress that the two are not the same. Self-dedication is a solitary pursuit, which is between the practitioner and their Gods, whereas initiation into a coven is done in the presence of the Gods *and* peers. The benefits and pitfalls should be explored on an individual basis before making a commitment.

It is further necessary to take into consideration that whilst most members of covens also work solitary, some solitaires may likewise find a suitable coven after years of solitary practice and

become a coven initiate. In addition, some coven initiates may decide for one reason or another that solitary work is better suited to them and go solo. Some people switch between the two paths or work them concurrently for a lifetime. You need to decide which is best suited to your lifestyle, development and needs.

Take into consideration that the method of learning and experiencing ritual is very different. The solitary practitioner will need to learn his or her rituals from books, workshops and possibly through attending public ceremonies. The coven initiate will learn through example - that is they will see the way in which ritual is performed within their coven and will learn through experience. This is often further complemented by additional solitary study and practice.

Witch Names

During the first degree initiation or sometimes during self-dedication a person will take a new name which is only used during ceremonies in the

magick circle. This name is known as a ‘*witch*’ name or craft name and is kept private. The witch name represents the magickal persona of the witch, and should be chosen very carefully as it reflects you and your aspirations. For this reason be very careful about using the name of a goddess or god, as they may consider it an invitation to influence your life and take it in directions you don’t want it to go. Examples of the use of such names can be found in the witch trials and are found in ceremonial magick traditions, where a name or motto is taken upon initiation, which represents the aspirations of the practitioner in the same way as the witch name.

The Wiccan Rede

Wicca has a simple ethical code which is expressed in the eight words “*An it harm none, do as ye will*”. This phrase is called the ‘*Wiccan Rede*’, and it was first used publicly by Doreen Valiente in 1964. This phrase most probably derives from Aleister Crowley’s famous axiom

“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. Love is the Law, Love under Will.” Crowley himself drew his inspiration from St Augustine’s phrase *“Love, and do what thou wilt”*, and Francois Rabelais’ novel *Gargantua* (1534). Rede is said to be an old word for ‘*counsel*’ or ‘*advice*’, which is exactly what the Wiccan Rede is intended to be, a philosophical statement which has many possible applications and interpretations. It provides you with a personal guideline which you can use whenever you need to make an important decision. Not just decisions in regard to magickal workings, but also in your every day life. The Wiccan Rede places the emphasis on personal responsibility for all your actions. It says *“hold on a minute, do you need to do that? How will your actions affect you? Are you sure you want to go ahead?”*

The Wiccan Rede helps you to think about cause and effect, which is an essential part of magickal work. It is up to you to decide whether or not you should proceed. Some people find that the

meaning of the words change for them as they gain in experience. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that hurt and harm are not quite the same thing. If you follow the Wiccan Rede you should strive towards always giving careful consideration to all your actions.

The Book Of Shadows

This term, which is often shortened to '*BOS*', is used to describe the book of rituals and spells which is traditionally copied by hand by a new initiate from their initiator. Contrary to popular belief, there are many different Books of Shadows, as each witch is encouraged to add their own rituals and spells to the book they copied from their High Priestess or High Priest. When they in turn pass it on to their own initiates the book may sometimes be significantly different from that which they themselves copied, although of course some material will remain the same. These *BOS*' which are passed from initiator to initiate, who in turn may pass it to their own initiates, are considered to be oathbound, which means that they

are not shared, shown or given to anyone apart from initiates in the same tradition. In doing this Wicca continues a long tradition of magickal books used by witches and magickians. From books of spells and incantations used by the ancient Egyptian priesthoods to Roman witches through to the grimoires, the book of magickal practice and technique has a long and well documented history.

Those working outside the established initiatory traditions may choose to create their own *Books of Shadows* by gathering together over their years of practice the ceremonies, invocations and spells they use and find effective. Solitary practitioners may do this by looking through and compiling such material from their personal magickal diaries. There is no reason not to call such a book a *Book of Shadows* and likewise as it is not oathbound to a particular tradition it is up to you who you would share the material in it, however as with all things it will be worth considering the magickal axiom '*To Keep Silent*' when doing so as traditions such as keeping

magickal material oathbound are usually firmly based in the knowledge gained through experience, not as some would have you believe simply in the wish to keep secrets for the sake of secrets.

Skyclad, Naked in Our Rites?

Many Wiccans perform their rituals skyclad, which means that rituals are performed in the nude, clad only the light of the stars and moon. There are many reasons given for why this is done. In the *Charge of the Goddess* it says “...as a sign that you shall be truly free, you shall be naked in your rites...” In this line (which is borrowed from a speech made by the Goddess Diana in the material presented in *The Aradia*, by Charles G. Leland) a personal freedom which is very important to Wiccans is described.

Working skyclad may help you overcome social conditioning and personal inhibitions, which in turn may help you to attain a freedom of mind and spirit. Some have suggested that it is necessary to work skyclad as clothing may inhibit the flow of

energy from the body, we personally feel that if this is the case that it is probably necessary to learn how to raise and direct energy in a manner that clothing does not interfere with it, as it is not always possible to take your clothes off when you need to do a ritual or direct energy. Skyclad is optional for solitaires, those thinking of working in a coven should inquire about this practice prior to joining a group, some groups work skyclad for all rituals, some work skyclad only for some ceremonies and when the weather permits, where as yet others may work robed for all ceremonies. In traditional initiatory Wiccan covens, the first degree ceremony is always performed skyclad as it represents a rebirth into the coven and the tradition. Here being skyclad represents both trust between the coven and the new initiate, as well as being symbolic of birth itself. Solitaires performing rites of self-dedication may prefer to do so skyclad for the latter reason.

2. Magick

There has been a great deal of debate in recent centuries as to whether magick really works or not. To have an opinion as to whether magick works you first need to define what magick is. The magickian Aleister Crowley described magick as *“the art and science of causing change to occur in conformity with will”*. In ancient Egypt magick was called *heka* and was described as a gift from the sun god Re to ward off negative events. Every living thing was believed to possess varying amounts of heka (magick). Between these two views we can see a good basis for appreciating that magick can be perceived as both the actions of directing energy to achieve change, and the energy itself. Working magick effectively is achieved by efficiently directing energy towards a desired result in harmony with your environment. By working magick you shift the probability of a desired outcome in your favour. The more

effectively and harmoniously you perform your spells and rituals, the greater the probability of the desired outcome. So the answer to the question is that yes, magick does indeed work.

Magickal Resistance

When you first start performing Wiccan ritual, you will need to practice on a regular basis, as the techniques, like all new skills, will need to be perfected in order for you to become proficient in them.

A common problem, when one first starts practicing ritual, is a feeling of resistance, as the ego naturally reacts against the motions of change. This resistance needs to be overcome in order to practice successful ritual and is a common phenomenon which may recur. The human ego likes a very ordered and rigid existence and through practicing magickal ritual, whether Wiccan or otherwise, you will set the forces of change into motion.

As you overcome this resistance you may start

noticing changes in yourself, you may feel more confident, have more energy and feel motivated to explore new horizons. One of the aims of practicing Wicca is the realization of your own potential, through creating a personal understanding of your connection to the web of life all around you. Through overcoming the obstacles which are placed in your way, you can realise this potential and strive towards perfection.

Life Changes

You should be aware that your perceptions will shift as you perform more and more ritual. You will become more sensitive to subtle energies, in ritual, in yourself, in the world around you and in people and their behaviour. This can sometimes cause feelings of isolation, as you find yourself having less in common with people who do not share your interests. You may find yourself questioning them and their actions.

There is a pitfall here that must be avoided. Wicca may take you away from friends, as you

grow and change, which can be in a very different direction from them. If this happens to you, you need to accept this, and not preach or try and tell them how wonderful, or worse, better, your path is. If Wicca is a path which is right for them, they will find it in their own time, just like you did. Do not try and convince them that your beliefs and experiences are better and do not look down on them for not following the same spiritual path as you.

3. The Four Elements

Air, Fire, Water and Earth – the four elements which make up everything, are not just physical, they are also energy states, states of being and philosophical concepts, and are an integral part of the Wiccan tradition. The philosophy of the four elements can be traced to the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles, who expounded the idea in the fifth century BCE and described it in his work *Tetrasomia* (“*Doctrine of the Four Elements*”). Empedocles expressed the idea that the four elements were not only the physical building blocks of the material universe, but also spiritual essences. In fact Empedocles went as far as to equate the sources of the elements to Greek deities, Zeus being Air, Hera being Earth, Hades being Fire and Nestis (Persephone) being Water. From this also comes the origin of the attributions of Air and Fire as masculine elements and Earth and Water as feminine elements. Empedocles

wrote:

“Now hear the fourfold Roots of everything:
Life-bringing Hera, Hades, shining Zeus,
And Nestis, moistening mortal springs with
tears.”

Empedocles was an herbal magickian or root cutter (*rhizotomoi*) and applied his theory to developing a doctrine of occult sympathies in plants. After Empedocles, Aristotle in the fourth century BCE expounded further on the elements as spiritual essences, concentrating on their qualities and laying the basis for subsequent ideas of the four elements.

In order to understand the symbolism used within ritual and to perform the rituals efficiently it is important to realise how fundamentally important the four elements are to our very existence. They are the building blocks of life and to work effective magick you will need to become

familiar with their interaction and presence in the world we live in, in yourself, and to also strive towards a greater understanding of how they work together.

Working with the elements enables you to balance yourself and remain centred, and promotes growth through realisation of imbalances in yourself (be they qualities, emotions, habits, etc) and the means to change the imbalances, through working with them and transmuting them.

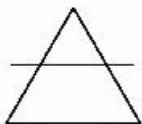
Whenever you are out in nature the elements are all around you. The air that you breathe also blows past you as wind, the warmth of sun light comes from the fire of our star, water rains on you and is in the rivers, lakes, oceans, etc, and the earth is everywhere, giving form to the land and everything on it.

Meditating in different environments like woods, hilltops, fields, by the sea or rivers, etc, will help you attune to the way the elements surround you and interact with you. Indeed spending a significant period outdoors in as natural

an environment as is possible is a good way of reconnecting with nature, and we would recommend doing so on a regular basis.

The nineteenth century occultist Eliphas Levi coined the magickal axiom of '*To Know, To Will, To Dare, To Keep Silent*', sometimes called '*the witch's pyramid of power*', which can be ascribed to the four elements and will be explored in that context in the sections that follow.

Air – To Know



Air is the breath of life, continually energizing us as we draw oxygen from it to keep our bodies working and vitalize ourselves. We are surrounded by air all the time, invisible yet ever-present. Air is the subtlest of the four elements, intangible and connecting us to the stars, filling the gap between the Earth and the heavens.

Air represents the intellect, the power of thought and knowledge. The magickal axiom for air is *To Know*, reflecting this association with knowledge. With knowledge comes the power of communication to transmit knowledge, best expressed through the words we speak, which travel through the air. Knowledge also facilitates

the development of skill, through understanding and application of knowledge, and so the learning of skills is also associated with Air.

Air is associated with inspiration, a term which can literally mean to breathe in. When we are inspired ideas move in our minds, and movement is a quality of Air, as seen in nature by the power of the wind, which can vary from a gentle breeze to a raging tornado, demonstrating its changeability. Another quality of Air is clarity, the ability to perceive clearly, analyse the facts and then exercise discernment, i.e. informed choice based on knowledge.

Air also embodies joy and happiness, the lightness of spirit you feel when you are in a good mood. Feeling happy is often described as '*floating on air*'. Air brings beginnings, like the tide of air which starts the year in spring. Air embodies the hope of a spring day, the clarity of a sharp intake of breath, the joy of a cooling breeze, the freedom of a bird gliding on the winds. It is associated with the quality of discrimination, logic

and the ability to analyse, to see the whole picture with a *'birds-eye view'*, and the wisdom of experience.

Memory is another airy quality, and it is no coincidence that the sense of smell, recognizing scents carried on the Air, should be known as the *'evoker of memory'* due to its ability to prompt memories more than any other sense.

Colours	White, Yellow
Time	Dawn, Spring
Direction	East
Gender	Male
Sense	Smell
Tools	Wand, Bailine, Censer
Instruments	Flutes, Pan-Pipes, Wind Instruments
Crystals	Agate, Chalcedony, Citrine Quartz, Kunzite, Lapis Lazuli, Opal, Sapphire, Sodalite,

Turquoise

Scents

Benzoin, Eucalyptus,
Lavender, Pine

Elementals

Sylphs

Elemental

Ruler

Paralda

Archangel

Raphael

Planets

Mercury, Jupiter, Uranus

Zodiacal

Signs

Aquarius, Gemini, Libra

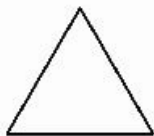
Positive
Qualities

Analysis, Clarity,
Decisiveness, Discernment,
Happiness, Hope, Inspiration,
Joy, Logic, Wisdom

Negative
Qualities

Anxiety, Dispersion, Fear,
Impulsiveness, Indecision,
Insecurity, Paranoia, Prejudice

Fire – To Will



Fire is the great transformer. Fire is the least obviously present around us on the Earth of the four elements, yet one expression of Fire is light, which enables us to see. It is the next most subtle of the elements after air, it flickers and dances, leaping up to die down and be gone again. It is probably for this reason that it is sometimes referred to as the '*living element*'. The magickal axiom associated with fire is *To Will*, reflecting its creative, dynamic and energetic qualities. Through the light of fire we receive illumination, and can see our path, enabling the process of transformation that it facilitates to continue. Willpower is what keeps us on the goal of achievement.

Fire is also associated with courage and freedom. To be free we must be brave, and be willing to use our creativity and drive to succeed. Fire motivates us to succeed and refine our passions.

Fire can be creative or destructive, and this is clearly seen in nature. A forest fire may initially seem devastating, but many plants actually need fire in their life cycle to ensure their continued survival, a fact that research has made clear in recent years.

Fire burns, and reminds us of the importance of control. When handled properly fire provides light and heat, and can be used to cook and for protection. If allowed to get out of control it can cause great destruction. In the same way fire represents our will and our passions. If controlled they can be creative and constructive, enabling us to develop and do great things. But if we let them get out of control we can become obsessive, or violent.

Fire is probably the most challenging element,

its creative and destructive power contained within every flame. Fire represents transformation, both in the substances which burn, and in the environment around it, as the flames supply light and heat. Fire burns with a passion and energy which are reflected in the human spirit. The purity of fire is like our motivation and will, the drive to succeed and shine with our own light. Through the light of fire we receive the illumination we need to follow our paths, giving us the energy to refine our passions and strive for our goals. Fire can leap up and die down again just as suddenly, and brings spontaneity in its flames. The dance of fire reminds us of our own dance of life. In the summer, the heat of the sun's fire is most present, and the energy of fire fills our bodies and our lives. We spring into activity, motivated by the increased light to do more and express the fire of our will in succeeding to achieve our goals.

Colours	Orange, Red
Time	Noon, Summer

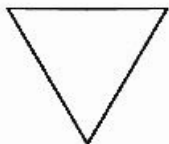
Direction	South
Gender	Male
Sense	Sight
Tools	Athame
Instruments	Rattles, Sistrums
Crystals	Amber, Calcite (Orange), Garnet, Heliotrope, Obsidian, Ruby, Spinel, Topaz
Scents	Basil, Cinnamon, Frankincense, Ginger, Hyssop, Juniper, Rosemary
Elementals	Salamanders
Elemental Ruler	Djin
Archangel	Michael
Planets	Mars, Sun
Zodiacal Signs	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
Positive Qualities	Courage, Creativity, Drive, Energy, Freedom, Light, Motivation, Passion, Power,

Purification, Success,
Transformation, Will

Anger, Cruelty, Egotism,
Fear, Possessiveness,
Vengeance, Violence

Negative
Qualities

Water – To Dare



Life began in the waters. Water is vital for life, and like fire it can be both nurturing and destructive. In nature Water is all around us as rain, rivers, lakes and oceans, covering much of our planet, and making up the bulk of our bodies. The seas move in tides, and this reflects our lives, which ebb and flow like those tides.

The magickal axiom of Water is *To Dare*, which we must do if we are to control our emotions and not let them run away with us, like a

tidal wave. We must also dare to push the boundaries of our learning and our experience, another important step on any magickal path.

Water can represent both serenity, like the still surface of a lake, or sexual energy and love, which can be as changeable as the sea.

Like Air, Water transports things, and this is reflected in the associated sense of taste, which tells us whether we want to eat or drink something. The dreamlike quality of Sun or Moon light sparkling on water also indicates another watery association, that of dreams. Our dreams are messages from the depths of our unconscious, rising to the surface of our consciousness like a whale from the deeps. The sea is known as '*inner space*', emphasizing the link between watery depths and the unconscious mind.

Our emotions also ebb and flow like the tides of the sea, and can be as serene as a calm lake or as wild and overwhelming as a tsunami. Water can be nurturing, the '*waters of life*', or it can represent death, the journey beyond the physical

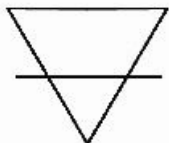
into the unknown, which has always been represented as a journey over water. Because of this it can also represent rebirth, and the compassion that comes from accepting inevitable change and encompassing it.

Water is unique in that it can be solid (ice), liquid or gaseous (water vapour and steam). Its ability to change state reflects its quality of transformation, and adaptability to the appropriate condition, hence the saying of '*water always finds it level*'. In Autumn we encounter the elemental tide of water, in the rains that fall, and the sense of change that fills the air around us, as the tide of the year begins to ebb.

Colours	Blue
Time	Dusk, Autumn
Direction	West
Gender	Female
Sense	Taste
Tools	Chalice

Instruments	Rain Pipes
Crystals	Amethyst, Aquamarine, Beryl, Coral, Kyanite, Moonstone, Pearl, Prase, Quartz, Tourmaline
Scents	Camphor, Eucalyptus, Geranium, Jasmine, Lotus, Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang
Elementals	Undines
Elemental Ruler	Niksa
Archangel	Gabriel
Planets	Moon, Neptune
Zodiacal Signs	Cancer, Pisces, Scorpio
Positive Qualities	Compassion, Death, Dreams, Emotions, Empathy, Intuition, Nurturing, Rebirth, Serenity, Sexuality, Sympathy, Trust
Negative Qualities	Deceit, Hatred, Jealousy, Sorrow, Spite, Treachery

Earth – To Keep Silent



Earth gives us the solidity of the physical which we inhabit. Earth is the most solid of the elements, and hence has associated qualities like endurance, patience, tolerance and steadfastness. Earth is also associated with sensuality, reflected in the pleasures of physical activity.

The sense of touch is associated with earth, we say we are '*in touch*' with someone when we keep a link between us. The magickal axiom of earth is *To Be Silent*, and this describes the enduring stillness of earth, which can be felt when you go and stand on a mountain or even in a field, and which is reflected in the inner silence of meditation and contemplation.

The silence of Earth reflects its non-judgmental

nature, but its very selflessness encourages us to be the same, to be responsible in our actions, to try and make our world something of beauty, and leave it better than we found it. The silence of a winter's day, when the world is blanketed with snow, when even water has been given the solidity of earth as ice and snow, emphasises the elemental tide of earth at its peak.

Earth is a nurturing element, providing the food we eat, and making up the materials used to build houses, and indeed being the ground beneath our feet. Earth teaches us that through dedication, patience and toil, all things are possible.

Earth also emphasises selflessness and responsibility. To live in a pleasant physical environment we must act responsibly and in community with others, being heard when we speak out for our environment, knowing when not to keep silent as well.

Earth is the most solid and physical of the elements. Earth gives us form, and we walk and live on the earth beneath us. It gives us the strength

and endurance of physicality. Through the physicality of earth we eat, we work, we make love, and we give birth. Earth is the nurturer, the womb and the tomb, patiently and steadfastly supporting us whatever we do.

Earth is nature as well as nurture, and all we do impacts on the people we are and the environment we live in. Earth is the element that is most often taken for granted, yet it is our home, supplying all our needs.

Colours	Brown, Green
Time	Midnight, Winter
Direction	North
Gender	Female
Sense	Touch
Tools	Pentacle
Instruments	Drums, Percussion
	Instruments
	Amber, Aventurine,

Crystals	Chrysocolla, Emerald, Fluorite, Jadeite, Jet, Magnetite, Malachite, Nephrite, Onyx, Smoky Quartz, Staurolite, Zoisite
Scents	Cedar, Myrrh, Patchouli, Pine, Vetivert
Elementals	Gnomes
Elemental Ruler	Ghob
Archangel	Uriel
Planets	Pluto, Saturn, Venus
Zodiacal Signs	Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo
Positive Qualities	Endurance, Humility, Patience, Responsibility, Selflessness, Sensuality, Steadfastness, Stillness, Strength, Tolerance
Negative	Attention-Seeking, Depression, Domineering,

Qualities

Greed, Inertia, Laziness,
Melancholy, Stubbornness

Spirit – To Go or Become



Spirit is the most intangible of the elements, existing when the other four elements are in balance. Spirit represents the creative essence of growth and reproduction that permeates all life. It is the divine spark or soul that resides in all of us and joins us together. The web of existence unites all life in the element of spirit. Spirit gives us the impetus to grow, to transcend our limits and realise our own potential, to discover our talents and use them.

Spirit is also connected with the psychic senses, which are a way of receiving the subtle energies which flow through the web of existence between us all. The more '*spiritual*' a person becomes, the more in tune with their environment they become.

The magickal axiom of Spirit is *To Go* or *To Become*, indicating the sense of evolutionary movement connected with Spirit. The going refers to the magickal journey of self-discovery, not purely physical movement. After all you can become more aware through sitting and quietly meditating.

Colours	Black, Purple, White
Time	Outside of Time
Sense	Hearing
Tools	Bell, Cauldron, Sword
Instruments	Voice
Crystals	Amethyst, Diamond, Kunzite, Jadeite, Labradorite, Opal, Pearl, Sapphire, Tourmaline, Zircon
Scents	Frankincense, Lotus
Archangel	Metatron
Positive	Evolution, Harmony, Life Force, Sixth Sense,

Qualities

Transcendence,
Transformation

Negative

Qualities

None

4. The Goddess

For lo. I am the womb of the Earth
and the soul of the trees

I am the cauldron of primal waters

Where dreams are created.

In my heart may you feel my rapture

And as my soul may you fly like eagles,

Across the winds of the time and space.

For I am all that has ever been

And all that will be.

I am the bridge of the heavens.

The rainbow in the womb

I am the joy in the silver stars

that shine in the night sky

Aum.

This is the end.

And this is the beginning.

Wiccans share a belief in both a Goddess and God, a feminine and masculine divine. This belief is rooted in the beliefs of ancient cultures, where there were many female as well as male deities. In Wicca, the Goddess and God are celebrated at each of the seasonal festivals and are called upon in rites of devotion and magick throughout the year.

In some Wiccan traditions, a specific Goddess and God are chosen as the tutelary deities and a Coven or individual may work with just those deities. Popular deities amongst Wiccans include the Goddesses Aradia, Diana, Artemis, Hekate, The Morrigan, Ceridwen, Arianrhod, Bride and the Gods Cernunnos, Pan, Hades, Gwyn Ap Nudd, Hermes, Herne, and Apollo.

In some instances, a person or group may work with Goddesses and Gods other than their tutelary deities, or they may work with a specific pantheon only. Some refer to these deities as '*Lord and Lady*' or simply as '*Goddess and God*' rather than naming them. In some traditions the names are

considered oathbound, like they were in the ancient temple traditions of Egypt, Greece and Rome.

The divine feminine is seen as being omnipresent and immortal, and in Wicca she is often seen as primarily associated with the Moon, but also with the Stars, the Earth and the Underworld. She is viewed as the Creatrix who gave birth to the God, and then joined with him in sacred union to create the universe and life within it. This is seen in the phrase from Crowley's *Liber Al*, "*I am ever divided for love's sake, for the chance of union.*"

Stellar aspects like the Celtic Arianrhod, Egyptian Nuit and Greek Nox are representative of the Goddess as the totality of all life, containing all within her body. As the Lunar Goddess, in aspects like the Greek Artemis and Selene and Roman Diana, she represents the changing ebbs and flows of life, symbolised by the phases of the Moon.

As the Earth Goddess, like the Greek Gaia and Demeter, Roman Ceres and Celtic Ceridwen, she represents the fertility of nature and the Earth. As

the Underworld Goddess, like the Greek Persephone and Hekate, and the Sumerian Ereshkigal, she represents the transformation of death and rebirth, like a seed rising anew from the ground.

As the transcendental Goddess, like the Hebrew Shekinah, Gnostic Sophia and Egyptian Maat, she represents divine truth, balance and wisdom, and unites the concept of the omnipresent goddess with the divine spark in each of us.

Connection to the divine is an important part of Wiccan practice. It reminds us that we are striving for perfection in ourselves and all we do. By working with the Goddess and God we aim to improve the qualities in ourselves which they exemplify, as the ancient magickians did under the name of Theurgy.

5. Horned God

I am horn and I am stone
I am blood and I am bone
Blazing with power I rise and I fall
All of nature responds to my call
I lead the dance and quicken the land
Wild magick in my hand
I am the lord of all that is free
I am the lightning and I am the tree

The God is often seen in three main aspects in Wicca – as the Horned God of the Wildwood, the Sun King, and the Dread Lord of Shadows. The God is the consort of the Goddess, her lover and son who dies and is reborn through her love on a yearly basis as experienced through the changing seasons of nature.

The God is seen by some people as being less important than the Goddess. However it is important to remember that Wicca is about

balance, and this includes the polarity and balance of energies between Goddess & God, Feminine & Masculine.

The God in his aspects emphasises the positive masculine qualities, and can help people overcome negative stereotypes of the masculine and masculine divine that they may bring with them from previous religious and social conditioning or bad experiences.

As the Horned God, he represents the wildness of nature, the fertilising power of conscious action. Gods like the Celtic Cernunnos, Herne and Gwyn Ap Nudd, and the Greek Pan, embody this aspect.

As the Sun God, like the Greek Helios and Apollo, the Roman Sol and Celtic Belenus, he represents the illuminating and life-giving rays of the sun.

The Dread Lord of Shadows, God of Death and Resurrection, is the comforter and transformer who guides the soul through the stages of change. He is represented by Gods like the Greek Hades,

Egyptian Osiris, and Celtic Gwyn Ap Nudd.

The Sun God and the Dread Lord of Shadows are sometimes viewed as ruling over the light and dark halves of the year and fighting twice to gain dominance of the year and be the consort of the goddess for that part of the year.

Practitioners hold individual views on the nature of the Goddess and God, as there is no one prescribed view. Wiccans may be polytheistic, duotheistic, henotheistic, animistic, pantheistic – or even a combination of the aforementioned. As Wicca does not force a theological viewpoint on its practitioners, we are free to view the divine in the way that we best understand them, and be open to change if we have new insights and inspiration.

6. The Old Ones

Hail Old Ones,
Ancient Ones of Time and Space
You who were before the first breath
You who will be after the last ember
Hail indwelling spirits of tree and rock and
lake
Hail dryads, nymphs and guardians of sacred
sites
Hail spirits of my ancestors,
You who have walked these paths before our
first breath
And whose wisdom flows in our veins
We are you and you live in us
Hail to thee!

The Old Ones, sometimes called the '*Timeless Ones*' or '*Forgotten Ones*', are an integral part of the web of forces that permeate nature. The term Old Ones is used to collectively describe a whole

range of beings. It includes our ancestors, genius loci ('*spirits of places* ') or site guardians, and indwelling nature spirits such as dryads and hamadryads (from trees) as well as nymphs (from pools and rivers).

The practice of working with the Old Ones originates with traditional forms of witchcraft, but many Wiccans have also incorporated it into their rituals. The Old Ones can be seen as representing the wild and free aspect of Wicca, the pleasure of the dance under the silver Moon, connecting us to the land and our ancestors, who have gone before us.

The Old Ones can serve as a gateway into the more subtle aspects of nature, helping you to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the wilderness. The Old Ones bring with them a sense of freedom and creativity that can fill the circle like a spring breeze fresh with the scent of May blossoms. They inspire poetry, music and dance, and help you to break free of your social self and be part of the natural world, flowing with the tides

and the breezes of the earth, sea and sky.

To really appreciate the Old Ones and the wide range of forces they embody, you should try working with them at an assortment of diverse sites that include a variety of environments, such as woodlands, lakes, mountains, seashore, stone circles or burial chambers, etc. You can even make them the focus of your ritual and perform workings with just the Old Ones without calling on deities.

7. Wiccan Ritual

Wiccan ritual as we know it today originated from rituals which were popularized and added to by Gerald B. Gardner during the late 1940's and the 1950's, with the help of priestesses such as Doreen Valiente. The result of his work, and that of other people who followed during the 1960's and 1970's, such as Alex & Maxine Sanders, is the structure we have today for working ritual which is used by covens, individuals and many other neo-pagan groups the world over. In addition to its use within Wiccan covens and traditions, we have seen it used by Egyptian revivalists groups, feminist groups, *Fellowship of Isis* Lyceums, Druids and even Chaos magickians!

Ritual has been called the technology of the sacred and just like other technologies constantly changes to adapt to its circumstances, so the rituals within traditions have been undergoing constant evolution with each individual or group who

practiced them. Today there are very few groups who adhere strictly to the rituals as presented by Gerald Gardner to his own covens, instead each individual adds to and changes the rituals to suit their own personal needs.

For this very reason no two covens are ever exactly alike and even within the same tradition there can be many significant differences. The personalities, energies and interests of the individuals within a group will ensure that no two rituals are the same, even if two groups perform exactly the same ritual.

Whenever you are working magick, you need to understand what you are doing and why you are doing it, and pay attention to what works and what doesn't work for you. In this way you can ensure that you are spiralling upwards, rather than diminishing what is a really great system already.

Once you understand the symbolism and techniques, it becomes easy to adapt rituals to suit your own needs and tastes. But to come to that understanding, you will first need to learn and

practice the rituals, a process which may take some time. Unless you understand the symbolism and purpose of each ritual component, you are not qualified to decide that any part of a ritual is obsolete or unnecessary. Doing so would be like driving a car with two flat tyres – it might move and it might even continue to do so for a while – but it is certainly not desirable! Of course there are ritual components which can be adapted, changed, omitted, added to and more, but first make sure that you understand the reasons for it being there in the first place, before doing so.

When you are first starting out, do things the tried and tested way, this may be the way you are taught by a teacher or a group, or what you learn from books. Consider carefully the symbolism and purpose of each small detail of the ritual, and make sure that you understand it. Once you reach that point, it should be easy to adapt it to your own likes and needs, and to indeed write wholly individual, creative, inspiring and unique rituals.

In our own covens we often perform freeform

work with great success, but each and every member of the Coven is first taught the traditional forms of the rituals and expected to be fluent in them.

By taking this approach, you can decide what suits you best – as you have experienced more than one way of practicing the different ritual components. Additionally you can adapt and write your own original rituals with a thorough understanding and experience of magickal symbolism, rather than writing rituals which are empty forms which seem to be impressive, with words and symbolism which are meaningless!

Wiccan ritual consists of a basic structure. There is a formal opening, a formal closing and certain activities which are performed at nearly every ritual. Within that structure there is scope for a lot of freedom and creative expression, both for groups and individuals.

Wiccan ritual is in no way dogmatic, nor is it a liturgy. However it does follow a set pattern of working, which is what defines it as being Wiccan

ritual, rather than that of a different tradition. There are no restrictions on how you should and should not perform your rituals - the only limitations are your own understanding, knowledge and personal creative interpretation of the rituals, their purpose and their symbolism.

Ritual Structure Outline:

Preparation of the ritual space

Preparation and purification of the participants

Purification of the ritual space

Casting the magick circle

Invocation of the Guardians of the Watchtowers

Invocation of the Goddess

Invocation of the God

Magickal workings –divination, healing, spells
etc.

Cakes & Wine

Rite of departure for the God

Rite of departure for the Goddess

Dismissing the Guardians of the Watchtowers

Opening the Circle

Wicca was designed as a ritual tradition – i.e. through the practice of certain rituals we achieve mystical states and they can trigger direct experiences of the Divine. All the tools, symbols, actions, words and thoughts that you use in ritual have a purpose. That purpose is to focus your will to precisely and effectively direct your intent towards achieving the aim of the ritual.

The ritual structure may at first seem restrictive and formulaic, but it is exactly the opposite. By using the same method for creating sacred space at each of our ceremonies, we build on our experience and knowledge of the ritual and symbolism used, as we gain in experience. Furthermore, it places the focus back on the content of the ritual, rather than the creation of the sacred space itself, which allows us to spend more time and energy on our relationship with deity, learning and experience and results.

Another benefit to using the same ritual formulae is that with frequent use by numbers of

people over time they gain an inherent power, like a dynamo which is charged by use, storing the energy like a battery for people to tap into. By working in an existing magickal current like the Wiccan tradition you are following a well-trodden path, making it easier to follow that path, though it is still essential to look where you are going and be careful of your footing.

It is for this reason that it is very important that the first step in preparing for your ritual is to clarify what the purpose of your ritual is. Ritual is a very powerful experience, as it helps restore a sense of the sacred, and acts as a gateway between the physical mundane world we live our lives in, and the subtle unseen worlds of the Gods and spiritual beings. So when you have the powerful experience that ritual can generate, it helps greatly if you have a clear focus.

There is no point in expending energy in a ritual that you perform just for the sake of it. Consider what you are trying to achieve – will it be a celebrational ritual to mark the changing seasons, a

devotional ritual, or a spell for a specific result or are you performing this ritual with the intent of performing a divination? Or indeed a combination of more than one of these components?

Having a clear intent for each ritual you perform will help you gain deeper insights and give you a feeling of accomplishment once you have achieved the goals you have set for yourself.

It is important to be precise in your wording of a ritual, as well as the symbolism that you include. Precision does not necessarily mean that you need to say everything word perfect, it does however mean that you need to know what it is that you say and that there are no ambiguities. The Gods tend to have a sense of humour when it comes to these things and the saying *“be careful what you wish for, you may just get it”* is a common phrase amongst Witches, especially those who have experienced it first hand! The same is true for symbolism, try and make sure that you are not confusing the goals you set yourself, by using inappropriate correspondences!

The magick that you do, be it a spell or otherwise, will put forces of change into motion, changes which will affect you. Make sure that you are both willing and able to accept those changes and the effects that they will bring and make sure that you consider all possible outcomes before you perform your magick. You may desire certain changes to your life, but make sure that you are ready for those changes when they happen!

8. Ritual Tools

There are many tools which may be used in Wiccan ritual. The most frequently used of the standard tools are those which correspond to the elements. These are the athame (fire), wand (air), chalice (water) and pentacle (earth). Additionally the other standard tools are the censer (air), scourge (fire), cords, bailine (air) and sword (spirit).

Tools are used to focus the energies of a ritual in a particular way, appropriate to that moment in the ritual. Hence the sword, athame or wand, which are directing tools, are used for casting the circle, whereas the pentacle, which is a receiving tool, is used as the basis for consecrations, and the chalice, another receiving tool, to hold the wine.

As well as being functional, tools are also symbolic and understanding their symbolism can make your rituals richer and more rewarding. Not understanding the symbolism of a tool may lead to

you misinterpreting the rituals and not understanding the rituals that you work.

One way to appreciate the symbolism of your tools is to meditate on them before using them. This also has the added benefit of attuning you to each of your tools, making them feel like familiar friends, or even extensions of yourself. You should meditate on each tool in turn, so that you have done this for all of them.

Hold the tool in your hand, and contemplate it. Consider its shape, what it is made of, what you will use it for, and what it symbolises. Close your eyes and spend time just feeling the energy of the tool. What impressions do you get from it? How do you feel holding it? Do this as many times as you wish until you feel you have a clear grasp of the tool's nature, and feel strongly attuned to it.

We will consider the use and symbolism of each of the ritual tools in turn, to clarify their significance.

Element	Fire
Symbolism	The ‘true will’ of the owner, phallic, personal power
Ritual	Consecrations, casting a
Uses	circle, directing energy

The traditional athame is a black handled dagger, usually with a double-edged blade, sometimes referred to as the black handled knife. The athame is often described as ‘*the real witch’s weapon*’, which is a good description as it represents the personal power of the individual, the power of the mind, the focus and discrimination. The term ‘*weapon*’ is used here to indicate its function in creating the protective circle and drawing the pentagrams at the four cardinal points to further aid in the protection and empowerment of the magick circle.

The athame is generally taken to represent the element of Fire, although some traditions ascribe it to the element of Air instead. The argument for the athame being attributed to fire is that it has a steel

blade, which is forged in fire, and it represents the will of the individual, which is also associated with the element of fire.

The athame represents the will of the individual witch who wields it (remember the magickal axiom of Fire is *To Will*), and for this reason, unlike any other magickal tool, there will be an athame in the magick circle for each witch present. In ritual the athame is an active weapon to be wielded. It is often used for casting the circle, especially in circumstances where you do not have the space or where it is not practical to wield a sword, or when working solitary.

The athame is also used for consecrations. It is most often used to consecrate the salt and water for purifying the space, as well as the cakes and wine at the end of the ceremony.

The athame represents the male principle during the symbolic Great Rite when the wine is consecrated by the Priest and Priestess. The athame is never used to cut anything, and should never be used to draw blood. This is because the

athame can be seen as an extension of the will of the wielder, and you are using an athame to direct energy, not to cause harm. This does not mean that the athame should be blunted though, as some books suggest. By blunting your athame you are symbolically blunting your will, which is not a good idea.

A number of possible sources have been suggested for the name athame, which is probably derived from the grimoires. Whatever the source, what is certain is that the athame is a black-handled knife, and these have a long history of use in making magick circles which dates back at least a thousand years.

The White Handled Knife

Element	Air
Symbolism	Practice
Ritual	Crafting tools, marking or
Uses	etching sigils, cutting within the magick circle

The white-handled knife is a functional tool, and should be a practical knife that you can cut and etch with. The white-handled knife, like the wand, is considered to represent the element of Air. As with the athame, the use of the white-handled knife also stems from the *Key of Solomon*, a fact acknowledged by Gerald Gardner in his book, *High Magic's Aid*:

“Thur recited anew those same Psalms of David, then, throwing the herbs on the brazier, he waited until the clouds of incense ascended, and took up an engraver’s awl. He purified it on the live coals and, with the white-handled knife, whose office was that of a tool as distinct from that of the Athame used by the witch to control spirits and work magic, he carved on the handle of the awl, which was to become the Burin, these characters.”[\[1\]](#)

The white-handled knife is used within the circle to etch or carve sigils and symbols into items such as candles or wands. It is also used to

carve wands and help with the making of other tools. Another practical use of the white-handled knife is to cut food.

The Sword

Element	Spirit
Symbolism	The true will of the owner, or if used in a Coven, the will and goals of the group as a whole.
Ritual	Casting a circle.
Uses	Consecrations. Directing energy.

The sword can also represent the will of the wielder and is used to direct and command energy. During a Wiccan ceremony there will usually only be one sword in the circle, wielded by either the High Priest or High Priestess. When used within a coven ritual it represents the combined will and goals of the group. The sword is used to cast the circle and to direct power.

The sword symbolises Spirit, as the active will

of the wielder or group. Some people attribute it to fire because of the forging process, but this ignores the difference in scale between the sword and the other elemental tools, and also the association of the sword with nobility and authority. The sword was the standard weapon borne by the angels and archangels, sometimes in conjunction with a pair of scales to show balance and divine justice.

The Wand

Element	Air (sometimes Fire, due to Tarot attribution)
Symbolism	Phallic. Masculine energy. Life-force.
Ritual	Invocations and Banishings.
Uses	Consecrations. Directing energy.

The wand is used to direct energy in a similar manner to the athame. The wand is representative of the element of Air (some people use it for the

element of fire due to the attribution in the Tarot), representing the life-force and healing (hence the caduceus). Wands come in many shapes and sizes.

It is traditional for a witch to make their own wand from the wood of a fruit bearing tree. This is traditionally hazel, representing wisdom and the Moon, although it can be interesting to work with wands made from different woods, corresponding to different elements and energies.

So for instance a wand made from willow could be used to represent watery and healing energies, or a wand made from oak to represent the element of earth and strength, etc. Wands can also be made from crystal or metal and can be engraved or otherwise decorated with symbols and sigils appropriate to the intended use. Instructions are given regarding wands in the *Key of Solomon*:

“...the Wand of hazel or nut tree, in all cases the wood being virgin, that is of one year's growth only. They should each be cut from the tree at a single stroke, on the day of Mercury, at Sunrise.”

The wand can be used for any purpose that the athame is used for, such as casting the circle, drawing invoking and banishing pentagrams, consecrating salt and water or cakes and wine.

The Chalice

Element	Water
Symbolism	The Divine Feminine. The Womb of the Mother Goddess.
Ritual	To hold the wine, which is
Uses	used as a Eucharistic sacrament, as well as during initiations.

The chalice is used to hold the wine during ritual. Chalices come in many sizes and designs, using a silver one is particularly appropriate if you work with the Moon and is as such the popular choice for Wiccans today.

The chalice represents the element of Water. It is also symbolic of the womb of the Mother Goddess and as such of the receptive feminine principle. The use of cups to hold libations to the

Gods is very ancient, the Egyptians, Greek and Romans all used them for this purpose.

The chalice has one main function, which is to hold the drink for the end of the ceremony. It can be used to pour libations as well as to drink from. It can also be used to hold water for ceremonies in which there is an emphasis on the four elements.

The Pentacle

Element	Earth
Symbolism	Solidity. Endurance. Steadfastness.
Ritual	The material basis for
Uses	consecrations.

The pentacle is one of the most important tools in Wicca, and is seldom used to its full potential. As the symbol of earth and the base for consecrations, the pentacle can be seen as a mini-altar.

Confusion in terminology has resulted in a number of books referring to the pentagram as the pentacle. This is not the case – a pentagram is a

five-pointed star, and a pentacle is a ritual tool. Leading to further confusion is the fact that a pentacle may have the symbol of the pentagram engraved or painted on it.

The pentacle is symbolic of the solidity and endurance of earth and represents the element of Earth in ritual. Traditionally it is inscribed with a pentagram and symbols particular to the tradition it is being used in; when working solitary you can decide on the design yourself.

Some groups use a design with a pentagram representing man (the microcosm) on the front and a hexagram, representing the universe (the macrocosm) on the reverse. This also emphasises the primary magickal axiom '*As Above, So Below*', which refers to the interconnectedness of all life. The pentacle is usually made from wood, wax or copper, although you can also use a flat stone, crystal or clay, or any other natural material.

The use of pentacles in Wicca was most probably inspired by the pentacles which were made for a variety of reasons by medieval

magickians.

The pentacle is the object on which consecrations are performed for ritual tools and spell ingredients. It is often used as the base for the platter of cakes or bread which is blessed during the ceremony of cakes and wine. The pentacle is also used for wealth spells as it represents the fecundity of the element of earth (think of coins and you get the idea).

The Cords

Element	-
Symbolism	Varies
Ritual	Circle marking. Spellwork.
Uses	Binding.

The cords have a number of uses and symbolisms attached to them. Many Wiccans choose to work with three cords in colours which are symbolic of the principles of life, death and rebirth. Others use cords to represent the different elemental or planetary energies, or of course

choose a cord to represent the intent of their spell or ritual.

The use of cord and knot magick was common amongst the magickal practitioners of Ancient Greece and Egypt. Knotted red threads were frequently used in magick.

The cords are used in Wiccan ceremony for binding (being '*properly prepared*' in a Witches circle). Additionally they are also used for cord magick, spells and to mark the magick circle with. Wiccans again seem to have borrowed the marking of the circle with a cord from the *Key of Solomon* in which the magickian is instructed:

“then take a cord of nine feet in length, fasten one end thereof unto the Sickle and with the other end trace out the circumference of the Circle, which may be marked either with the Sword or with the Knife with the Black hilt.”

They may also be worn around your robe or waist during ritual. The three cords are sometimes

plaited together to make a cingulum which is worn around the waist during ceremonies and can be useful to hang your athame or other objects from.

Wiccan groups often work with three colours, representing energies that are special to them. This varies between groups – the alchemical colours – white, red and green are quite common, though blue or black in place of green are also common. The three cords can represent many things, such as life, death and rebirth, the Triple Goddess, or the Goddess and Horned God with the Child of Promise.

The Censer

Element	Air
Symbolism	Air, Intellect
Ritual	To burn incense in for
Uses	purification, as offerings, devotion, focus.

The stimulatory properties of smell in ritual should not be ignored, as smell is one of the

strongest prompts to the unconscious available. The censer to hold the stimulating incense can be an ornate object designed for the purpose, or as simple as a fireproof dish filled with some clean earth.

The censer represents the element of Air. The use of incense is probably as old as mankind itself. We know that it was very popular amongst the ancient Egyptians, who used it to mark the journey of the Sun God Re through the day.

The censer holds the incense and enables you to purify a space with incense. Sweet smelling incense is considered to generate a positive atmosphere pleasing to the Gods and spirits, and also purifies the environment you work in. If you are working indoors, using incense helps your mind make the distinction that you are travelling from the mundane to the magickal.

Incense can be used for a wide range of purposes, including focusing the mind, as an act of devotion (using fragrances sacred to specific deities), and for its healing and relaxing effects. It

also makes a good medium for skrying in and on a practical level can keep distracting insects away when you are outdoors (it was used for this in ancient Egypt).

Please see Appendix E for instructions on how to burn incense in a censer on a charcoal block.

The Scourge

Element	Fire
Symbolism	Dominion, Power
Ritual	For purification, initiation
Uses	ceremonies, spells, Drawing Down.

The scourge is a symbol of dominion and power, which is used more often in group ceremonies than in solitary practice.

The scourge used in Wicca traditionally has eight strands with five knots in each. The eight strands can be said to represent the eight festivals of the Wheel of the Year, as well as the other eight main tools. Five is the number of points on the

pentagram, representing the four elements plus spirit. Combining these numbers gives forty knots, a significant number during initiation.

The scourge is held by the High Priestess during Drawing Down the Moon, and represents the Qabalistic Pillar of Severity which is feminine, as opposed to the Pillar of Mercy (represented by the wand), which is masculine.

It is also used, in some traditions, during the initiation ceremony as a symbolic representation of “*art thou willing to suffer to learn*” which is a phrase central to all who follow Wicca as their chosen path. This certainly doesn’t mean that we have to all go through life in pain, but instead it warns that to follow a magickal path is not easy or a soft option. It will come with obstacles, your ideals and beliefs will be challenged, you will have to remain open minded at all times and be able to accept the changes that the practice of magick will bring to you.

PREPARATION

9. Planning Your Ritual

Purpose

The purpose of your ritual is what defines it. Being clear in your intent is vital, so take your time in defining and refining the intent of your ritual, making sure you are working for the exact result you desire.

Timing

The timing of your ritual is an important consideration. By choosing your time wisely you can enhance the energies you draw on to power your spells, and make the ritual as harmonious and therefore effective as possible. Details of the different cycles you can use, lunar, solar, planetary and elemental, are given in the appendices with explanations of their respective benefits.

Ritual Space

Making every step of the preparation a sacred

act will help prepare you for the ritual and enhance your rituals greatly. The preparation should never be a chore, it should be a pleasure!

After you have decided to do a ritual and why you want to do it, you will need to decide where you will go to perform your ritual.

Indoors is the practical option for many of us who live in cities as it provides more privacy and security than working in most city parks. There are of course exceptions and if you spend some time getting to know your local area you may find an outdoor space which is suitable.

Private indoor spaces are convenient for spells, but you may want to work outside for rituals in which you celebrate the changing seasons. There might be a place you can go to which is sacred to the deity you will be working with, or it may be appropriate for you to be near water, on a hill, or even under a specific type of tree.

Indoors or outdoors, near or far from home, you will need to spend time preparing the physical space before the start of your work. Indoors

preparation includes dusting, vacuuming and general tidying, prior to starting the process of setting up for your ritual. A clean and tidy space will also help remove additional distractions which may interfere with your concentration. If you decide to work outdoors, you should spend some time at the site prior to your ritual in meditation to contact the spirits of the place and obtain their permission to work there. This is an important step, as nature spirits can often cause havoc if they feel that their space is being invaded by unwelcome guests.

We have found that nature spirits appreciate offerings, such as fruits, nuts, milk and honey. It is also a good idea to spend some time clearing the space of any litter and other debris – you should aim to leave a site in as good or in a better condition than you found it. These simple considerations demonstrate your respect to the spirits of the place you are working at.

Whether you are indoors or outdoors, remember that devices like phones should be

switched off to avoid any awkward or distracting moments during rituals. Indoors it is also a good idea to switch off any electrical devices you may have in the room if it is not a dedicated temple, like televisions and computers, to avoid any unexpected reactions to the energy you raise.

Remember that you will be welcoming spiritual beings such as Goddesses and Gods into your circle, and you should thus prepare the space and yourself appropriately.

Having decided on the purpose of your ritual, the timing and location, you need to get down to the basics of creating your ritual structure. Try sitting down with a pen and paper to write down ideas and thoughts to the following considerations:

Techniques

This is a crucial consideration. If you are performing a spell, what type of spell will work best? Should you do a candle spell, and if so should it be a single spell, or a multi-day spell that

you do over a period of time? Perhaps a cord and knot spell would be better, or an amulet or talisman.

Having decided on the focus for your spell, you then need to decide what techniques you will use to energise the spell. This is largely down to personal preference as to what works best for you and what suits your environment. You may like prolonged periods of chanting to raise energy, or dancing around forming a cone of power, or simply concentrating your intent silently, or another technique. Or you may decide to use more than one technique to generate the energy that will power your spell.

Deities

In Wicca we call upon both the Goddess and God in our ceremonies, some traditions always work with the same Goddess and God, whereas others are more eclectic and work with a variety of deities. If you are working as a solitary you can try working with a variety of deities, by doing this

you will eventually find what works for you. If you are working with a Goddess or God for the first time, make sure to do some research to find out as much as you can about them prior to the ceremony. This will help you attune to their energies, to prepare your invocations and of course it is a good way of learning more about the world pantheons. Having decided on which deities to work with, you can include symbolic representations of them on your altar, and prepare appropriate offerings.

What you will need

It's a good idea to make a check list of everything you will need for a specific ritual in advance. This is even more important if you are working outdoors or away from home, as it will avoid a last minute panic when you realise you forgot something which may be integral to your ritual.

Some items may have to be specially prepared or made in advance. If you have a creative streak

you may want to, for instance, make your own incense, candles, robes, altar cloths or other altar decorations.

A typical check list may include:

The ritual tools you will use – such as:
a wand, athame and/or sword
white handled knife
pentacle
chalice

In addition you may need:

Wine & Cakes for the sacrament, with a platter on which to place it
Bowls with appropriate salt and water for the purification of the ritual space
Incense and charcoal blocks (or alternatives)
Matches or lighter for lighting the charcoal and candles
Appropriate anointing oil (if used)

Candles - for light, as representations of the deities and for spell work (as appropriate)

Clean robe (if working robed) and cords

Your magickal journal and a pen, for recording the ceremony and results

Ingredients for any other workings, such as spells or devotions.

Outdoors you may also need:

A cloak if it is cold

a working torch with batteries

good walking boots

waterproof clothes

a map (if you are unfamiliar with the area)

a charged mobile phone (in case of emergencies)

If you are taking a bottle of wine, make sure that you have packed the corkscrew, and remember to prepare some food and drink to feast with after your ritual, preparing it all in advance will give

you more time for contemplation after your ritual. Also if you prepare food beforehand you can minimise the packing materials you need to take along with you.

Altar Preparation

The altar is the working space you create for your ritual, on which you will place all your tools and ingredients your ritual requires. The altar also acts as a focal point for the ceremony.

It can be a table, a box, a flat stone or piece of wood, in fact any flat raised structure will do. When deciding on the size keep in mind that all your working tools and symbols, as well as cakes & wine, will be kept on the altar for the duration of the ceremony.

All items on an altar are usually packed away after the ceremony, unless you are lucky enough to have a permanent ritual space which is dedicated as a temple. Packing away everything avoids unnecessary curiosity from friends and family and keeps things nice and tidy too! Remember, that an

altar is a working table.

In Wicca, the altar is usually placed in the North, which is considered to be the place of mystery, although some traditions do place the altar in the East as it is the place of the rising Sun and of new beginnings. Solitaries can choose which they prefer, and might even want to alternate between North and East depending on the purpose of their ceremony. Another practice, which although rare, is used sometimes is that of putting the altar in the centre of the circle. This is practical if you are working in a large space, and is often used in larger group situations.

If you decide to do work with a particular element or something which likewise is attributed to a specific direction, you could place your altar in the corresponding part of the circle.

Some Practical Tips

You should place everything you will need for your ceremony on your altar and it is useful to make a checklist as part of your planning to ensure

that nothing is forgotten.

The tools should generally be placed according to their elemental correspondences. So for instance, the pentacle should be placed on the northern side of the altar (element of Earth), the Chalice on the West (element of Water), the athame on the South side of the altar (element of Fire), the wand and censer on the East side of the altar (element of Air).

It is important to keep the altar practical, so you should place the tools you are likely to use more often during your ceremony, such as your wand or athame, near the front, keep them facing towards their respective elemental directions. All ingredients or other special tools for spells or other workings should also be placed in a convenient space, so that you will be able to reach them easily during your ceremony. It is, for instance, best to keep the salt and water bowls near the front of the altar, as this will make it easy to reach for the blessing and consecration.

The candles, one for the Goddess, one for the

God and one for Spirit, should be placed near the back of the altar. The Goddess candle should be placed on the left and the God candle on the right. The positioning of the Goddess and God candles corresponds to the black and white pillars on the Qabalistic Tree of Life, representing the Goddess and God respectively. The Spirit candle should be in the centre. Having the candles towards the back of the altar helps prevent accidents when you are reaching for items on the altar, and also allows it to illuminate your altar more effectively. If you are using statues, pictures or symbolic representations of the Goddess and God, these should be placed in proximity to their respective candles.

Your altar should if possible be decorated with items that correspond to the purpose of your ritual. You may want to use altar cloths in appropriate colours to the planetary influences you are invoking, or which are sacred to the Goddess or God you are working with, or indeed the seasonal ritual you are performing. You can also use

greenery or other images which are appropriate for your ritual. Altars can be as creative as you wish them to be, but do keep it practical! Using additional symbols, colours and images that correspond to the ritual you are performing will enhance your ritual, but too many may distract.

10. Grounding

No ritual can start or be completed without grounding. The term has a two-fold meaning:

Firstly we ground ourselves by centring our energy prior to a ritual. The best way of doing this is through the use of simple breathing and meditation techniques.

When a ritual is complete, we come to the second way in which grounding is used in Wiccan ritual – this time it is to ground the extra energy that we hold both within ourselves and the magick circle, to ensure that we are able to continue with our mundane activities and that the ritual space is left in an appropriate energy state.

It has been suggested that the ceremony of Cakes and Wine, which forms a standard part of Wiccan liturgy, is grounding, but this is not the

case, as the quantities of food consumed are generally small and serve as a Eucharist. Most covens and working groups follow a ritual with an after ritual meal, which helps participants to reconnect with mundane reality and the physical world. The more earthing the food is, the better – carbohydrate rich dishes, such as rice, pasta, bread etc are all very good choices.

You can also ground the energy by stamping your feet or touching your palms to the ground and letting the energy flow into the earth as you do so. Mundane physical activities are good for grounding, so housework tasks like washing up or ironing are ideal post-ritual forms of grounding.

Another technique that can work well for post-ritual grounding is to visualize your feet putting roots down into the earth, like a tree. Allow the excess energy to flow out through these roots into the earth, and when you feel grounded of the excess energy, visualize the roots going back into your feet.

RITUALS

11. Temple Purification

The temple space is where you will cast your circle and perform your rituals, it is a place into which you will invite the Gods and it is considered sacred in Wicca for this reason. It is also important to carefully purify the space to ensure that no unwanted energies remain. In Wiccan ritual this is done through the blessing of the salt and water on the altar and then sprinkling the space with the consecrated salt water. In Wicca salt is attributed to the element of Earth.

Water also has an important role in many religions for its cleansing properties, and it is easy to see why. Water washes away impurities and uncleanliness and can make something clean again. Water is also a key building block of life, without water there is no life.

Both the elements of Earth & Water are attributed to the feminine principle in Wicca, and on this level the symbolism of sprinkling a space

with salt water can be seen as bringing in the qualities of the Goddess in preparation for the rite.

Symbolically water is associated with the Moon, with the realms of the astral planes and the tides of the unconscious. By mixing the water with the salt (earth), you are demonstrating that you will perform magic, bringing the subtle magickal energies (represented by water) through to manifestation in the physical world (represented by salt). Water should be exorcised to render it pure and sacred, whereas the salt is usually only blessed, as it is considered to be pure already.

If you work in a group, it is usual for the High Priestess to perform the consecration of the water and the High Priest the salt. The High Priest will add the salt to the water and hand the bowl to the High Priestess, who will sprinkle the space herself, or hand the bowl to an appointed person in the Coven, in some traditions this will be the Coven maiden.

Another important point – when you sprinkle the circle, you should lustrate the entire space in

which you will be working, not just the perimeter of the circle. Sprinkle the boundaries of the circle first, then sprinkle some of the water into the centre of the circle.

Some Wiccans have also included other techniques for purifying the space borrowed from other traditions. These include censuring the space with purificatory incense or smudge sticks, shaking a rattle or beating a drum.

If you are working outdoors, it is worth keeping in mind that salt can be damaging to plant life, as such it might be more appropriate to use a purificatory herb, instead of salt when performing the purification of the space. Sage, St. John's Wort, Hyssop, Rosemary and Vervain are all good examples of herbs with purificatory properties, and several of them are seen in the Solomonic sprinkler.

In the *Key of Solomon* a sprinkler is made by bundling the following herbs, gathered in the day and hour of Mercury, whilst the Moon is waxing: vervain, fennel, lavender, sage, valerian, mint,

garden-basil, rosemary and hyssop. The herbs are tied together using a thread spun by a young maiden and various inscriptions are to be made onto the handle. This is then used to sprinkle the sacred space, tools and anything else which requires it with the blessed water.

Salt & Water Consecrations

As you are performing the consecrations, you should place each bowl in turn on the pentacle, which is used as the base for consecrations.

Place the tip of your athame in the water, visualizing gold light directed from your heart along the energy channels in the arms, through the hands and directed down the blade of the athame into the water, saying:

I exorcise thee, O creature of Water, that thou cast out from Thee all the impurities and uncleanness of the Spirits of the World of Phantasm, this I do in the holy and most potent names of our Lady and our Lord.

If you prefer this can be simplified down to something less traditional but still functional like:

I bless and consecrate this Water, that it be pure and untainted, in the names of the Goddess and the God. In love and truth, so mote it be!

Do the same with the salt, directing energy in the same way through your athame into the salt, saying:

Blessings be upon thee creature of Salt, let all malignity and hindrance be cast forth from thee, and let all good enter herein, wherefore I bless thee and invoke thee, that thou mayest aid me in the holy and most potent names of our Lady and our Lord.

Again you can use a simpler form for solitary work if you prefer, like:

I bless and consecrate this Salt, symbol of

purity and protection, in the names of the Goddess and the God. In love and truth, so mote it be!

Now add some of the salt into the water, stirring the salt into the water in three clockwise circles, visualizing the salt water glowing with pure gold light. Gold is the colour of the sun and success, a colour of purity, healing and achieving goals. By using gold in consecrations you are ensuring the purity of the item being consecrated and also that it will work to best effect.

If you are using a wand or your fingers, you will find it easier to tip a little of the salt into the water bowl rather than trying to use the end of the wand or your hands. You may also use the names of a specific Goddess or God, instead.

Once the salt water is consecrated, walk from your altar, around your space deosil from East to East, sprinkling the salt water as you go, saying:

Where this salt and water falls let all outside influences be gone. With salt and water I purify

this space in love and truth. So mote it be!

Whilst you are doing this visualise the space being filled with a purifying golden light, the manifestation of the golden light you used to consecrate the salt and water being expressed into your ritual space.

12. The Magick Circle

In Wicca we create a magick circle in which we perform our rituals and devotions. The circle separates us from the mundane world so that we are transported to a '*world between the worlds*' ready to perform our magickal and devotional work. The magick circle is our working space for the duration of our rituals.

Once cast, it serves the twofold purpose of keeping us safe from that which we do not invite into the space as well as acting as a vessel to concentrate the energies we raise within it so that we may direct them with more ease towards our desired goals. It acts as a sacred space in which rituals may be performed.

In Wicca it is traditional to use the sword or athame to cast the circle, or in some instances the wand. When working in a coven, the casting is traditionally done by either the High Priestess or High Priest, according to the preferences of the

coven or tradition. Of course if you are working solitary you do it yourself!

Movement within the circle should always be deosil (sunwise) unless the movement is specifically intended to be symbolic of banishing, in which case it should be widdershins (anti-sunwise). This is rare and in some traditions this is considered bad luck, or negative. On occasion it can however be used to great effect in ritual, for banishing negativity or for seasonal rites in which (e.g.) Winter is banished and Spring is welcomed. Widdershins movement can also be used to open the circle, as a symbolic unwinding of the circle, to take us back from the magickal to the mundane world. The idea of always moving sunwise in the magick circle is first found in ancient Egypt, where the movement was seen as symbolising the sunwise movement of the Sun God Re, and anticlockwise movement was thought to invite *isfet* (chaos and disorder).

The magick circle has a great deal of symbolism in Wicca. As already mentioned, in

Wicca we often talk of the magick circle as a place between the worlds, to indicate that we are transported to a domain that is nearer to our Gods when we perform our ceremonies.

The shape of the circle itself represents continuity and creation, fertility, equality and all celestial bodies and has a long tradition of use in history, from ancient Sumeria and Egypt through to modern times. It is also a symbol of unity, which is important on two levels: There is the unity of the coven working magick together, and the unity of the participants with the Gods.

The circle can be seen to represent the womb of the Earth Goddess, from which all creation sprang forth, and as such represents a place in which we can communicate with her. The shape of the circle may be seen as representing both the Moon and the Sun, as well as the eternal movement of the seasons through the wheel of the year. The circle is also symbolic of the Egyptian stellar goddess Nuit as the all-encompassing goddess.

The circle is considered a symbol of

perfection, as it has no beginning and no ending. Circles are very fluid shapes, with no corners to trap energy or act as points of manifestation. Think of the way a wheel rolls, and you appreciate the cyclic nature inherent in a circle.

Many groups do cast a circle to be the traditional nine foot in diameter, although more often the circle size is determined by the number of people participating, and in some instances the space available – if faced with a coven of thirteen or more members, a circle of only nine foot in diameter will not allow for much movement or dancing!

Casting A Circle

The traditional Wiccan method is to use the sword or athame to draw the circle. This is done because the sword and athame represent the will of the person wielding them, and are seen as a focus for the energy that is being directed. The wand can also be used, and is advised for rituals in which nature spirits are to be invoked as some, in

particular the Fairy, are known to dislike iron.

If you do not have an athame or wand you can cast and open the circle using your hand. This is normally done using the preferred hand with index and forefinger extended, ring and little fingers folded down, with the thumb folded over on top of them. You should feel a flow of energy from your body which accumulates in your hands.

Walk deosil around the space, visualising the energy manifesting as blue flames at the tip of your athame (or sword, wand or fingers as appropriate), which marks the boundaries of your circle. A good way to visualise this is to see the flames shoot up and down to encapsulate you. Then as you move around the circle, see them spreading, increasing as you move around.

Blue is the colour of purity and psychism in the western Mystery Tradition, hence sapphire being the stone of purity and psychic awakening. Blue is also the colour associated with the heavens and the astral realms, thus its use in casting the circle, where you are moving beyond the physical realm

to a place '*between the worlds*'. It is interesting to note that the eminent psychologist and scientist Wilhelm Reich described the orgone energy as being blue in colour. This energy he saw as the sexual power inherent in us all.

As you walk the boundaries say:

I cast this circle, may this circle be a shield of protection and a boundary between the worlds. I bless thee and consecrate thee, in the names of the Goddess and God. The Circle is Cast. So mote it be!

A version we sometimes use is one we created which includes the elements in the casting itself. As you walk around casting the circle, say:

By fertile Earth and whirling Air,
By rushing Fire and Water fair,
By Spirit joined and all held fast,
This sacred circle now is cast!

Once you are comfortable with the standard circle casting, you can try other methods if they appeal to you and see how they feel. E.g. some people like to walk the boundary of the circle beating a drum or ringing a bell, or carrying incense (such as a censer, joss stick or smudge bundle).

Circles are cast deosil (sunwise), starting and finishing in the East (the place of the Sunrise).

13. Guardians Of The Watchtowers

Once the circle has been cast, the next step in a Wiccan ceremony is the invocation of the Watchtowers – also known as the calling of the Guardians of the Four Cardinal Directions or the Mighty Ones. This is another idea we find in ancient Egypt, where guardian deities were often called to protect the space at the four quarters. Indeed this practice has continued through history in different magickal traditions, and became popularized in the late nineteenth century by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, who worked with the elemental archangels at the cardinal directions. They also used the term Watchtower, borrowed from the writings of the Elizabethan magus Dr John Dee, which is where the use of the term in Wicca comes from.

When invoking the Guardians of the Watchtowers, we are usually calling upon the elemental energies of Air, Fire, Water and Earth to

join us in our circle. The four elements combined bring balance and create the fifth element of Spirit. In Wiccan ritual we call upon a guardian from each of the elements to both help protect our circle at each cardinal point and to bless the circle (and those within) with their energies and qualities. Traditionally the Guardians called are not always beings of the different elements, e.g. sometimes the four winds are called upon at the four directions.

As you call the element raise your arms in the blessing position. This is done by raising your arms so they form a 'V', with your palms open and facing forwards. As you say "*I bid you hail and welcome*", cross your arms making an 'X' across your chest and give a little bow. This is a mark of respect as you welcome the Guardian of the element. The same gestures are used when you bid them farewell.

The elements are called starting in the East, place of Air and new beginnings. You then turn deosil to the South to call Fire, then to the West to

call Water and to the North to call Earth, finally turning back to the East to complete the circular motion.

In our group we prefer to invite the elements rather than commanding them. The traditional manner of “*summoning, stirring and calling up*” implies dominance over the elements, rather than a harmony with them. We do not feel this is appropriate to Wiccan ritual as it emphasises ‘*power over*’ rather than ‘*power with*’, and it is also true to say that we do not command the elements, as nature often reminds us. What is important, especially if you work in a group, is to keep a uniformity throughout. This might seem formulaic at first, but prevents one person from doing a 5 second invocation followed by the next person doing a 15 minute speech – if this happens it will hinder the flow of the ritual rather than aid it regardless of how good the invocations are! Also having a set way of calling quarters in a group helps build confidence as everyone will be able to learn the words beforehand, and the calls will

build up more power through regular use!

The Elemental Guardians

When working with elemental guardians at the four cardinal points of the circle, it is useful to visualise them whilst performing the invocations in order to build on the strength of the invocations. What follows are brief versions of the standard descriptions of the elemental guardians, of course once familiar with this and how to use the technique these can be adapted.

East

The Air Guardian is a very tall, slender and beautiful man with very ethereal features, piercing grey eyes and blonde hair. He is dressed in gossamer thin yellow robes that blow around his body, and has a crown of white lilies on his head. He may be visualised standing on a wind-swept hill or in the elemental landscape of air.

South

The Fire Guardian is tall and powerfully built with strong musculature. He has sharp features and red hair and flaming red-brown eyes. He is dressed in scarlet robes, and has a crown of red poppies on his head. He may be visualised standing on a volcano or in the elemental landscape of fire.

West

The Water Guardian is a voluptuous and very

beautiful woman with grey-green hair and deep blue eyes. She is dressed in flowing blue robes, and has a crown of blue lotuses on her head. She may be visualised standing in front of a waterfall or on the seashore, or in the elemental landscape of water.

North

The Earth Guardian is a well built and very beautiful woman with dark brown hair and green eyes. She is dressed in green robes, and has a crown of corn on her head. She may be visualised standing in a corn field in front of woods, or in the elemental landscape of earth.

The elementals of all the elements, both male and female, may also be seen in these descriptions when they are visualised in human form.

Invoking Elemental Guardians

The following is an example of how the elements are invited into the circle. You can adapt the words to suit a particular ritual or to your own

personal preference, maybe including some of the correspondences of each of the elements.

Example:

(Facing East)

Powers of Air, wise and joyous keepers of knowledge, I call to you now to guard and empower this rite; come on wings of clarity in Love and Truth. I bid you Hail and Welcome!

(Facing South)

Powers of Fire, courageous and powerful keepers of illumination, I call to you now to guard and empower this rite; come on flames of will in Love and Truth. I bid you Hail and Welcome!

(Facing West)

Powers of Water, beautiful and daring keepers of dreams, I call to you now to guard and empower this rite; come on waves of healing in

Love and Truth. I bid you Hail and Welcome!

(Facing North)

*Powers of Earth, strong and patient keepers
of mystery, I call to you now to guard and
empower this rite, come on horns of power in
Love and Truth. I bid you Hail and Welcome!*

If this is done in a group, you would say "we" rather than "I" and "us" rather than "me" when performing the calling and the farewells.

The Guardians of the Elements are commonly referred to as the Lords and Ladies of the Cardinal Directions. Within this context the Guardians of Air and Fire (the masculine elements) are usually seen as masculine (Lords) and the Guardians of Water and Earth (the feminine elements) as feminine (Ladies).

The Elemental Archangels

Some groups call the Archangels of the

Elements as worked with in ritual magick in the Pentagram ritual. These are Raphael (Air), Michael (Fire), Gabriel (Water) and Uriel (Earth). All of the archangels are seen with large white wings on their backs. If you wish to work with the archangels they are visualised as follows:

Raphael

Raphael stands around 9ft tall (just under 3m), his face almost too bright to see, very beautiful and androgynous. He wears a yellow robe, and there are flashes of purple about his form, he holds a caduceus and the Air element enters the circle from behind him in the East. You may feel a flow of air like gentle breezes blowing past Raphael into the circle.

Michael

Michael also stands around 9ft tall, with a beautiful radiant masculine face. His robe is bright red and there are flashes of green around him as he holds a sword or lance in his right hand.

Flames dance around Michael's feet, and from the South you feel the heat as the element of Fire enters the circle.

Gabriel

Gabriel stands around 9ft tall, his face blindingly bright, beautiful and feminine. He wears a blue robe and holds aloft a silver chalice, around his form there are flashes of orange. You may also see a waterfall behind Gabriel, and from behind him in the West you feel cool moisture as the element of Water enters the circle.

Uriel

Uriel stands around 9ft tall, his face beautiful and feminine, with a look of nurturing and compassion on it. His robe is of green, with flashes of red about him. He holds a pentacle and stands in front of a field of corn with woods behind. You sense the impending strength and stability of earth, and from the North behind him you feel the element of Earth enter the circle.

14. Invocation

There are two ways in which this is usually done in a Wiccan ceremony. The first is an invocation of the Goddess and God into the circle, and the second, which is commonly used by covens, is Drawing Down the Moon (Goddess) and Drawing Down the Sun (God) in which the deities are invoked into a Priestess or Priest.

Drawing Down the Moon and Drawing down the Sun as practiced in Wicca require at least two people. This is usually a Priest who invokes the Goddess into a Priestess, who then acts as a channel for the Goddess. She in turn then invokes the God into the Priest, who acts as a vessel for the God. When the Priestess or Priest enters a trance state during this ceremony they channel both the energy and the words of the Goddess or God, and in some instances may not remember much of the experience, or what they said afterwards. This is another reason why this is usually not done by

solitaries in the same way.

In some covens and traditions the Priestess and Priest only enter a partial trance, during which they recite a prepared '*charge*'. This charge usually takes the form of a piece of prose prepared in advance, the best known example being the well known '*Charge of the Goddess*'. In our own covens, Priestesses and Priests use both prepared charges and full trance states when performing this part of the ritual, depending on what is most appropriate.

Invocation of the Goddess also brings the energy of the Goddess into the circle, but in a different way. When you invoke a Goddess you are asking her to bring her blessings and energy into your circle. This technique is used by both solitaries and covens alike, and can be a very powerful way in which to explore the mysteries of different deities.

Drawing down can be seen as the person who is drawn down on being the gateway for the energy of the Goddess or God, whereas invocation is

making the whole circle the gateway for the energy of the Goddess or God.

Books and other sources can provide many examples of invocations which you can use. It is of course better to write your own, but first using examples from other people, and older examples such as the *Orphic Hymns*, can provide a great source of inspiration.

Example:

(adaptation from the *Orphic Hymns*, *Hymn to Hekate*)

I invoke thee beloved Lady of magick
Hekate of the Crossroads
Hekate of the three-ways
Of the Heavens, Earth & Sea
Saffron-cloaked Goddess of the Heavens
Nightgoing one, Protectress of dogs
Unconquerable Queen

I ask you to be present now at this my sacred
rite

To bless me and protect me!

Spend some time researching the Goddess or God you are looking to invoke, research their mythologies, their symbols and their roles within the pantheon in which they originate. Including symbolism and titles of a deity in your invocations can be a great way of making it a more powerful and personal experience. Of course through knowing more about the deities you work with, it also becomes easier for you to foster a closer relationship with them.

When you invoke a Goddess or God you should visualise that deity in the way they have usually been portrayed in the art of their culture. E.g. Artemis was depicted as a tall and beautiful maiden in a white hunting tunic carrying a bow with her quiver of arrows on her back. See the deity coming to your circle from their realm and standing over your circle, so their presence fills the space. So e.g. for chthonian deities you may see the deity rising from the ground, for stellar,

solar and lunar deities they may descend from the sky, etc. The ancient Egyptians saw their deities as standing about fifteen foot (4.5m) high, which can be a good guide to work with. Certainly they should be larger than the Guardians of the Watchtowers and Archangels, who are normally visualized as being around nine foot tall.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn used a technique where the deity who was invoked was visualized approaching the magickian from behind, and then seen '*stepping in*' to the aura of the magickian, so the deity literally enfolded or overshadowed the magickian with their presence and energy.

It is preferable to memorise the invocation if you can, as you can focus more on the energy of the deity and visualizing them if you are not reading from a piece of paper. With practice you will find you can do invocations spontaneously without needing to prepare, especially if they are for deities that you have worked with a lot and are familiar with.

Invocation of the Goddess

Example:

Beautiful and graceful Lady of the Moon
Mistress of the Stars at Night
Lady of Magick and Mystery
You who are the giver and taker of life
You who have been before time began
Queen of Heaven, Earth and Seas
I ask you to join me now in this rite
To inspire me and to guide me on my path
Bountiful and wise Goddess of the Night
Join me now, as I do bid thee hail and welcome

Invocation of the God

Example:

Mighty Horned God of the Woodlands
Bringer of magick and mystery,
God of Life, Light and Liberty
Who guard the wild and free places
I ask you to join me now in this rite
To share your wild wisdom with me
Strong and gentle guardian of the wild animals,
Join me now, as I do bid thee hail and
welcome!

15. Ritual Content

Of course a ritual is not just about creating a magickal space and invoking the Gods, although both these play an important part. The purpose of your ceremony will determine what else you do during the ritual.

The following are some examples of what you may include, every ceremony is unique however, so you may include a mixture of these or just one, you may even have other ideas to add!

Whether quiet and contemplative or loud and raucous, celebration is a key element of Wicca. It sums up the difference between Wicca and a number of other religions.

Of course all Wiccan rituals are devotions to the Gods. We celebrate our Gods, rather than prostrating ourselves, and the phrase “*all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals*” from the *Charge of the Goddess* encapsulates the way in which we work with our Gods. We also never

denigrate our Gods by placing the responsibility of our actions onto them, as we take personal responsibility for our actions.

You may want to however include a specific devotional component to your ritual at certain times. It can be an interesting and effective way in which to develop your understanding and relationship with the Gods that you work with, and the form that such a ritual devotion will take will largely depend on your relationship with and understanding of the Gods.

There are also of course specific practices associated with some of the Goddesses and Gods, and you may want to include something historic in your ritual. For example, making cakes with ingredients sacred to the Greek Goddess Hekate (such as saffron & onion) and leaving them at crossroads on the dark moon, or lighting candles for the Irish Goddess Bride at Imbolc (Candlemas).

You can also prepare incense with ingredients sacred to the Goddess or God you are working

with and burn that whilst reciting some inspirational poetry, chanting or singing. Of course you could keep it very simple and simply light a candle in their honour and spend some time in quiet contemplation and communion.

If you are performing a ceremony in celebration of the turning of the Wheel of the Year, you may want to include celebrations and workings which are specific to that time of the year.

Examples:

Beltane – Gather dew first thing in the morning and use it in spells for beauty and youthfulness. If you are working in a group you can erect a maypole and include that in your ceremony. Solitaires can tie (bio-degradable) wish ribbons to trees.

Litha – Rise to greet the Sun on the morning of Midsummer and perform a ceremony to honour the Solar Gods.

Lughnasadh - making a corn dolly with some of

the harvest grain to symbolise fertility for your projects in the coming year. If you have a corn dolly you made in a previous year you could offer it to the Goddess and return it to the Earth.

Samhain – If you are working in a group, apple bobbing can be great fun (albeit messy!). Samhain is also a traditional time to perform divination and skrying is particularly appropriate. Making offerings of food and drink to the ancestors and those who have departed in the previous year is also a good practice to include.

Yule – Rise early on the morning of Midwinter and perform a ceremony to honour the reborn Sun.

By performing devotional and celebrational work, you develop a stronger bond with the Gods, and this is important, because Wicca does not act through intermediaries, the emphasis is on your own personal relationship with the Gods of Wicca.

Remember that the Gods like to have fun too, and can have a wicked sense of humour!

Offerings

Making offerings is an act of respect and devotion. As well as making offerings to the gods, you can also make offerings to the spirits of places (genius loci) when you work outdoors. The idea of offerings to the gods is an old practice, seen in the ancient world, as well as to the ancestors and to spirits. The best example of this is perhaps ancient Egypt, where the food and drink were offered to the gods, who were perceived as partaking of the most subtle essence of the food. The food was then offered to the ancestors, who partook of what was left of the subtle essence, and then the priests ate the food afterwards. This was known as the '*reversion of the offerings*'.

If you do make offerings, remember that it is good to offer food and drink which are native to the land you are in, and also preferably in season. Fruit and nuts, like apples and hazelnuts are good examples of appropriate foods to offer. Before going to sites, remember to remove excess packaging from any food you are taking, to avoid

any chance of littering. A traditional offering made to spirits in the ancient world was milk and honey, though as you can see there is plenty of scope.

Results Magick& Spells

This is the part of the ritual where you perform spells, i.e. magickal workings towards a specified goal, such as a job spell, wealth spell, healing spell, etc. Remember spells do not have to be hurried, and you will find that a reasonable amount of time spent in raising energy, and focusing your intent and the visualisation of your goal will greatly increase the effectiveness of your workings.

Our experience has been that it is better to do fewer spells in a ceremony, and do more than one ceremony, rather than to perform dozens of spells in a single ceremony. Not only will your altar be cluttered with spell ingredients, but you will also be flagging when it comes to raising energy and clearly focusing your intent after a few spells.

Ideally you should not do more than about two

or three spells in a ritual, any more than that and you will probably start losing concentration. This is as true for solitaires as it is for covens, as raising energy, holding visualisations and preparing for each spell in turn, takes a great deal of energy and time.

Many people enjoy casting spells, and many do not, seeing them as not being spiritual. Spells are performed for a purpose, and that purpose is to create positive change. To this end it is beneficial to not be too zealous about never performing spells, but rather to perform them when you need them. If everything in your life is going wonderfully, you may not wish to cast spells; conversely e.g. if a close friend or relative is ill, you may perform a lot of healing spells (with their permission) to help them recover.

Techniques

There are several techniques which are commonly used for spells, each of which is very simple in practice, and all act in a similar manner, acting as a focus for the energy you raise and attract to create the result that is your desired intent.

Candle Spells

The use of candles to perform spells is widely used today and can be an effective, yet simple way of performing spells. The basic technique involves choosing a candle of an appropriate colour, carving it with symbols which represent the desired outcome, anointing it with oils which correspond to the desired outcome and then ritually charging it, by using chanting, singing, dancing or concentration. Finally the candle is burned down to release the energy towards the desired outcome.

Cord Magick

There are many examples of knot magick throughout history, well known examples can be found in ancient Greece and Egypt, as well as during more recent times, when it was used by Cunning folk in Devon and Cornwall to tie winds into knots, which were sold to sailors. The sailors would release the knots when they needed wind in their sails!

Charms: Amulets & Talismans

Charms have long been used in magickal systems the world over to help protect from (amulet) or attract (talisman) a specific energy to the bearer. They can be simple in construction such as a magickally charged crystal; or complex such as a charm bag with a number of different ingredients and symbols which are used for their combined powers (charm bags are also magickally charged).

Raising & Directing Power

Of course there are many more ways of performing spells, it is a huge subject and many books have been published on the subject in recent years. Let us now consider methods for raising power which are commonly used within the tradition to charge the spells we perform:

Concentration

This may seem at first glance a curious way to raise power, but in fact by concentrating all of your mental energy onto a single focused intent you can generate a lot of energy. What is important is that you have a very precise intent, and that you do not allow your attention to wander or waver. Think of the visualized result as the end of a race, which you reach by running the length of the race, which is the process of maintaining your concentration for the desired period of time. As can be seen this emphasizes having developed your visualization

and meditation skills, as discussed earlier.

Dancing

Dancing whilst chanting is one of the most commonly used, effective and simple ways to raise energy for spells and celebration. In groups dancing is usually performed deosil in a circle, or in a spiral.

Whilst the dancing is done people also visualise the energy generated by their movement and singing as a particular colour, such as gold or blue, forming an inverted cone of energy within the circle. By combining the energy of the dance, the singing and the visualisation, a lot of energy can be generated to power spells or other magickal work. The High Priestess or person leading the ritual will allow the dancing to go on until she feels enough energy has been raised to be directed by her to the desired intent.

Singing and Chanting

If you are working solitary or have space

constraints on your group, you may prefer to chant without dancing. In such instances you are concentrating on the sound produced by your voice as the primary form of generated energy. The energy you raise through singing chants for a period of time is again visualised as a swirling pattern of appropriately coloured energy which you allow to build up until you feel there is enough to power your intent for the spell or whatever the purpose is.

Divination

There may be times that you find you need help with big questions or dilemmas that you face in your every day life. Instead of doing a spell for this, you could perform a divination as part of your ritual. Of course most forms of divination can be practiced outside a magick circle, but you may want to perform it in a circle to ensure additional energy and blessings from the Gods or for a purpose related to previous spell work like healing

to see how the magick is working. Forms of divination which you may want to explore for use within a Wiccan ritual include:

Tarot

The use of Tarot cards, and oracle cards can bring an interesting dimension to Wiccan ritual. There are so many different decks of cards available today which you can choose from depending on the nature and theme of your ritual. We often use the *Thoth Tarot* (by Lady Frieda Harris & Aleister Crowley) for yearly divinations, or the *Druid Animal Oracle* (by Phillip & Stephanie Carr-Gomm) when we are working with Celtic deities, which is also excellent for power animal work. It is worth looking at and exploring the symbolism of different decks and finding those which resonate best with your interests and way of working.

Skrying

Skrying into a crystal ball has long been one of

the archetypal images of witches; however there are many other methods of skrying which may suit you or your ritual. Fire skrying using a candle flame or a bowl with white spirit in to see patterns in the flame (be careful with flammable liquids!) is a technique that many witches find works well for them. Alternatively skrying in a magick mirror, or incense smoke, or candle wax dripped into a bowl of water are all other examples of ways you can use different mediums to sky in.

16. Cakes & Wine

The ceremony of Blessing the Cakes & Wine takes place after most of the work and celebration are done in the circle. Some groups use the time after the blessing of Cakes & Wine to discuss experiences during the ceremony, feast in the circle after the ceremony or use the time to make announcements – others will close the circle after the partaking of Cakes & Wine and discuss the ceremony afterwards whilst feasting.

If you work solitary it is best to close the circle after the blessing of Cakes & Wine and then ground through feasting. The act of partaking of the Cakes & Wine is not a grounding as some writers suggest. Rather it is a Eucharistic act, partaking of the blessed sacraments, which have been infused with the energies of the Goddess & God. By partaking of the Cakes & Wine you unite yourself with the divine energies in balance, and reinforce the balance within yourself.

Blessing The Wine

The blessing of the wine in Wicca represents the sacred marriage as it symbolises the union of Goddess & God, considered to be one of the key mysteries of Wicca, which can only be fully understood through direct experience.

The Chalice symbolises the womb of the Fruitful Goddess, the wine shows the fecundity of the Earth and symbolises the joy in this life. It is traditional to use red wine, but mead or if you prefer apple or grape juice, can also be used. The athame represents the phallus of the Horned God, the fertilizing principle.

Symbolically the chalice and athame represent the elements of water and fire, and when the triangular symbols of these two elements are conjoined, they produce the hexagram, representing the universe. The sacred marriage of the two divine principles is thus expressed in the creation of the universe through their union, embodied in the sacramental drink within the chalice as their life-

giving fertility.

The union of opposites in the blessing of the wine is emphasized further by the fact that the High Priestess holds the athame (masculine tool) and the High Priest the chalice (feminine tool), demonstrating that both are embodying the divine balance in themselves, and this is then further reflected by the union of the athame and chalice in the wine.

The fruit juices used have specific symbolisms. Apple juice represents the fruit of wisdom, sacred to the Goddess and containing the pentagram within it. Grape juice is the fruit of the vine, sacred to the God as the Lord of Liberation and Wildness, in forms such as the Greek Dionysus and Roman Bacchus.

When working in a group it is usual for the High Priestess and High Priest to perform the ceremony together. The High Priest holds the Chalice, and the High Priestess lowers the athame into the Chalice saying:

As the Athame is to the Male so the Cup is to the Female and conjoined they bring forth fruitfulness.

The High Priestess drinks from the Chalice first, then passes the Chalice to the High Priest with a kiss and the words "*Blessed Be*" or "*May you never thirst*". The High Priest then passes the Chalice to the person next to him in the circle with the same words and the Chalice is passed from person to person, each time with a kiss and "*Blessed Be*" or "*May you never thirst*".

It is traditional that the High Priestess is given the remaining wine in the cup to finish, or when working outdoors she will take a last sip and then make a libation with the remaining wine to the Old Ones.

For solitary work you should hold the athame in your dominant hand, and the chalice in your other hand. As you do so imagine the energy of the God descending down the blade of the athame into the wine, like a flash of golden lightning, and the

energy of the Goddess permeating the wine, like a flowing silver tide, from the chalice that symbolises her womb (the same visualisations are used for group work as described above).

Example:

Take the Chalice and hold it up saying:

I bless this wine, made from the fruits of this bountiful Earth, fertile and nurturing, blessed by the union of the Goddess and God. Blessed be.

Then take a sip of the wine and replace the Chalice on the altar.

Blessing The Cakes

The cakes are as mentioned previously a Eucharist, symbolising the fruitfulness of the Goddess and God, as well as symbolising the gifts given to us by the Earth herself.

The cakes traditionally should be made with

flour, wine, a pinch of salt and honey, which are then shaped into crescent moons. In practice most groups working together will use cakes, bread or biscuits which reflect the celebration. For instance it is perfectly acceptable to use a Yule Log when celebrating Yule, bread baked from corn for Lughnasadh, or something sweet for Beltane!

When working in a group it is traditional to have one more cake than the number of celebrants for the blessing. The cakes are placed on a platter which is then placed on the pentacle. They are blessed by the High Priestess, who touches each cake with the tip of her athame, visualizing the golden energy flowing from her through the athame into the cakes.

She takes the first cake and breaks it into two pieces, giving half to the High Priest with a kiss and say "*Blessed be*" or "*May you never hunger*". He then passes the platter of cakes to the celebrant next to him with a kiss and "*Blessed Be*" or "*May you never hunger*" and so it is passed from one person to the next until it is returned to

the altar. The High Priestess will take the remaining cakes and make a libation to the Old Ones.

An alternative to the athame is for the High Priestess to use the wand for the blessing of the cakes. This then means all four of the elemental tools have been used in the Cakes & Wine – chalice and athame for wine, and pentacle and wand for cakes. Symbolically the same balance of feminine and masculine can be seen as in the blessing of the cakes as is observed in the blessing of the wine.

When working solitary, hold your hands over the platter on the pentacle and visualise golden energy flowing through your hands down into the cakes as you say:

I bless these cakes, made from the seeds of the grain grown in the bosom of the earth, fertile and bountiful, blessed by the grace of the Goddess and the vitality and strength of the God.

Break the cake in half and eat half – replacing the remaining part on the platter or libate it if you are working outdoors. Alternatively you can touch your athame or wand to the cakes and see the golden energy flow from your hands through the tool into the cakes rather than use your hands when you bless the cakes.

17. Opening the Circle

Farewell To The Gods

At the end of your ceremony you say farewell to the God first, as the end of the ritual is in reverse order to the beginning. This can be very simple, and should thank him, acknowledging his power and properties. An example of this would be as given below for Cernunnos.

Example:

Mighty Cernunnos, Lord of the Wild Beasts and the Wild Places, Guardian of the Old Ways, I thank you for joining me and sharing your power and timeless wisdom with me,

In love and joy and truth, I bid you hail and farewell.

As you say the *“Hail and Farewell”* you

should bow in honour of his presence, power and courtesy. See him walking, flying or descending away back to his realm, in a similar manner to how you saw him arrive.

The farewell to the Goddess follows exactly the same formula as the farewell to the God. If you are working solitary you will do both of these farewells. In a group, the person who invoked a God or Goddess is always the one who also bids farewell.

Example:

Beautiful Lady of the Moon
Mistress of the Stars at Night
You who have been before time began
Queen of the Heavens, Earth and Seas
I thank you for your presence here tonight
I thank you for the blessings you have brought
I thank you for the wisdom you shared
Your spirit will dwell within my heart and
spirit always
But for now as I end this rite,
I bid you hail and farewell.

The departure of the Goddess and God should be like saying goodbye to a close friend. There should be no sorrow, simply an acknowledgement and appreciation of the contribution they have made to your ceremony. The words you speak do not need to be a long soliloquy of praise, it is

preferable to keep it fairly simple, knowing that you will call on them again when you perform your next ceremony.

Dismissing The Guardians

Obviously when you have finished your rite you say farewell to the Elemental Guardians, starting in the North with Earth and moving widdershins to Air in the East. This is done before opening the circle, as the closing of a rite is done in reverse as a symbolic unwinding of the circle. It is effectively like returning from a journey, you retrace the steps of the journey to return to your original starting place. As you speak see the Elemental Guardian leaving and returning to their realm, taking the elemental energy with them that they brought into the circle.

Example:

(Facing North)

Powers of Earth, I thank you for joining me

and guarding and empowering this rite, and with love and thanks I bid you Hail and Farewell.

(Facing West)

Powers of Water, I thank you for joining me and guarding and empowering this rite, and with love and thanks I bid you Hail and Farewell.

(Facing South)

Powers of Fire, I thank you for joining me and guarding and empowering this rite, and with love and thanks I bid you Hail and Farewell.

(Facing East)

Powers of Air, I thank you for joining me and guarding and empowering this rite, and with love and thanks I bid you Hail and Farewell.

Whatever gestures you used to call the Elements should also be used in banishing. So if you made the elemental gestures, do so again, if you used invoking elemental pentagrams, use

banishing elemental pentagrams, etc. As you do this, feel the energy of the element leaving the circle. If you did use pentagrams visualise the elemental energy leaving through the pentagon in the centre of the pentagram, returning to its elemental landscape.

The pentagram that has been in the air at each quarter as a gateway for the elemental force should be seen disappearing as you draw the banishing pentagrams if you have used elemental pentagrams.

Some modern writers suggest using phrases like *“Stay if you will, go if you must”*, when dismissing the Guardians. Such phrases are wholly inappropriate, as the point of opening the magick circle at the end of a ceremony is to return to the mundane world and leave the place in a similar state to that you found it in. Guardians of the Watchtowers wandering around a room or piece of land that is not their normal home is hardly leaving a place as you found it! Not only is this bad magickal practice, but it also shows a lack of consideration for the environment you are

working in, and a lack of respect for the beings themselves.

Opening The Circle

At the end of a ritual, the circle is opened by reversing the casting. This is done by again walking the boundaries of the circle, using your athame / wand or hand in the same way that you did for the casting of the circle. This time you walk in the opposite direction to the way you walked when you cast the circle.

Whilst you walk you visualise the blue flames dying away and you say:

The rite is ended, the boundary removed as I return to the world of men, the circle is open yet unbroken!

Following the opening of the circle, i.e. its removal, the place should feel as it did before the ceremony, with no trace of magickal energy left to show anything occurred there. This is why the

Wiccan circle is said to be '*between the worlds*', it is distinct from the mundane world. By the same token, always make sure you take away everything you brought with you if you work outdoors, especially not leaving half-used candle stubs or litter, though of course the local wildlife will probably happily consume any bread or cakes you wish to leave them as offerings!

18. Magickal Records

Keeping a personal record of your magickal workings, your observations, results and what you learn is one of the most important things you should do right from the beginning. Keep a note of when and where you performed your ritual or meditation; the time of the day and phase of the moon should also be noted down. In addition you should keep a record of all the techniques you used, invocations, spells and of course the results achieved.

Writing up your rituals, meditations and other magickal experiences forms a very important part of your development and learning, and is one simple, but important ritual in itself, which should not be ignored. If possible you should also write up your dreams, as there is often a great deal to be learned from examining the symbolism of your unconscious mind through examining the visions which come to you in dreamtime. Looking back over your magickal diaries will show you how you

have changed and grown as a person with time and practice, as well as indicating which techniques work best for you. Your magickal diary is a place where you should be very honest in recording your feelings and impressions, and avoid ego. Only if you are honest will you truly be able to see the process of personal transformation that occurs over time. Because it is very private you should obviously keep it away from prying eyes.

As soon as you have finished your ceremony, you should write up your experience while it is still fresh in your mind. You will already have the structure recorded from when you planned the ritual, but now you should record details of your impressions of each part of the ritual and how it went. Any images, thoughts, words or impressions that you received at any time during the ritual should be recorded, and also how well or not you felt the different parts of the ritual went.

Be honest with yourself when recording the ritual. Rituals do not always go 100% according to plan, and things do not always work as you

expect them to. By keeping honest and meticulous records, you can look back later and assess the effectiveness of different techniques of energy raising and spell casting, and see what works best for you.

Likewise when you record you may find it helpful to note factors such as the weather, your mood, and if you are a woman, the phase of your own menstrual cycle. Looking at such factors over time may give you indicators of times when you work particularly well or badly that you can figure in to your ceremonies. Additionally you may also find that certain places are particularly conducive for your rituals, and others are not, particularly at different times of the year. All of this information helps you build up an effective pattern of working which helps you progress more efficiently on your path.

REFINEMENTS

19. Visualisation

Both meditation and visualization are vital skills you need to know and master to really perform effective magickal ritual. These may be considered to be like the foundations of a house, without solid and well build foundations the walls are likely to crack, the house may even fall down, but with good foundations the house will be strong and may be extended in future. We will now consider each in turn, together with their applications for a student of the Wiccan Tradition, how they might be used in ritual and some example exercises to try.

Meditation is a form of inner concentration, blocking out the constant ever-changing stimuli of the world we live in. Meditation calms the mind and stills the spirit, a vital prerequisite for magickal work. By meditating you can shut out everything from the mundane world and focus purely on the magick you are going to perform.

There are different types of meditation, including the use of visual stimulus as a focus, the use of words of power (sometimes called '*mantras*' after the eastern use) in which words of power or phrases are repeated out loud or silently by the meditator, breathing techniques etc.

When first learning the skills of meditation you will usually encounter some difficulties, commonly in the form of distractions created by your mind. Distracting details or irrelevant information like your shopping list or credit card statement may fill your mind. Ignore these and gently push them aside, returning to the stimulus that is the focus of your meditation. This is the first stage, of concentration.

Next your body will try and distract you. You may find yourself feeling sudden itches, or pins and needles, or nagging aches. Ignore these, as this is the ego trying to resist the transformative effect of meditation. When you move past these distractions, you achieve the second stage of meditation, which is serenity.

Now your mind is free to receive intuitions and ideas relating to the symbols or whatever focus you are using for your meditation. This is the third stage of meditation, insight.

At any time during meditation your ego might try a sneak attack, and distract you again with those irrelevant images or body pains. Gently push them away and return to your focus. Do not allow them to irritate you, as they are a natural occurrence, and no reflection on your abilities.

A form of meditation that is commonly used is guided visualisations. These are meditative journeys which are used to explore astral and inner mental landscapes, towards gaining insights into myths, spiritual creatures, and your own psyche. By exploring such astral and inner mental landscapes you allow all aspects of your consciousness to communicate, bringing insights and cues from both your unconscious and your higher self. Guided visualisations are often performed in a group context with one person acting as the guide and describing the journey to

the rest of the group, though they can equally be performed alone using a recording.

Meditation is a good practice to use before any ritual, as it helps make sure you are completely focused on the ritual, and have cleared away any distracting clutter in your head. Even if you only meditate for a few minutes, think of it like a doorway you go through every time you perform a ceremony. When the door is shut behind you, you will not be unduly disturbed by the mundane thoughts and distractions you leave behind.

A good preparatory meditation we sometimes use is to meditate on the elements in turn. Start with Air and visualize a suitable symbol, such as the Air triangle, or a feather, and meditate on how it makes you feel, whilst contemplating the qualities associated with Air. Repeat this for each of the elements in turn, using their symbol or a suitable other symbol, such as a flame for Fire, or a crystal for Earth. When you have worked through all of the elements you can then start your ceremony in an appropriate state of mind.

Visualisation has been described as the process of creating or realising a symbol (or series of symbols) to focus and harness the power of the mind. It is a pictorial rather than a verbal way of thinking. By developing your ability to visualise you train your creative imagination and harness its creative ability.

Visualisation enables you to see symbols, perform guided meditations, visualise the intent of a spell, and perform astral work and psychic work. Some lucky people find they are able to visualise easily and naturally, but for many others it is a skill that needs to be developed. Learning and practicing visualisation is like developing a new set of muscles, but mental ones rather than physical ones.

The easiest way to develop your visualisation skills is to practice them every day. Spend some time, say 10-15 minutes, visualising a simple image, like a red triangle for fire, or blue circle for water. A good and useful image to also include in your practice is a golden pentagram. Hold the

image you use on a black background. Every time the image changes, be it a change of shape or colour; reform the image so it is back to the original image. Keep practicing this until you can hold the image exactly for that 10 or 15 minutes without a single change of colour or shape.

This may take you a while to do, so don't get disheartened if you are still finding it mutating occasionally after a few weeks of practice. When you can hold the image unchanging, your powers of visualisation will be well honed. Even at this point it is still worth practicing to refine your skills. At this point you should start using more complex images to practice your visualization skills on, such as Tarot cards. To do this choose a card (the Major Arcana or Trumps are good) and study it, until you have committed it to memory. Then close your eyes and visualize the card. When you have filled in as much detail as you can, open your eyes again and re-examine the card. How well did you do, and how many details did you leave out? Close your eyes again and repeat the

process, until you can bring the complex image to mind and effectively reproduce the image you chose.

When you have mastered holding complex images like these in your mind you have trained your mind well. Visualisation is one of those skills that you will always use in your ceremonies, so time invested in mastering it will benefit you throughout your spiritual journey.

20. Using Your Voice

Your voice is one of the most powerful magickal tools you possess, and you always have it handy. The power of sound has been well documented by science, and from a magickal perspective sound can be considered to be transmutable energy. How you speak or sing words can dramatically affect the quality of your ritual.

Words contain an inherent power. With words we communicate, and by naming something you begin to gain an understanding of that thing. Magickal names have been considered important since the idea of true names giving power over beings in ancient Egypt.

Considering the importance of words, you can see that the more energy you put into your words, the more you can add to your rituals. When you speak it should be clearly, so that each word is pronounced in a distinct way. Remember that the

influence of your magick (and hence your words) will echo through the subtle planes. As a result you want those words to have a strong and positive charge on them.

Practice projecting your voice, so it fills the room when you are indoors. This is not just a matter of shouting or being very loud – you do not have to be that loud to fill a space, and on many occasions this can be inappropriate.

As well as speaking clearly, you also need to consider the use of songs and chants. Since ancient times the value of repetition in magick has been recognised. As chants are one of the ways of raising energy, you need to spend some time performing them to really get a good level of energy up to power spells.

In some religious ceremonies, such as those of Hinduism or Buddhism, sacred mantras (a word or phrase) are chanted for hours. Whilst we are not saying you should spend hours performing your chants, you can appreciate that singing a chant for two minutes is going to raise a lot less energy than

doing it for ten minutes. Spending longer on a chant requires good concentration and focus, so it is a good discipline to engender in yourself, as it will improve your chances of achieving your desired results.

When you do use your voice, it is important that you also keep in mind the intent of your ritual. Practicing ritual teaches you (if you didn't already have the skill) to be able to split your attention and multi-task. Through practice it becomes easy to hold an image in your mind and use your voice, perform ritual actions, etc.

Don't be afraid to really use your voice. If it makes you feel self-conscious, this is something you need to deal with and overcome - practice by yourself, allowing your voice to develop in power as your confidence increases – remember you need to dare. Through words our ideas can be given form, and manifested into the desired result of our intent, so speak the words of creation and let your goals become real.

21. Personal Purification

By purifying ourselves we prepare ourselves for the practice of magick, and create a demarcation between the mundane and the magickal. The act of self-purification declares our intent to be in the best possible state to do magick and honour our Gods. There are a variety of methods of purification might be used by Wiccans today, though not all these methods are traditional, they include:

Ritual Baths

Before you start a ritual, having a purification bath will help you get into the right frame of mind. You may add appropriate essential oils, herbs or salts to your bath to enhance the process.

The purpose of the bath is purification, and it is the start of your ritual – so your mind should be focused purely on the matter at hand, you can combine the bath itself with visualisations and balancing work.

When you emerge from the bath, allow yourself to dry naturally. If it is not possible to have a ritual bath beforehand, at least try and wash your hands and face, especially for healing work! Examples of appropriate oils & herbs that have purificatory properties include: frankincense, sandalwood, hyssop, St John's Wort and myrrh. You can also use sea salt. Ritual baths can be combined with chanting or meditation relevant to the ritual you are about to perform.

Fasting

We can use fasting to cleanse our bodies from the inside. Fasting helps the body remove toxins and also means that all your energy will go into the ritual; rather than bodily functions such as digestion. A fast normally lasts a period of one day or longer, but it is important to remember that if you lead a busy life a fast of more than one day may be impractical.

When you fast, you should abstain from all food and stimulants. This means no caffeine, no alcohol and no tobacco (and no chocolate)! Not all

Wiccans use fasting, and it is certainly not a prerequisite, although it can be a good way of strengthening your will. Many people use fasting as a method of purification for important rituals, such as initiations – drinking only spring water and apple juice for a predetermined period, usually 24 hours.

Apples symbolise the Goddess and are considered the fruit of wisdom, and drinking apple juice ensures your blood sugar does not become too low or your energy become drained.

If you find that cutting out all food when fasting is a problem, try eating only certain types of food, like fruit. Some people find their metabolism struggles to cope with periods of fasting, and it is important that you use the form of fasting best for your body. If you have any health problems be sure to consult your doctor before attempting any period of fasting, especially if you plan on doing it for longer than 24 hours.

For most rituals it should not be necessary to fast for long periods of time, unless you are doing

a specific ritual that requires it for some reason. It is still however a good idea to abstain from food and stimulants for at least 4 hours before a ritual, as this will aid any psychic work and will of course also make it easier for you to participate in dancing and movement without being slowed down by a heavy meal.

Anointing

Anointing can also effectively be used as part of pre-ritual purification. A special oil or ointment can be prepared containing herbs and oils which have purificatory properties, these can be blended with ingredients which are sacred to the Goddess or God who you will be working with, or they may have another special symbolic meaning related to your ceremony. Be sure to use a base oil to mix your oil in, as you do not want to experience oil burn on your forehead!

In groups, the participants should be anointed by the High Priestess or an appointed Priest or Priestess, accompanied with appropriate wording, such as *“Be pure of thought, Blessed Be!”* or *“Let*

wisdom enter herein". The anointing is usually done on the third eye with a crescent Moon shape, or another suitable symbol. Any finger can be used for the anointing; we usually use the little finger of the dominant hand as was recorded to be the practice in ancient Egypt. If you work as a solitary, you can still incorporate anointing as a part of your ritual preparation. Other applications for anointing include anointing the hands prior to healing and anointing the chakra energy centre points when performing balancing exercises.

Censing

Incense is a very effective tool for purification and can be used to cense (sometimes called smudging when done with bundles of herbs, rather than incense). Censing can be used in Wiccan ritual in a variety of ways for purification. Participants can be censed as they enter the circle, or prior to the circle being cast. The sacred space itself can be purified by censing the entire space prior to casting or after casting to purify and to

welcome the Gods.

22. Psychic Protection

Humanity is superstitious and Wiccans are no exception. Once you start opening yourselves up to change and concentrating on developing your relationship with the natural world, seen and unseen, changes occur. One possible result of this is a tendency to feel that negative forces or entities are influencing your life anytime something goes wrong. It can be easy to allow paranoia to creep in, forgetting that things do go wrong anyway, and blame hidden powers for all the problems in your life.

If things in your life are going wrong, stop and take stock. Consider the balance (or imbalance) of influences in your life to see if there is a simple explanation for why things are going wrong. A cold could come from being out in the rain without a coat rather than being cursed by somebody who gave you a funny look!

Psychic attack is a rare phenomenon, but if you

are convinced you are experiencing it, simple steps can neutralize it very quickly. Remember that if you do regular magickal work in your home, such as casting circles and calling the Guardians of the Watchtowers and the Goddess and God, there will already be protection around it anyway and these steps will not be necessary.

To protect a house, simply cast a magick circle around it (this can be visualized), and then sprinkle every window and door with blessed salt water (you can make a pentagram on them with the salt water for added protection if you prefer). Call on the Guardians of the Watchtowers and ask them to protect your home and those in it, and do the same for the Goddess and God. Visualise your whole house filled with a positive golden glow.

23. Lunar Timing

The use of phases of the Moon is a major consideration in Wicca for magickal work. The New Moon is the time for performing magick for beginning new projects. The Waxing Moon is the time for things you want to grow and increase, or

attract to you. The Full Moon is a time of fruition and completion.

The Waning Moon is a time for getting rid of things you want to lose, which also includes healing when you are getting rid of illness. The Dark Moon is a time of transformation, of moving between phases.

To this we may also add the significant time of the Half Moon – when the face of the Moon shows equal light and dark. This is a very good time for balancing work. You can do work that needs to balance lighter qualities on the waxing Half Moon, and work that concentrates on balancing darker qualities (this includes the unconscious) on the waning Half Moon. Even if you do not wish to make use of other times such as the planetary ones, the lunar phases are a good guide to when to work different types of magick drawing on the appropriate energetic tides.

An occasion which happens about once every two and a half years you may wish to take advantage of is the Blue Moon. The Blue Moon

occurs when there are two full Moons in a month, and is the second full Moon in a month. On rare occasions, such as in 1999, this can happen more than once a year. Obviously as they are 28 days apart this means the first full Moon needs to happen in the first day or two of the month.

The expression “*once in a blue Moon*” comes from this term, referring to an unusual event. Blue Moons are considered very magickal, and are a good time to work for things that are difficult to achieve – they can be seen as a window of opportunity to do that spell or ritual that really needs to work and work well.

Of course on these occasions the Moon does not actually turn blue, there are however occasions when it does! An example of this would be when the Indonesian volcano Krakatoa exploded in 1883, it sending dust clouds into the atmosphere which caused the Moon to appear blue all around the world for the best part of two years. (It also turned sunsets green!) The same phenomena can take place when large forest fires send smoke and

dust particles into the air, although most of these instances are localised. Ice particles and clouds can also sometimes cause this to happen.

New Moon	New projects
Waxing Moon	Growth, attraction, healing by growth (e.g. repairing damage)
Half Moon (waxing)	Balancing, conscious personal change
Full Moon	Completion, fruition
Half Moon (waning)	Balancing, unconscious, dreams
Waning Moon	Banishing, removal, including healing by getting rid of things (e.g. illnesses)
Dark Moon	Transformation, inner work

24. Planetary Timing

The seven classical planets have long been associated with magickal work. Each of the planets are associated with a day of the week and each day is divided into planetary hours, these are not 60 minutes long and are each in turn associated with one of the classical planets. Working in harmony with the planetary days and hours can be beneficial for magickal workings to obtain particular results and is an area of magick which resonates very well with Wicca and is worth further consideration as they do lend an additional level of energy to such workings. See the appendix for planetary correspondences., which includes details of the types of magick associated with each planet, colours, numbers, as well as the relevant days associated with each.

Attributions for Planetary Hours

Planetary Hours of the Day				
Hour	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	W

1	Sun	Moon	Mars	M
2	Venus	Saturn	Sun	M
3	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Sa
4	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Ju
5	Saturn	Sun	Moon	M
6	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Su
7	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Ve
8	Sun	Moon	Mars	M
9	Venus	Saturn	Sun	M
10	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Sa
11	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Ju
12	Saturn	Sun	Moon	M

Planetary Hours of the Night				
Hours	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
2	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
3	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
4	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
5	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
6	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
7	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Venus
8	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
9	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
10	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
11	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
12	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn

Example Calculations

Example 1

Let us say you wanted to work out the planetary hours for a ritual that focused on using Mercurial energies. Wednesday is the day of Mercury, so you decide to perform the ritual next Wednesday, during the day. The process is then as follows:

Consulting an almanac you see the sun rises at 7am on that day and sets at 8.48pm.

So the hours of daylight are from 07.00 – 20:48, giving 13 hours and 48 minutes.

$13 \times 60 + 48 = 828$ minutes of daylight.

Divide by 12 = 69.

This means each of the 12 'hours' of daylight will be 69 minutes long.

Consulting the tables given you see the first and eighth hours of Wednesday are ruled by Mercury. So for the first hour of the day the ritual should be performed between 7.00am and 8.09am (69 minutes).

For the eighth hour further calculation is

needed:

Add together the 'hour' length for 7 'hours' ($7 \times 69 = 483$ minutes, or 8 hours and 3 minutes).

Then add this to the sunrise time (7:00am) + 8 hours and 3 minutes = 3:03pm).

This means the eighth hour starts at 3:03pm and finishes at 4:12pm ($3:03 + 69$ minutes).

You then decide which of these two times will be more practical, and you have your time to perform the ritual in.

Example 2

Let us say you now wanted to work out the planetary hours for a ritual that focused on using Saturnian energies. Saturday is the day of Saturn, so you decide to perform the ritual next Saturday, during the night when Saturn is visible in the sky. The process is then as follows:

Consulting an almanac you see the sun sets at 9.04pm on that day and rises the following morning at 6.10am.

So the hours of night are from 21.04 – 06:10, giving 9 hours and 6 minutes.

$$9 \times 60 + 6 = 546 \text{ minutes of night.}$$

$$\text{Divide by } 12 = 45.5.$$

This means each of the 12 'hours' of the night will be 45.5 minutes long.

Consulting the tables given you see the third and tenth hours of Saturday night are ruled by Saturn. So if you now calculate these two times you have your options:

For the third hour

Sunset is 9.04pm so this is the base time you start from.

To calculate the start time for the third hour, add the 'hour' length for 2 'hours' ($2 \times 45.5 = 91$ minutes, or 1 hour and 31 minutes)

Add this to the sunset time (9.04) + 1 hour and 31 minutes = 10.35pm

The Saturnian hour runs from 10.35pm to 11.20.5pm (10.35 + 45.5 minutes)

For the tenth hour further calculation is needed:

Add together the 'hour' length for 9 'hours' (9 x 45.5 = 409.5 minutes, or 6 hours and 49.5 minutes).

Then add this to the sunset time (9:04pm) + 6 hours and 49.5 minutes = 3:53.5am).

This means the tenth hour starts at 3:53.5am and finishes at 4:39am (3:53.5 + 45.5 minutes).

You then decide which of these two times will be more practical (probably 10.35pm!), and you have your time to perform the ritual in.

One further aspect you may wish to consider is the planetary movement. At times some of the planets go retrograde, i.e. appear to reverse their

movement in the sky. This is taken in magickal terms to mean the energy is waning rather than waxing, so many magicians prefer to work when the planet is not retrograde. This can easily be checked by looking at an Astrological Ephemeris.

25. Solar Timing

The movement of the Sun through the heavens is reflected both in our daily and our annual lives. The Sun rises from dawn (Sunrise) to the midpoint of the day (from the point of view of the duration between Sunrise and Sunset) when the Sun is at its zenith, and this is the time for solar work seeking to increase qualities associated with the Sun. Likewise from the midpoint to Sunset would be a time for getting rid of negative solar qualities, or working to transform them into positive ones.

Rather than always celebrating at night, the Sabbats in the light half of the year from Spring Equinox to Autumn Equinox (when there is more light than dark in the day) can be performed advantageously during daylight hours, especially if a solar deity is being invoked.

It is well known that many megalithic monuments were built with alignment towards the Sun on the morning of the Summer and Winter

solstices, and indeed sunrise on the morning of the Summer solstice makes an ideal time to celebrate the power of the Sun which is at its zenith. At the Midwinter solstice, we welcome the reborn Sun as the child of promise at dawn.

Although Wicca is often thought of as a lunar religion performed at night, remember that you move deosil (sunwise) around the magick circle, and that it is also about balance, so take advantage of the solar phases where they are appropriate!

26. Elemental Timing

As well as being present physically in our lives, the four elements are also seen in the tides of the day and the year. This means that of all the tides that you can draw on for your ceremonies, the elemental tides are the most frequently accessible as they occur every day. Thus dawn is associated with Air as the beginning of the day, then noon with Fire, dusk with Water and the stillness of night with Earth. It is interesting to note that the traditionally magickal liminal times of dawn and dusk are associated with the two fluid elements, Air and Water.

Of course you may not wish to perform your rituals at dawn or midday, or it may not be practical. In such instances you may also use the seasonal elemental tides to reinforce the nature of your work.

You may also choose to make the focus of your work appropriate to the elemental tide of the

season, as is done in some traditions of Wicca. Thus, e.g. use the winter months to focus on inner change, use spring to start new projects, summer to develop projects and autumn to harvest your results.

Element	Time	Season
Air	Dawn	Spring
Fire	Noon	Summer
Water	Dusk	Autumn
Earth	Midnight	Winter

27. Natural Cycles

In Wicca we attune to the cyclic nature of the Earth through the celebration of her seasons. The festivals, which are also called Sabbats, are celebrated at eight turning points throughout the year. This cycle of eight festivals is known to Wiccans as the Wheel of the Year.

Seasonal Rites

Samhain (Halloween), Yule (Midwinter), Imbolc (Candlemas, Bride), Eostra (Spring Equinox, Ostara), Beltane (May day), Litha (Midsummer), Lughnasadh (Lammas) and Modron (Autumn Equinox, Mabon) – help us to tune in with the cycles of nature as they exist both within us and in the world around us.

Although we know almost for certain that the combination of the eight festivals into what is known as the '*Wheel of the Year*' today, is a modern concept, and that no one group of people would have celebrated all eight of the festivals in

the same way as we do today, there is absolutely no doubt that all the festivals marking the points on the wheel are rooted in history.

The Wheel of the Year is so called for a good reason – wheels turn and return to the same point, but never quite the same place, and the wheel of Nature continues to turn, each season containing many new wonders.

Observation and celebration of these seasons will help you to become more attuned to the energies of Nature each year, it is a process that never stops. No one person can ever be an expert on the nature of Nature!

There is no one correct way of celebrating any of these festivals, and within the context of this book they are included here for the sake of completion.

The following are key themes which may provide inspiration when you are preparing for your own celebrations:

Festival	Date	Key Themes
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Samhain	31st October	Ancestors, Beginnings, Divination, Harvest (Meat), Facing Shadow, Transformation
Yule	21st December	Rebirth of the Sun, Resolutions, Turning Tide
Imbolc	1st February	First Stirrings, Initiation, Psychic Abilities
Eostra	21st March	Balance, Birth, Growth
Beltane	1st May	Fertility, Luck, Pleasure, Sacred Marriage
Litha	21st June	Activity, Life, Strength
Lughnasadh	1st August	Harvest (Grain), Sacrifice,

Modron	21st September	Transformation Abundance, Balance, Harvest (Fruit)
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The Sabbats may be divided into the light and dark halves of the year, or by the elemental tides. Thus Eostra-Modron represents the light half of the year, when there is more light in the day than dark, and conversely from Modron- Eostra represents the dark half of the year. The spring tide of Air is seen at Eostra and Beltane, the Fire tide at Litha and Lughnasadh, Water at Modron and Samhain, and Earth at Yule and Imbolc. We have included a table below of aspects the Goddess and God are commonly seen in at the Sabbats for further inspiration in creating your own celebrations.

Sabbat	Goddess	God
Samhain	Dark Mother	Dread Lord of Shadows
Yule	Birthing Mother / Crone	Solar Child of Promise
Imbolc	Goddess of Inspiration	Conquering Child
Eostra	Dawn Goddess of Fertility	Sun Prince
Beltane	Passionate Earth Goddess	Horned God of the Wildwood
Litha	Queen of All	Virile Sun King
Lughnasadh	Reaper Goddess	Sacrificed Corn King
Modron	Dark	Lord of the

Whenever possible it is preferable to celebrate the Sabbats outdoors, but this is not always practical. Using appropriate foods and drinks for the time of year, like cider and apples at Samhain or elderflower wine at Beltane help emphasise what is going on in nature around you and remind you of the changes all around you.

28. Consecrations

Whenever you buy or make a new ritual tool, or indeed purchase one second-hand, you need to purify (cleans) and consecrate (empower) it. Cleansing removes any influences from the tool so it is psychically clean when you start to work with it. Consecration focuses the energies of the elements into a tool, and establishes it as a magickal item that will only be used for your magickal work.

Elemental Tool Purification

The following is a ritual which can be used to purify and consecrate all your tools as well as items such as candles. Remember you can adapt the ritual to suit your circumstances – it can also be done as part of a Sabbat celebration or an Esbat.

Set up your altar in your usual manner, including salt & water in bowls, one red candle and some incense or joss sticks. Purify your ritual

space, cast a circle, invoke the Elemental Guardians and invoke the Goddess and the God.

Pass the item through the incense smoke (if it is large you may move the censer around it and blow smoke over it as well as you do this), saying:

I purify you with the power of the element of Air.

As you do this visualise winds blowing over the item, removing any impurities.

Pass the item through a candle flame, saying:

I purify you with the power of the element of Fire.

As you do this visualise fire caressing the item around its edges, burning away any impurities.

Sprinkle the item with water, saying:

I purify you with the power of the element of Water.

As you do this visualise water flowing over and around the item, washing away any impurities. Sprinkle the item with salt saying:

I purify you with the power of the element of Earth.

As you do this visualise the item being surrounded with earth, absorbing any impurities.

Elemental Tool Consecration

After you have purified your tool, you will need to empower it and consecrate it for the purpose you intend to use it for. Pass the item through each of the elemental representations on your altar as before, saying:

I consecrate and charge you with the powers of the element of Air.

As you do this, visualise the wind filling the

tool with the wisdom of Air.

Pass the item through the candle flame, saying:

I consecrate and charge you with the powers of the element of Fire.

As you do this, visualise the Fire tempering it with the creative power of Fire.

Sprinkle the item with water, saying:

I consecrate and charge you with the powers of the element of Water.

As you do this, visualise Water filling it with the tides of emotional balance.

Sprinkle the item with salt, saying:

I consecrate and charge you with the powers of the element of Earth.

As you do this, visualise the endurance and stability of Earth entering the item.

Finally hold the item up towards the symbolic representations of the Goddess and God on your altar and saying:

*I consecrate and charge you with the powers
divine*

May the might of the God always be thine

*May the wisdom of the Goddess your purpose
define*

To serve my intent my will to refine.

So mote it be!

After you have purified and consecrated your tool, you should wrap it in silk, or if you prefer any other natural fabric, such as wool, cotton or linen, to help preserve the charge. It is also an old and well acknowledged belief that your tools should never be touched by another person, the only exception being if it is a tool which is being shared in a group ritual.

29. Magickal Gestures

When you meet a person for the first time, one of the subtle cues you pick up off them is how they hold themselves. Do they stand proud and upright, or slouch and look like they want to hide in a corner? How you react to a person will be influenced by their posture and body language.

Likewise how you hold yourself when performing magick is very important. You should never slouch! When you are standing up, hold your back straight and upright. This helps the flow of energy in your body, which you obviously want to optimise when performing magick.

In the same way, when you are sitting to meditate, make sure that your back is straight and upright. Sloppy posture shows a lack of focus and may frustrate the energy you are trying to focus to make your magick work.

Putting a cushion under your buttocks when you sit cross-legged makes it easier to sit comfortably

for longer, and means that you will be less likely to become distracted by aches or pins and needles. Likewise if you practice sitting against a wall, you will soon get used to the posture you assume when you have your back straight.

When you are sitting meditating, rest your hands gently on your knees, palms upwards. This shows that your energy is flowing outwards into your magick circle. If however the meditation is purely internal, you may wish to place your hands palms down, to make your body a closed energy circuit, keeping all the energy circulating just within you.

Where appropriate you can form your hands into hand postures appropriate to the energy of your work. A common hand posture to use is to have the thumbs resting on the nail of the (bent) forefingers, with the other three fingers of each hand slightly curled. This represents the control of the ego (symbolised by the forefinger) by the higher self (symbolised by the thumb).

Do not lie down to meditate, as this may result in you falling asleep! You should sit cross-legged,

if you can manage it comfortably. If sitting on the ground is going to be a problem, have a chair in the circle that you can sit in to meditate or for quiet parts of the ritual.

It should be a chair rather than a stool, so your back can be straight and upright against the back of the chair. Traditionally when sitting in a chair the hands are placed palms down on the thighs, with the fingertips just reaching the knees. This position helps you maintain your focus and promotes good energy flow.

In a subsequent chapter we will refer to elemental pentagrams, which are a form of magickal gesture. There are many other magickal gestures, some which can be seamlessly incorporated into Wiccan ritual with great effect. Movement implies action and change, and when you do Wicca this is what you are making happen. Hence it is a good idea to look at the gestures you make, as you can use them to symbolise particular energies and actions, helping your mind focus more clearly on the intent of what you are doing.

30. Elemental Gestures

A set of elemental gestures you can perform are to make the elemental signs using your hands. For these you make the triangle shapes that correspond to each element, providing a sense of uniformity and connection between the four gestures. These four elemental signs are taken from the hexagram[\[2\]](#), and show how it represents the universe. For the combination of the four elements makes up everything in the physical universe, and this is reflected in these signs being formed from the hexagram.



Air

Make an upward pointing triangle, with your thumbs touching at the tips forming the base of the triangle and your fingers steeping up to make the two other sides of the triangle. The big fingers should be lowered so one rests on the other horizontally, parallel to the thumbs. Note that the little fingers do not actually have to touch finger tips, they should just be next to the ring fingers.



Fire

Again make an upward pointing triangle, with your thumbs touching at the tips forming the base, and the fingers steeping up to make the two other sides of the triangle.



Water

Turn your hands so they face downwards, and put your thumbs touching at the tips so they form the horizontal base of the triangle. The fingers steeple downwards forming the two downward pointing sides of the triangle.

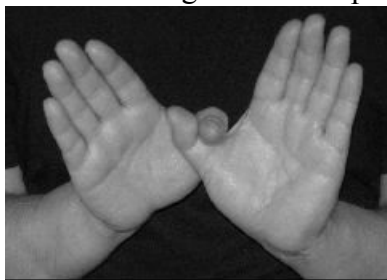


Earth

Turn your hands so they face downwards, and put your thumbs touching at the tips so they form the horizontal base of the triangle. Steeple the fingers as for the water gesture, but move the big fingers to the horizontal so one rests on the other making a horizontal bar parallel to the horizontal upper side of the triangle.

Alternative Elemental Hand Gestures

Alternative to the gestures based on the elemental sigils derived from the hexagram, the following gestures can be used to great effect. They are simpler to make and we have found them useful as a focus during larger group ceremonies, as well as training circles and public ceremonies.



Air

Interlocked thumbs, making a bird like gesture to symbolise the element of Air.



Fire

Thumbs together with forefingers forming the apex of an upright triangle, which is the symbol of the element of Fire.



Water

Hands cupped together, as if scooping water, to symbolise the element of Water.



Earth

Hands side-by-side, completely flat, to symbolise the stability of the element of Earth.

31. Elemental Pentagrams

The Elements are attributed to the points of the pentagram, clockwise, starting with Spirit at the top, Water, Fire, Earth and Air. The elemental pentagrams are used by the person invoking the Elemental Guardians and are drawn as gateways through which the elemental energies can enter the circle.

Originally only the invoking Earth pentagram was used for all of the Guardians of the Watchtowers, but this is because they were not viewed as specifically elemental beings. So if you are calling them as non-elemental Lords of the Cardinal Directions, as discussed in the chapter on *Guardians of the Watchtowers*, then you may prefer to use just the invoking Earth pentagram (and banishing Earth pentagram for dismissing).



When you draw a pentagram, it should be a reasonable size. Hold your arm out straight, and imagine the five points in the air in front of you corresponding to the equivalent positions in front of your head, left and right shoulders, and left and right hips. That is where the point of your tool or your fingers should be in the air, making a pentagram that is several foot across.

E.g., if you were performing the invoking Earth pentagram, you start with your arm held out so your preferred hand is in front of the top of your head. You then bring the arm down diagonally left so the hand is in front of your left hip, then diagonally up

right so the hand is in front of your right shoulder. Continue the stroke horizontally to the left so your hand is in front of your left shoulder, and then bring it down diagonally right to be in front of your right hip. Finish the pentagram by bringing your hand up diagonally left so it returns to its starting place in front of your crown.

You should keep your arm straight at all times, and the movements should be fluid rather than jerky, so it is a single continuous flowing stroke. If you find drawing pentagrams difficult, there is a simple way you can practice to make it easy for yourself. Draw a large pentagram on an A3 sheet of white paper, marking the directions for the different pentagrams on so you know which goes in which direction. Stick it to a wall in your house that you can easily stand in front of, and practice tracing the pentagram in the air in front of you with your preferred hand until it becomes a fluid and practiced motion that is second nature.

If you struggle to remember where the elemental attributions go around the pentagram,

there is an easy way to remember them, which is that starting from the leftmost point (i.e. upper left) and moving right, the attributions are alphabetical. Thus it goes from Air (upper left) to Earth (lower left) to Fire (lower right) to Water (upper right). If you also remember that your first stroke should be towards you for Invoking and away from you for Banishing, you will soon be drawing flawless pentagrams in your rituals.

Invoking Elemental Pentagrams



Banishing Elemental Pentagrams



Air



Fire



Water



Earth

The purpose of the use of the elemental pentagrams when invoking the guardians of the watchtowers is to help bring those guardians into the circle. The pentagrams themselves act as both a doorway for the Guardians to enter through, as well as additional protection for the circle itself.

The use of the elemental pentagrams is a personal choice, some groups choose to use them, others, use only the invoking and banishing Earth pentagrams, some omit them altogether.

Elemental pentagrams serve as doorways for the force of the element to enter through or depart. In addition to their use in the calling of the Watchtowers, they are also sometimes used in blessing rituals and spells (to represent that particular elemental energy).

If you prefer you can visualise the pentagrams in the corresponding colour of the element instead of them all being gold. So for instance, you can visualise a golden yellow pentagram for Air, a

fiery red pentagram for Fire, a shiny blue pentagram for Water and a forest green pentagram for Earth.

32. The Elemental Landscapes

When you draw elemental pentagrams, you are opening a doorway into your circle for the forces of that element. To help with this process, you can visualise the elemental landscape for that element through the pentagon in the middle of the pentagram.

As you do this you will feel the energy of that element entering your circle. For Air this may manifest as a breeze rushing past you, for Fire a sudden sense of heat, for Water a sense of moistness in the air around you, and for Earth a feeling of solidity and heaviness.

Air Landscape

The Air landscape is actually more of a skyscape. See a blue sky, with white clouds in it which seems to go on for ever. Different clouds move through the sky, from wispy Cirrus clouds high in the sky to fluffy low level Cumulus and

Stratus clouds. A variety of types of birds fly through the sky, birds of prey like eagles and falcons, flights of swallows, 'V's of geese, and you may also see mythical flying creatures like pegasi or griffins.

Fire Landscape

The Fire landscape is a hot sandy desert. Running through the desert you see a river of molten lava from a volcano in the distance. Dunes rise and fall in all directions, like giant waves of sand, and the air is hot and dry, with no moisture in it at all. There are also trees dotted around, with scarlet red bark, whose leaves are all individual flames. Creatures such as lizards, snakes and salamanders may be seen, as well as mythical creatures like the phoenix and basilisk.

Water Landscape

The Water landscape is a coastline. A river runs over a cliff, forming a waterfall down into the sea below, which ebbs and flows with its tides. On

the beach below you can see rocks partially covered with seaweed waiting for the tide to come fully back in. In the water you may see creatures like dolphins and whales, fish and seals, as well as mythical creatures like mermaids and sea goats.

Earth Landscape

The Earth landscape is a mountain range, with a forest on the lower levels of the mountains. All different sorts of trees may be seen in the forest, both deciduous and evergreen, their foliage all different shades of green, with blossoms and berries providing splotches of colour like red and white amongst the leaves. The forest is filled with creatures like deer and boar, bears, wolves and lynxes. You may also see mythical creatures like gnomes, nymphs, fauns and dryads darting around or hiding in the undergrowth.

APPENDIX

A. Important Symbols



Pentagram

The Pentagram is the best known symbol used in modern Wicca. It represents balance and the perfection of the self. The five points represent the five elements – Air, Fire, Water, Earth with Spirit at the top. They also represent the five senses of man (hearing, smell, sight, taste and touch), the five limbs – legs, arms and head. It can also be seen as representing the five fingers on a hand or the five toes on a foot. It is used in consecrations and blessings, as well as in invocations. It is used as a protection and doorway for the Guardians of the Watchtowers. The pentagram is usually marked on

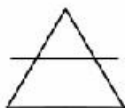
the pentacle, and these terms are often confused. Put simply, the pentacle is a disk used as a tool for consecrations, the pentagram is any symbol of a five-pointed star, usually depicted as the '*endless knot*' as shown above.



Hexagram

The hexagram, or six-pointed star, represents the Universe. It also encapsulates the axiom '*As Above, So Below*' which is represented by its two interlocking triangles, one pointing up and one pointing down. The downward pointing triangle represents the Goddess and the element of Water, the upward pointing triangle represents the God and the element of Fire. The upward pointing triangle, combined with the horizontal baseline of the other triangle, represents the element of Air. The downward pointing triangle with the

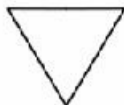
horizontal line of the upwards pointing triangle represents the element of Earth. Thus the hexagram combines the symbols of all four of the elements, which comprise the totality of the material universe.



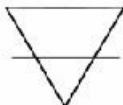
Air



Fire



Water



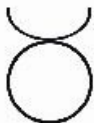
Earth



The Goddess

This symbol is sometimes used to represent the Goddess as the three-fold Maiden, Mother & Crone, but we use it as a general symbol to represent the ever changing nature of the Goddess, who like the Moon may take on many different roles at different times during the myths and during our lives. The Goddess can also be represented by

just a simple crescent moon symbol.



The Horned God

This symbol is used to represent the Horned God, it is also of course the astrological symbol for the sun sign of Taurus. The Crescent can be seen as representing the horns of the God, whereas the circle can be seen as representing the Sun which is often associated with the Horned God in the Wiccan Tradition.



Ankh

The Egyptian symbol for life, which is often worn by Wiccans as a symbol of their devotion to the Gods, especially if they work with the Goddesses and Gods of the Egyptian pantheon. The Ankh is believed to have provided the inspiration for the Venus symbol as used in astrology. Venus is of course also a feminine planet, and as such the Ankh could be used to symbolise the feminine divine.

B. Colour Correspondences

Red

Red symbolises anger ('*she saw red*'), blood, courage, danger, dynamism, energy, motivation, passion, self esteem, sexual love, stimulation, success, willpower and vitality. Red has been used to write down names of beings like Gods and angels since the time of ancient Egypt, to signify their power. Red cords or threads are associated with spirits and ethereal beings. Red is associated with the planet Mars and the element of Fire.

Orange symbolises communication, creativity, courage, dealing with trauma,

Orange

developing self-esteem, emotional strength, improving luck, inspiration, knowledge, legal matters, prosperity, stimulating fertility and travel. Orange is associated with the planet Mercury, and sometimes with the element of Fire.

Yellow

Yellow symbolises communication, emotional balance, enlightenment, harmony, improving memory, mental stimulation, travel and wealth. Yellow is sometimes associated with cowardice, as in '*being yellow*'. Yellow is the most reflective of colours and helps introspection. Yellow is associated with the Sun and the element of Air.

Green symbolises balance,

Green

beauty, envy ('*turning green with envy*'), fertility, growth, harmony, nature, nurture, serenity, truth. Green is the colour of plant life as the colour of the pigment chlorophyll used for photosynthesis. Green is associated with the planet Venus and the element of Earth.

Blue symbolises clarity, cleansing, enlightenment, healing, improving perception, meditation, mental calm, protection, purification, sincerity, success, tranquillity, understanding, wisdom. Blue can also represent insular coolness towards others and unhappiness, as in '*having the*

Blue

blues'. Blue is the first colour we register when seeing colours, and hints at the spiritual, hence its use in healing and circle casting visualisation. Blue is associated with the planet Jupiter and the element of Water (some people use sky blue for Air).

Indigo

Indigo symbolises active psychic powers, creativity, overcoming negative emotions, new perspectives and wisdom. Indigo is associated with the planet Jupiter. It may also be used to represent the element of Spirit.

Violet and purple symbolise ambition, astral work, compassion, countering

Violet/
Purple

depression, developing psychic abilities, holistic balance of mind, body and spirit, illumination, improving luck, nobility, power, realisation, spiritual development, and spiritual love. It is associated with the planet Uranus and the element of Spirit. It may also be used to represent the Moon.

Pink

Pink symbolises balance, beauty, calming, fidelity, friendship, gentleness, harmony, honour, integration, love, romance, subtlety and tranquillity. Pink is a colour of opposites – it can feel both cool (‘*cool pink*’) or hot (‘*shocking pink*’). It is associated with the planet Venus, and may also be

associated with the Sun
(Qabalistic attribution).

Turquoise symbolises calm, good luck, joy, perfection, purity, serenity and spiritual harmony. Turquoise is associated with the planet Jupiter, and can represent the element of Air as the Sky.

Brown symbolises decisiveness, endurance, grounding, patience, practicality, security, stability, tolerance. Brown is associated with the element of Earth and is sometimes used to represent the planet Saturn.

White symbolises blessing, calming stress and negative emotion, change, chastity, cleanliness, completion,

White

healing, innocence, perfection, purity, sacredness, spirit, spirituality, truth and wisdom. White is the reflection of all colours, and when split contains the entire spectrum of colours of the rainbow, so it is ideal for transformation of the self. White is often associated with divinity and as such can represent the element of Spirit. White is also associated with the planet Pluto, and is sometimes used as a Lunar colour. Also the element of Water as Ice.

Black symbolises absorbing negativity, assertiveness, binding, bringing things to an end, dealing with depression and grief, divination, focus,

Black

protection, unmanifest potential. It can also be associated with unfairness ('*blackening her name*') or callous behavior ('*he had a black heart*'). As the absorption of all colours, black is a very protective colour (or more correctly absence of colour). Black is associated with the planet Saturn and the element of Spirit. Confusingly it can also sometimes be attributed to the element of Earth as fertility, as with the Nile mud of ancient Egypt.

Grey

Grey symbolises neutrality and dispelling negative influences. Grey is associated with the planet Neptune, and is

also sometimes used to symbolise the Moon. Grey and silver may be used interchangeably.

Silver

Silver symbolises astral and dream work, developing psychism, skrying and versatility. Silver is associated with the Moon. Silver and white are sometimes used interchangeably.

Gold

Gold symbolises achieving goals, healing, prosperity, success and wealth. Gold is associated with the Sun. Gold and yellow are sometimes used interchangeably.

C. Numerical Correspondences

One

Number of unity, of totality.
One is often considered the number of the divine spirit, as the all-pervading energy of life, beyond gender or any division. It is the beginning, the initial manifestation from nothingness. It can only be divided by itself, and is a factor of every other whole number, showing the divine spirit in everything. One is also the number of the self, of the individual, as when you talk about yourself in the first person. It can be seen as a number of self-sufficiency, of the single individual. It represents the point as the first depiction of existence.

Number of duality, of the

Two

polarity of opposites. Polarities are dualistic, so we have Goddess-God, light-dark, female-male, day-night, black-white, positive-negative, action-reaction, wave-particle, etc. A complimentary number, for balance is achieved by the union of opposite polarities, and this can be seen mostly clearly in relationships. In Wicca two is often considered a masculine number, as the horns of the Horned God. Two is a number of choice, for there is no longer a single perspective, you have to choose, and may be on the '*horns of a dilemma*'. Represents the line, which connects two points, and can be seen as the lingam or phallus, the masculine energy.

Trinity, where the union of

Three opposites produces a third, complementary force. In Wicca three is often considered a feminine number, as the triple aspect model of Maiden, Mother and Crone. It can also be seen as the number of the Child of Promise, the result of the union of Goddess and God. The number of Saturn, and form, as it gives us the first shape, the triangle. A very common magickal number as the triad expressed through a huge range of significant groupings, such as the three principles of life, death and rebirth, or earth, sky and underworld, the three Fates, the three Graces, etc.

Four is the quaternary, the square or equal armed cross. The number of stability, as the solidity

Four

of the square. Balance and hence the four elements and the four directions. With four we move into three dimensions with the tetrahedron, and the fourth dimension of time is implied, as once something has form, it exists within the dimensions of space, and has duration. Also two squared, again indicating stability. The number of Jupiter.

Five

Number of man, the microcosm. Five represents the manifestation of spirit in matter, the pentagram, and hence can be seen as a number of activity and movement. Five is also the elements all together in harmony – Air, Fire, Water, Earth and Spirit. Can also be seen as the number of the sacred marriage, of the masculine two with the feminine

three, hence the five points of fellowship when two people embrace. We have five physical senses, and five digits on each of our extremities, so five is very much the generic number for humanity. The number of Mars.

Six

Six is the number of the universe, the macrocosm. The hexagram, which is two times three, and as such represents the balance of the Goddess and God as the downward and upward pointing triangles. Six is a number of perfection, being the only number produced by both adding and multiplying its factors ($1+2+3$, $1 \times 2 \times 3$). The number of the Sun. The cube also symbolises six, with its six faces. Six also indicates unseen power, as in the sixth sense.

Number of completion, and has always been considered one of the most mystical of numbers. Seven days in a week, seven colours in a rainbow,

Seven

seven notes in a musical scale, seven major chakras, seven classical planets, the list goes on and on. The number of Venus and is thus associated with love. It is also considered a mystical number, uniting the divine triplicity with the material and solid four.

Considered to be a magickal number, representing as it does the Mercurial energy of change, communication and healing.

Eight

Also a number of solidity, being the first cube number ($2 \times 2 \times 2$), and if you look at a cube you will see it has eight corners. For these reasons eight is also a number of fullness.

Lunar number, connected with cycles and completion, being the last simple number

Nine

before 10, and also because nine is unique in that any number multiplied by nine will always generate a product that adds up to nine. There are nine planets in our solar system, and nine is attributed to groups of beings, such as nine Muses, nine Orders of Angels, etc. It is 3×3 , and is hence seen as a Goddess number. This is also reinforced by the nine month gestation of pregnancy in women.

Number of balance and stability. It is the sum of the first four numbers, one, two, three and four. As such it represents all the elements in balance, and this is why it is the number of the planet Earth. Ten

Ten

is the number base we work in, based on our ten fingers, and there are ten spheres on the Tree of Life. Ten indicates an increase in scale, beyond simple numbers. Ten is also the original unity extended into full manifestation (indicated by the circle of the 0 after the 1), embodying the principle of '*As above, so below*'.

Eleven

Eleven is considered to be the number of magick. It is the one beyond ten, the invisible influence of subtle energies. The first number formed by repetition – 1 and 1, symbolising the creative tension between two opposing forces, the polarity which underlies magick. It is also the first number which adds together to

form something different (two), implying change. Eleven is also the number of Uranus.

Twelve is the number of the zodiac, and is hence a stellar number. We have twelve months in the solar year (and of course our Sun is a star). A number of completion, the whole cycle, and is the result of the feminine three multiplied by the masculine four.

Thirteen is also the sum of four and nine, the squares of two and three, making it a number of union.

Twenty-two is considered a magickal number due to its Qabalistic connection. There are twenty-two paths on the

Twenty- Two	Tree of Life, Hebrew letters and Tarot trumps. It is also the product of two and eleven, implying change of an even greater magnitude than eleven.
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D. Planetary Correspondences

The Sun

Colours	Gold, Orange, Yellow
Direction	South
Tools	Sword
Scents	Chamomile, Cinnamon, Frankincense, Ginger, Juniper, Rosemary
Crystals	Amber, Diamond, Orange Calcite, Sunstone, Topaz, Zircon
Metal	Gold
Numbers	6, 36, 216, 666
Rules	Leo
Intent	Advancement, Charisma, Dominance, Friendship, Growth, Harmony, Healing, Illumination, Individuality, Joy, Leadership,

Power, Success, Wealth, Will.

Day

Sunday

Element

Fire

The Moon

Colours	Silver, White
Direction	North-West
Tools	Magick Mirror
Scents	Aniseed, Camphor, Jasmine, Myrrh, Ylang Ylang
Crystals	Chalcedony, Moonstone, Pearl, Quartz
Metal	Silver
Numbers	9, 13, 28, 81, 999
Rules	Cancer
Intent	Astral Work, Birth, Clairvoyance, Cycles, Divination, Dreams, Fertility, Glamour, Increase, Intuition, Mystery, Psychic Ability, Reconciliation, Secrets, Shapeshifting, Spells, Tides, Transformation.
Day	Monday

Element

Water

The Earth

Colours	Black, Brown, Green
Direction	North-East
Tools	Drum
Scents	Patchouli, Pine, Vetivert
Crystals	Amber, Aventurine, Chrysocolla, Emerald, Jadeite, Nephrite, Onyx, Staurolite
Metal	N/A – Horn is often used
Number	10, 100
Rules	-
Intent	Awareness, Endurance, Form, Home, Manifestation, Nature, Patience, Perseverance, Solidity, Strength, Tolerance.
Element	All four combined

Mercury

Colours	Orange, Light Blue, Multi Colours
Direction	East
Tools	Caduceus
Scents	Caraway, Eucalyptus, Lavender, Lemon, Lime, Sandalwood
Crystals	Agate, Citrine Quartz, Opal
Metal	Mercury, Aluminium
Number	8, 64, 88, 888
Rules	Gemini, Virgo
Intent	Business, Commerce, Communication, Creativity, Divination, Exams, Flexibility, Healing, Humour, Insight, Intelligence, Knowledge, Literature, Magick, Memory, Music, Recovering Lost

Property, Science, Travel.

Day Wednesday

Element Air

Venus

Colours Green, Pink

Direction Centre

Tools Girdle, Necklace

Scents Benzoin, Geranium, Lotus,
Pennyroyal, Peppermint, Rose

Crystals Emerald, Jadeite, Malachite,
Nephrite, Peridot, Rose Quartz,
Zoisite

Metal Copper

Number 7, 49, 343, 777

Rules Libra, Taurus

Intent Art, Attraction, Beauty,
Culture, Emotions, Enhancing
Friendship, Fertility, Grace,
Harmony, Inspiration, Love,

Passion, Peace, Pleasure,
Sensuality, Sexuality,
Sociability.

Day

Friday

Element

Earth

Mars

Colours	Red
Direction	South-West
Tools	Spear, Scourge
Scents	Basil, Black Pepper, Ginger, Hyssop, Rue
Crystals	Garnet, Hematite, Heliotrope, Magnetite, Ruby, Spinel
Metal	Iron, Brass
Number	5, 25, 125, 555
Rules	Aries, co-rules Scorpio
Intent	Conflict, Courage, Discord, Drive, Ego, Military Matters, Passion, Revenge, Sex Drive, Strength, Vengeance, Vigour.
Day	Tuesday
Element	Fire

Jupiter

Colours	Blue, Purple
Direction	South-East
Tools	Sceptre, Wand
Scents	Cedar, Hyssop, Sandalwood
Crystals	Lapis Lazuli, Sapphire, Sodalite, Turquoise
Metal	Tin
Number	4, 16, 64, 444
Rules	Sagittarius, co-rules Pisces
Intent	Ambition, Ascendancy, Authority, Business, Career, Devotion, Enthusiasm, Ethics, Expansion, Fortune, Good Health, Honour, Humour, Law, Leadership, Luck, Obtaining Friendship, Philosophy, Politics, Religion, Responsibility, Success, Truth, Wealth.
Day	Thursday
Element	Air/Water

Saturn

Colours	Black, Brown
Direction	North
Tools	Sickle, Scythe
Scents	Camphor, Lavender, Myrrh
Crystals	Coral, Jet, Obsidian, Onyx, Smoky Quartz
Metal	Lead
Number	3, 9, 29, 333
Rules	Capricorn, co-rules Aquarius
Intent	Agriculture, Austerity, Death, Duty, Equilibrium, Form, Formation, History, Legal Matters, Limitation, Memory, Patience, Prudence, Restriction, Self-discipline, Teaching, Time, Wisdom.
Day	Saturday
Element	Earth

E. How To Burn Incense Grains

Loose incense grains are frequently used during Wiccan ceremonies, as offerings, for purificatory rites, for consecrations and as a symbolical representation of the element of Air. The grains are placed on charcoal blocks in a fireproof container or censer which is placed on the altar and may sometimes be taken around the circle, especially when performing purifications or blessings. In order to burn loose incense you will need:

Incense grains (a specially prepared blend, or a resin that can be burned by itself, for example frankincense)

Charcoal disks

A heat resistant dish or censer made for the purpose

You will also need matches or a lighter with which to light the charcoal.

You should first prepare the container in which you will be burning the incense. It is a good idea to place some clean sand or gravel at the base of the container as this will help with heat insulation and will also allow air to circulate more effectively to the burning charcoal, which in turn will allow both the charcoal and incense to burn more evenly. Once you have prepared the container the next step is to light the charcoal block, this is done by holding the edge of the disk in a flame (a lighter or candle flame works well). If you are worried about burning your fingers, use an old pair of tweezers or tongs to hold it with. Once it ignites you will need to place it in the censer and allow it to ignite properly. Sometimes charcoal can be troublesome and in some instances you may have to relight it, but with most good quality self-igniting charcoal blocks you should be able to see the sparks travelling across the block. Once the charcoal is fully lit, place approx $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of incense grains on the block and enjoy!

Different types of incense grains and blends burn at a different pace from each other, as a result you will need to keep an eye on it and add more grains as need be.

Common Sense Warnings:

If you suffer from respiratory problems, or are prone to allergies, it is best to avoid the use of incense in enclosed spaces.

Do not leave burning incense unattended

Treat burning charcoal with caution; keep away from flammable objects at all times.

On occasion a charcoal block may sparkle profusely upon ignition, so take extra care when lighting as the sparks may ignite nearby flammable objects or cause damage to clothing, carpets or upholstery.

F. Under-18's

With a massive increase in pop culture exposure of witchcraft and Wicca, this is an area that has become increasingly popular amongst teenagers. However, legally teenagers are still minors until their late teens, and as such their involvement in Wicca can be fraught with problems. The advice given to teenagers interested in Wicca is not what they usually want to hear! Reputable groups and individuals will not normally work with anyone until they are eighteen, to avoid any problems regarding legal issues. At eighteen a person is considered an adult in the UK and able to make up their own minds.

So what can teenagers do until then? There is an ever-increasing number of books available aimed specifically at teenagers, and there is nothing to stop them reading other books on the subject too. Learning about the ethics, beliefs and the practices can give a teenager a clearer idea as

to whether this is something they are seriously interested in, rather than simply a fad or a fashion statement. There are also some websites with areas aimed specifically at teenagers, which are safe and can allow them to learn more in a positive environment. If a teenager is still interested when they are eighteen, having learned about the tradition and practices before then will have been beneficial.

G. Solitary Studies

This may seem like a trivial question, but it is something that is often asked by those starting out and wishing to work solitary. Our advice would be that you learn from as many sources as possible, by doing this you will find your own way of doing things.

Read as many books as you can find, search for information on the internet, join internet forums where you can interact with others and ask questions, go to public ceremonies if they are available in your area, attend workshops and conferences, do correspondence courses etc. Our advice will always include that you should learn as much as you can about mythology and folklore associated with the place you live in and the cultures you are most interested in, in addition to learning about the practices of magick such as spells and ritual. Having a good knowledge of world mythology will help you understand

symbolism and also help you create a balanced view of deity.

Most importantly spend time in nature, observe the changing seasons, learn about the trees, the plants, herbs and animal life. Learn to meditate and practice it on a regular basis. And finally, there is no better way of learning than through doing – the only way of being a Wiccan and understanding the rituals and celebrations is to practice and learn through experience. By regular practice you will not only build your confidence and focus, but also develop a greater fluidity which gives your rituals more impetus and makes them more rewarding. Remember Wicca is a spirituality which helps you develop as a person, not a hobby to be picked up and put down on a whim. Change and growth require you to put energy in, and the more you put in, the greater the rewards you will reap.

When you interact with others, be it in person or on the internet, remember that your opinions are as valid as anyone else's, and if people belittle you

for asking questions, the chances are they are not worth listening to. Everyone should ask questions, and people who do not, or are afraid to answer questions, are usually not that serious in their intent. Remember it is always better to admit you don't know something, and then learn, than to try and bluster or lie.

H. Friends & Family

Becoming a Wiccan can bring a whole host of social and emotional issues with it. Be aware that people with strong religious views may find it very difficult to accept your beliefs, which they may see as being in opposition with their own. Whilst it can be interesting to exchange ideas with open-minded people, do not try and convert others and be ready for hostility from some people on religious grounds.

Another issue which may arise is jealousy. Friends, partners and family can be very jealous of your time, and if a chunk of it suddenly disappears because of your commitment to Wicca and you are unavailable, they may resent this. So when you tell people close to you about your involvement, pick a good moment, when there is no negativity around. It is often better to tell people one-to-one or in very small groups (two or three) in case it does become heated or negative. People are normally

used to an image of you that they are comfortable with, and it may take time for them to accept change to that image, so be patient and understanding. You need to decide when to tell people, but also be aware that hiding things like your spirituality from a partner will only cause problems in the long term.

I. Finding A Coven

There is a saying that when the student is ready the teacher appears. Yet many people wanting to find a coven or experienced Wiccan to teach them about Wicca do not find this to be the case. The truth is that it can be a long process to find a suitable coven that you are happy with that will accept you. If you are serious in your desire to join a coven then you need to find people who are in covens. This means attending moots (social gatherings), workshops, festivals, conferences or other events where there may be likeminded people. You need to get out there and talk to people. When you do attend events you also do not want to rush in like a bull in a china shop, it is better to be comfortable in a situation before raising questions like *"can I join your coven?"* The internet is another good place to find likeminded people, if you apply commonsense and stick with established and reputable sites.

Remember that time spent learning about the tradition and its practices, mythology and magick will not be time wasted. Covens tend to be more interested in people who are keen to learn and have already started the process. You should also be aware that a coven is a big commitment in time and energy, and be sure you will be able to fulfil that commitment if you make it.

If you do find a possible coven, and you are initially invited to meet with them, insist on meeting in a public place. Treat it like you would a '*blind date*'. Don't hand over your home address, work details or other personal information until you are sure that you trust the individual(s). Remember that you have a choice and should feel sure the coven is right for you, and you can be sure they will do the same. For this reason if you are turned down do not assume it is anything about you, it might just be a lack of compatibility or sympathy.



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titles.

[1] *High Magic's Aid* – Gerald Gardner, p100,
1949.

[2] See Appendix A, Important Symbols for an
explanation