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# WICCA



A GUIDE FOR  
THE  
SOLITARY  
PRACTITIONER

# SCOTT CUNNINGHAM

INCLUDES AUTHOR'S BOOK OF SHADOWS

## About the Author

Scott Cunningham practiced elemental magic for over twenty years. He authored more than thirty books, both fiction and nonfiction. Scott's books reflect a broad range of interests from the New Age sphere, where he was highly regarded. He passed from this life on March 28, 1993, after a long illness.

# WICCA

A GUIDE FOR THE  
SOLITARY PRACTITIONER

SCOTT  
CUNNINGHAM



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This book is dedicated to the forces that watch over and guide us—  
however we may envision or name them.

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# Preface

THIS BOOK, THE result of sixteen years of practical experience and research, is a guidebook outlining basic Wiccan theory and practice. It is written with the solitary student or practitioner in mind; there are no coven rituals or magical group dynamics described herein.

The Wicca as described here is “new.” It is not a revelation of ancient rituals handed down for thousands of years. This does not invalidate it, however, for it is based on time-honored practices.

A three-thousand-year-old incantation to manna isn’t necessarily more powerful or effective than one improvised during a private rite. The person practicing the ritual or spell determines its success.

If centuries-old incantations are nothing more to you than senseless gibberish, chances are the ritual won’t work, any more than would a Shinto ceremony in the hands of a Methodist. To be effective, rituals must speak to you.

Rituals are at the heart of Wicca for some, and are pleasant adjuncts to Wicca’s philosophy and way of life for others. In Wicca, as with every religion, ritual is a means of contacting the divine. Effective ritual unites the worshipper with deity. Ineffective ritual kills spirituality.

There are rituals in this book, yes, but they’re guideposts, not holy writ. I wrote them so that others, using them as general guidelines, could create their own.

Some people might say, “But that’s just your stuff. We want the *real* Wicca! *Tell us the secrets!*”

There is not, and can never be, one “pure” or “true” or “genuine” form of Wicca. There are no central governing agencies, no physical

leaders, no universally recognized prophets or messengers. Although specific, structured forms of Wicca certainly exist, they aren't in agreement regarding ritual, symbolism, and theology. Because of this healthy individualism, no one ritual or philosophical system has emerged to consume the others.

Wicca is varied and multi-faceted. As in every religion, the Wiccan spiritual experience is one shared with deity alone. This book is simply one way, based on my experiences and the instruction I have received, to practice Wicca.

Although I wrote it, it didn't hatch out of thin air. The jeweler who facets rough emeralds didn't create the gemstones; nor the potter the clay. I've tried to present a blending of the major themes and ritual structures of Wicca, not to create a new form, but to present one so that others can develop their own Wiccan practices.

When I began learning Wicca there were few books, certainly no published Books of Shadows.\* Wiccan rituals and magical texts are secret within many traditions of Wicca, and it wasn't until recently that any systems have "gone public." Due to this fact, few Wiccans wrote books describing the rituals and inner teachings of Wicca. Those outside the Wicca (or the Craft as it is also known) who wrote of it could necessarily report only garbled or incomplete pictures.

Within a few years of my introduction to Wicca, however, many authentic, informative books began to be published. As I continued my studies, both independently and under teachers I had met, I realized that anyone trying to learn and practice Wicca solely from published sources would gain a sadly unbalanced picture.

Most Wiccan authors tout their own form of Wicca. This makes sense: write what you know. Unfortunately, many of the foremost Wiccan authors share similar views, and so most of the published Wiccan material is repetitive.

Also, most of these books are geared toward coven-(group) oriented Wicca. This poses a problem for anyone unable to find a minimum of

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\* See glossary for unfamiliar terms.

four or five interested, compatible persons to create a coven. It also lays a burden on those who desire private religious practice.

Perhaps my true reason for writing this book—besides numerous requests—is strictly personal. I not only wish to present an alternate to staid, structured Wiccan books, I also want to return something for the training I have received in this contemporary religion.

Although I occasionally teach, and Wicca always draws a crowd, I prefer the medium of printed words to point out some of the things I have learned. Although nothing can replace one-on-one teaching, this isn't practical for all those desiring to learn.

And so, several years ago, I began jotting down notes and chapters that eventually became this book. To avoid becoming too narrow-minded (Sybil Leek once said that it was dangerous writing about your own religion—you're too close to it), I've had Wiccan friends read and comment on early drafts to ensure that the picture of Wicca presented here isn't too limited or dogmatic.

Please don't misunderstand me. Though this book's goal is a wider understanding of, and appreciation of Wicca, I'm not proselytizing. Like most Wiccans, I'm not out to change your spiritual and religious beliefs; it's none of my business.

However, with the continuing interest in nontraditional religions, concern over environmental destruction, and a wide interest in the Wiccan religion, I hope this book partially answers one of the questions I'm most commonly asked: "What is Wicca?"

## Linguistic Note

Much disagreement concerning the exact (and original) meaning of the word “Wicca” presently exists. It’s not my intention to enter into or add to such discussions, but I don’t feel that I can use this term without defining it. Therefore, “Wicca” will be used within this book to describe both the religion itself (a loosely organized pagan religion centering toward reverence for the creative forces of nature, usually symbolized by a goddess and a god), as well as its practitioners of both sexes. The term “Warlock,” though sometimes used to describe male practitioners, is virtually never used by Wiccans themselves; hence I’ve avoided it here. Though some use “Wicca” and “Witch” almost interchangeably, I prefer the older, less-encumbered word “Wicca,” and so use it almost exclusively.

# Introduction

WICCA, THE RELIGION of the “Witches,” has long been shrouded in secrecy. Anyone interested in learning “the Craft” had to content themselves with hints from books and articles. The Wiccans wouldn’t say much, save that they weren’t looking for new members.

Growing numbers of people today are dissatisfied with traditional religious structures. Many are searching for a personally involving religion, one that celebrates both physical and spiritual realities, in which attunement with deity is coupled with the practice of magic.

Wicca is just such a religion, centering around reverence for nature as seen in the Goddess and the God. Its spiritual roots in antiquity, acceptance of magic, and mysterious nature have made it particularly appealing. Until recently, the lack of public information concerning Wicca and its apparent exclusivity has caused much frustration among interested students.

Wicca doesn’t seek new members. This has been a major stumbling block to those wishing to learn its rites and ways of magic. Wicca doesn’t solicit because, unlike most western religions, it doesn’t claim to be the one true way to deity.

With growing numbers interested in practicing Wicca, perhaps it’s time to allow the full light of the dawning Aquarian Age to illuminate these ways. To do so is not to trumpet Wicca as the salvation of our planet, but simply to present it to anyone who cares to learn.

There have been many obstacles. In the past the only way to enter Wicca was to a) contact an initiated Wicca, usually a coven member, and b) receive initiation. If you didn’t know any Witches you were out of luck, for initiation was an absolute prerequisite.

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Today, times are changing. We are maturing, perhaps too quickly. Our technology outpaces the wisdom to utilize it. Vast unrest spreads over the globe, and the threat of war looms over most of the more than six billion persons alive today.

Wicca as a religion is changing too. This is necessary if it is to be more than a curiosity of an earlier age. The heirs of Wicca must point their religion firmly to the future if it is to have something to offer coming generations.

Since we have arrived at the point where one mishap could end our planet as we know it, there has never been a time when Wicca as a nature-reverencing religion has had more to offer.

This book breaks many Wicca conventions. It has been structured so that anyone, anywhere in the world, can practice Wicca. No initiations are required. It is designed for the solitary practitioner, since finding others with similar interests is difficult, especially in rural areas.

Wicca is a joyous religion springing from our kinship with nature. It is a merging with the goddesses and gods, the universal energies that created all in existence. It is a personal, positive celebration of life.

And now it is available to all.

# Section I

## *Theory*



## Wicca and Shamanism

SHAMANISM HAS BEEN defined as the first religion. It existed prior to the earliest civilizations, before our ancestors took the first steps down the long journey to the present. Prior to this time, the shamans were the medicine people, the power wielders, male and female. They wrought magic and spoke to the spirits of nature.

The shamans were the first humans with knowledge. They created, discovered, nurtured, and used it. Knowledge is power; women and men who possessed it in those far-flung days were shamans.

How did shamans capture or discover this power? Through ecstasy—alternate states of consciousness in which they communed with the forces of the universe. Early shamans first attained this state through the use of such “tools” as fasts, thirsts, self-infliction of pain, ingestion of hallucinogenic substances, concentration, and so on. Once mastered, these techniques allowed them to gain awareness of other, nonphysical worlds.

Through such “awareness shifts,” all magical knowledge was obtained. Conference with spirits and deities, plants and animals opened up new vistas of learning. Among their own people, the shamans often shared some of this knowledge but reserved the rest for personal use. Shamanic lore wasn’t for public consumption.

Later, shamans advanced in the use of tools to facilitate these awareness shifts, marking the advent of magical ritual. Shamans around the world still use tools such as drums, rattles, reflective objects, music, chants, and dance. Indeed, the most effective shamanic rites are those that utilize both natural and artificial tools—a sighing wind, roaring ocean, flickering firelight, steady drumbeat, hiss of rattle. These, combined with darkness

and chants, eventually overwhelm the senses, forcing a shifting from awareness of the physical world to the vaster realm of energies. Such are shamanic rites that exist to this day.

From these primitive beginnings arose all magic and religion, including Wicca. Despite current controversy as to the “antiquity” of Wicca, it is spiritually descended from such rites. Though refined and changed for our world, Wicca still touches our souls and causes ecstasy—awareness shifts—uniting us with deity. Many of the techniques of Wicca are shamanic in origin.

Wicca, therefore, can be described as a shamanic religion. As with shamanism, only a select few feel compelled to enter its circle of light.

Today, Wicca has dropped the ordeals of pain and the use of hallucinogens in favor of chanting, meditation, concentration, visualization, music, dance, invocation, and ritual drama. With these spiritual tools, the Wicca achieve a state of ritual consciousness similar to those attained by the most brutal shamanic ordeals.

I deliberately used the term “alternate states of consciousness.” Such changed consciousness states aren’t unnatural, but are a deviation from the “normal” waking consciousness. Wicca teaches that nature includes a broad spectrum of mental and spiritual states of which most of us are ignorant. Effective Wiccan ritual enables us to slip into such states, allowing communication and communion with the Goddess and God.

Unlike some religions, Wicca doesn’t view deity as distant. The Goddess and God are both within ourselves and manifest in all nature. This is the universality: there is nothing that isn’t of the gods.

A study of shamanism reveals much of the heart of magical and religious experience in general, and Wicca in particular (see bibliography for recommended books). With ritual as a means to enter ritual consciousness, the shaman or Wicca constantly expands his or her knowledge, and knowledge is power. Wicca helps its practitioners to understand the universe and our place within it.

At present, Wicca is a religion with many variations. Because it is such a personally structured system, I can only state generalities about its creed and form here, filtered through my experience and knowledge, to create a picture of the nature of Wicca.

Wicca, in common with many other religions, recognizes deity as dual. It reveres both the Goddess and the God. They are equal, warm, and loving, not distant or resident in “heaven,” but omnipresent throughout the universe.

Wicca also teaches that the physical world is one of many realities. The physical is not the absolute highest expression, nor is the spiritual “purer” than the base. The only difference between the physical and the spiritual is that the former is denser.

As in eastern religions, Wicca also embraces the doctrine of reincarnation, that much-misunderstood subject. Unlike some eastern philosophies, however, Wicca doesn't teach that upon physical death our souls will reincarnate in anything other than a human body. Also, few of the Wicca believes we began our existence as rocks, trees, snails, or birds before we evolved to the point where we could incarnate as human beings. Though these creatures and substances do possess a type of soul, it's not the sort we humans have.

Reincarnation is accepted as fact by many millions in the east and west. It answers many questions: what happens after death? Why do we seem to remember things we've never done in this life? Why are we sometimes strangely attracted to places or people who we've never before seen?

Surely, reincarnation can't answer all these questions, but it is there for those who wish to study it. This isn't something that should be believed. Through contemplation, meditation, and self-analysis, many come to the point where they accept reincarnation as fact. For more information on this subject see chapter 10, “The Spiral of Rebirth.”

The Wiccan ideal of morality is simple: do what you want, as long as you harm none. This rule contains another unwritten condition: do nothing that will harm yourself. Thus, if you as a Wicca abuse your body, deny it the necessities of life, or otherwise harm yourself, you're in violation of this principle.

This is more than survival. It also ensures that you'll be in good condition to take on the tasks of preserving and bettering our world, for concern and love for our planet play major roles in Wicca.

Wicca is a religion that utilizes magic. This is one of its most appealing and unique features. Religious magic? This isn't as strange as it might seem. Catholic priests use "magic" to transform a piece of bread into the body of a long-deceased "savior." Prayer—a common tool in many religions—is simply a form of concentration and communication with deity. If the concentration is extended, energies are sent out with the thoughts that may in time make the prayer come true. Prayer is a form of religious magic.

Magic is the practice of moving natural (though little-understood) energies to effect needed change. In Wicca, magic is used as a tool to sanctify ritual areas, and to improve ourselves and the world in which we live.

Many people confuse Wicca and magic as if the two words were interchangeable. Wicca is a religion that embraces magic. If you seek only to practice magic, Wicca probably isn't the answer for you.

Another fundamental point: magic isn't a means of forcing nature to do your will. This is a completely erroneous idea, fostered by the belief that magic is somehow supernatural, as if anything that exists can be outside of nature. *Magic is natural.* It is a harmonious movement of energies to create needed change. If you wish to practice magic, all thoughts of it being paranormal or supernatural must be forgotten.

Most Wiccans don't believe in predestination. Although we honor and revere the Goddess and God, we know that we're free souls with full control and responsibility of our lives. We can't point at an image of an evil god, such as Satan, and blame it for our faults and weaknesses. We can't blame fate. Every second of each day we're creating our futures, shaping the courses of our lives. Once a Wiccan takes full responsibility for all that she or he has done (in this life and past ones) and determines that future actions will be in accord with higher ideals and goals, magic will blossom and life will be a joy.

That perhaps is at the core of Wicca—it is a joyous union with nature. The earth is a manifestation of divine energy. Wicca's temples are flower-splashed meadows, forests, beaches, and deserts. When a Wicca is outdoors, she or he is actually surrounded by sanctity, much as is a Christian when entering a church or cathedral.

Additionally, all nature is constantly singing to us, revealing her secrets. Wiccans listen to the earth. They don't shut out the lessons that she is so desperately trying to teach us. When we lose touch with our blessed planet, we lose touch with deity.

These are some of the basic principles of Wicca. They are the true Wicca; the rituals and myths are secondary to these ideals and serve to celebrate them.

*The Standing Stones Book of Shadows* (ritual book) included in section III is a guide to constructing your own ritual. Because these rituals are outer form only, you needn't be chained to them. Change rites as the mood strikes you. As long as the rite attunes you with the deities, all is fine.

Don't shut out the physical world in favor of the spiritual or magical realms, for only through nature can we experience these realities. We are here on the earth for a reason. Do, however, use ritual to expand your awareness so that you are truly at one with all creation.

The way is open. The ancient Goddess and God await within and around you. May they bless you with wisdom and power.

## The Deities

ALL RELIGIONS ARE structures built upon reverence of deity. Wicca is no exception. The Wicca acknowledge a supreme divine power, unknowable, ultimate, from which the entire universe sprang.

The concept of this power, far beyond our comprehension, has nearly been lost in Wicca because of our difficulty in relating to it. Wiccans, however, link with this force through their deities. In accordance with the principles of nature, the supreme power was personified into two basic beings: the Goddess and the God.

Every deity that has received worship upon this planet exists with the archetypal God and Goddess. The complex pantheons of deities that arose in many parts of the world are simply aspects of the two. Every goddess is resident within the concept of the Goddess; every god in the God.

Wicca reveres these twin deities because of its links with nature. Since most (but certainly not all) nature is divided into gender, the deities embodying it are similarly conceived.

In the past, when the Goddess and God were as real as the moon and sun, rites of worship and adoration were unstructured—spontaneous, joyous union with the divine. Later, rituals followed the course of the sun through its astronomical year (and thusly the seasons) as well as the monthly waxing and waning of the moon.

Today similar rites are observed by the Wicca, and their regular performance creates a truly magical closeness with these deities and the powers behind them.

Fortunately, we needn't wait for ritual occasions to be reminded of the Gods' presence. The sight of a perfect blossom in a field of bare earth can

instill feelings rivaling those of the most powerful formal rite. Living in nature makes every moment a ritual. Wiccans are comfortable in communicating with animals, plants and trees. They feel energies within stones and sand, and cause fossils to speak of their primeval beginnings. For some Wiccans, watching the sun or moon rise and set each day is a ritual unto itself, for these are the heavenly symbols of the God and Goddess.

Because the Wicca see deity inherent in nature, many of us are involved in ecology—saving the earth from utter destruction by our own hands. The Goddess and God still exist, as they have always existed, and to honor them we honor and preserve our precious planet.

In Wiccan thought, the deities didn't exist before our spiritual ancestor's acknowledgement of them. However, the *energies* behind them did; they created us. Early worshippers recognized these forces as the Goddess and God, personifying them in an attempt to understand them.

The Old Ones didn't die when the ancient pagan religions fell to Christianity in Europe. Most of the rites vanished, but they weren't the only effective ones. Wicca is alive and well and the deities respond to our calls and invocations.

When envisioning the Goddess and God, many of the Wicca see them as well-known deities from ancient religions. Diana, Pan, Isis, Hermes, Hina, Tammuz, Hecate, Ishtar, Cerridwen, Thoth, Tara, Aradia, Artemis, Pélé, Apollo, Kanaloa, Bridget, Helios, Bran, Lugh, Hera, Cybele, Inanna, Maui, Ea, Athena, Lono, Marduk—the list is virtually endless. Many of these deities, with their corresponding histories, rites, and mythic information, furnish the concept of deity for Wiccans.

Some feel comfortable associating such names and forms with the Goddess and God, feeling that they can't possibly revere nameless divine beings. Others find a lack of names and costumes a comforting lack of limitations.

As stated earlier, the Wicca as outlined in this book is “new,” although built upon established rituals and myths, firmly rooted within the earliest religious feelings that nature aroused within our species. In these rituals I've used the words “the God” and “the Goddess” rather than

specific names such as Diana and Pan. Anyone with a special affinity with particular deities should feel free to adapt the rituals in section III: *The Standing Stones Book of Shadows* to include them.

If you haven't studied non-western polytheistic religions or developed a rapport with divinities other than those with which you were raised, start by accepting this premise (if only for the moment): deity is twin, consisting of the Goddess and the God.

They have been given so many names they have been called the Nameless Ones. In appearance they look exactly as we wish them to, for they're all the deities that ever were. The Goddess and God are all-powerful because they are the creators of all manifest and unmanifest existence. We can contact and communicate with them because a part of us is in them and they are within us.

The Goddess and God are equal; neither is higher or more deserving of respect. Though some Wiccans focus their rituals toward the Goddess and seem to forget the God entirely, this is a reaction to centuries of stifling patriarchal religion, and the loss of acknowledgement of the feminine aspect of divinity. Religion based entirely on feminine energy, however, is as unbalanced and unnatural as one totally masculine in focus. The ideal is a perfect balance of the two. The Goddess and God are equal, complementary.

## The Goddess

The Goddess is the universal mother. She is the source of fertility, endless wisdom, and loving caresses. As the Wicca know her, she is often of three aspects: the maiden, the mother, and the crone, symbolized in the waxing, full, and waning moon. She is at once the unploughed field, the full harvest, and the dormant, frost-covered earth. She gives birth to abundance. But as life is her gift, she lends it with the promise of death. This is not darkness and oblivion, but rest from the toils of physical existence. It is human existence between incarnations.

Since the Goddess is nature, all nature, she is both the temptress and the crone; the tornado and the fresh spring rain; the cradle and the grave.

But though she is possessed of both natures, the Wicca revere her as the giver of fertility, love, and abundance, though they acknowledge her darker side as well. We see her in the moon, the soundless, ever-moving sea, and in the green growth of the first spring. She is the embodiment of fertility and love.

The Goddess has been known as the Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Gods that Made the Gods, the Divine Source, the Universal Matrix, the Great Mother, and by countless other titles.

Many symbols are used in Wicca to honor her, such as the cauldron, cup, labrys, five-petaled flowers, the mirror, necklace, seashell, pearl, silver, emerald . . . to name a few.

As she has dominion over the earth, sea and moon, her creatures are varied and numerous. A few include the rabbit, the bear, the owl, the cat, dog, bat, goose, cow, dolphin, lion, horse, wren, scorpion, spider, and bee. All are sacred to the Goddess.

The Goddess has been depicted as a huntress running with her hounds; a celestial deity striding across the sky with stardust falling from her heels; the eternal Mother heavy with child; the weaver of our lives and deaths; a crone walking by waning moonlight seeking out the weak and forlorn, and as many other beings. But no matter how we envision her, she is omnipresent, changeless, eternal.

## The God

The God has been revered for eons. He is neither the stern, all-powerful deity of Christianity and Judaism, nor is he simply the consort of the Goddess. God or Goddess, they are equal, one.

We see the God in the sun, brilliantly shining overhead during the day, rising and setting in the endless cycle that governs our lives. Without the sun we could not exist; therefore it has been revered as the source of all life, the warmth that bursts the dormant seeds into life and hastens the greening of the earth after the cold snows of winter.

The God is also tender of the wild animals. As the horned God he is sometimes seen wearing horns on his head, symbolizing his connection with these beasts. In earlier times, hunting was one of the

activities thought to be ruled by the God, while the domestication of animals was seen to be Goddess-oriented.

The God's domains include forests untouched by human hands, burning deserts, and towering mountains. The stars, since they are but distant suns, are sometimes thought to be under his domain.

The yearly cycle of greening, maturation, and harvest has long been associated with the sun, hence the solar festivals of Europe (further discussed in chapter 8, "The Days of Power") that are still observed in Wicca.

The God is the fully ripened harvest, intoxicating wine pressed from grapes, golden grain waving in a lone field, shimmering apples hanging from verdant boughs on October afternoons.

With the Goddess, he also celebrates and rules sex. The Wicca don't avoid sex or speak of it in hushed words. It's a part of nature and is accepted as such. Since it brings pleasure, shifts our awareness away from the everyday world, and perpetuates our species, it is thought to be sacred. The God lustily imbues us with the urge that ensures our species' biological future.

Symbols often used to depict or to worship the God include the sword, horns, spear, candle, gold, brass, diamond, sickle, arrow, magical wand, trident, knife, and others. Creatures sacred to him include the bull, dog, snake, fish, stag, dragon, wolf, boar, eagle, falcon, shark, lizard, and many others.

Of old, the God was the Sky Father, and the Goddess, the Earth Mother. The God of the sky, of rain and lightning, descended upon and united with the Goddess, spreading seed upon the land, celebrating her fertility.

Today the deities of Wicca are still firmly associated with fertility, but every aspect of human existence can be linked with the Goddess and God. They can be called upon to help us sort through the vicissitudes of our existences and bring joy into our often spiritually bereft lives.

This doesn't mean that when problems occur we should leave them in the hands of the Goddess. This is a stalling maneuver, an avoidance of dealing with the bumps on the road of life. As Wiccans, however, we

can call on the Goddess and God to clear our minds and to *help us help ourselves*. Magic is an excellent means of accomplishing this. After attuning with the Goddess and God, Wiccans ask their assistance during the magical rite that usually follows.

Beyond this, the Goddess and God can help us change our lives. Because the deities *are* the creative forces of the universe (not just symbols), we can call upon them to empower our rites and to bless our magic. Again, this is in direct opposition to most religions. The power is in the hands of every practitioner, not specialized priests or priestesses who perform these feats for the masses. This is what makes Wicca a truly satisfying way of life. We have direct links with the deities. No intermediaries are needed; no priests or confessors or shamans. *We are the shamans.*

To develop a rapport with the Goddess and God, a necessity for those who desire to practice Wicca, you might wish to follow these simple rituals.

At night, stand or sit facing the moon, if it is visible. If not, imagine the fullest moon you've ever seen glowing silver-white in the inky blackness, directly above and before you.

Feel the soft lunar light streaming onto your skin. Sense it touching and mixing with your own energies, commingling and forming new patterns.

See the Goddess in any form that you will. Call to her, chanting old names if you wish: Diana, Lucina, Selena (pronouncing them as: Dee-AH-nah, Loo-CHEE-nah, Say-LEE-nah). Open your heart and mind to the aspect of Goddess-energy manifested in the moon's light.

Repeat this daily for one week, preferably at the same time each night.

Concurrently with this exercise, attune with the God. Upon rising in the morning, no matter how late it is, stand before the sun (through a window if necessary; outside if possible) and soak in its energies. Think about the God. Visualize him as you wish. It might be as a mighty warrior rippling with muscles, a spear upraised in one hand, the other cradling a child or a bunch of dew-dripping grapes.

You may want to chant God names, such as Kernunnos, Osiris, Apollo (Care-NOON-nos, Oh-SIGH-ris, Ah-PALL-low) as with the Goddess.

If you don't wish to visualize the God (for visualization can impose limitations), simply attune to the energies pouring down from the sun. Even if clouds fill the sky, the God's energies will still reach you. Feel them with all your magical imagination (See chapter 11, "Exercises and Magical Techniques").

Let no thoughts but those of the God disturb your reverie. Reach out with your feelings; open your awareness to higher things. Call upon the God in any words. Express your desire to attune with him.

Practice these exercises daily for one week. If you wish to explore the concepts of the Goddess and God, read books on mythology from any country in the world. Read the myths but look for their underlying themes. The more you read, the more information you'll have at your fingertips; eventually it will merge into a nonstructured but extremely complex knowledge bank concerning the deities. In other words, you'll begin to know them.

If, after seven days, you feel the need (or the desire), continue these exercises until you feel comfortable with the Goddess and God. They've been in us and around us all the time; we need only open ourselves to this awareness. This is one of the secrets of Wicca—deity dwells within.

In your quest to know the gods, take long walks beneath trees. Study flowers and plants. Visit wild, natural places and feel the energies of the Goddess and God directly—through the rush of a stream, the pulse of energy from an old oak's trunk, the heat of a sun-warmed rock. Familiarizing yourself with the existence of the deities comes more easily through actual contact with such power sources.

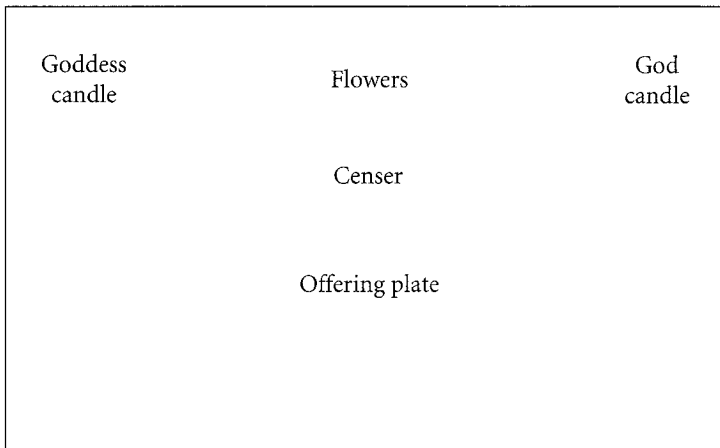
Next, when you've achieved this state, you may wish to set up a temporary or permanent shrine or altar to the Goddess and God. This needn't be more than a small table, two candles, an incense burner, and a plate or bowl to hold offerings of flowers, fruit, grain, seed, wine, or milk. Place the two candles in their holders to the rear of the shrine.

The candle on the left represents the Goddess; that on the right the God. Colors are often used to distinguish between the two; a red candle for the God and a green one to honor the Goddess. This ties in with the nature-associations of Wicca, for green and red are ancient magical colors linked with life and death. Other colors can be used—yellow or gold to honor the God, and white or silver for the Goddess.

Before and between these candles place the incense burner, and in front of this the plate or offering bowl. A vase of seasonal flowers can also be added, as can any personal power objects such as crystals, fossils, and dried herbs.

To begin a simple ritual to the Gods at your shrine, stand before it with an offering of some kind in your hand. Light the candles and incense, place the offering in the bowl or plate, and say such words as these:

*Lady of the moon, of the restless sea and verdant earth,  
lord of the sun and of the wild creatures,  
accept this offering I place here in your honor.  
Grant me the wisdom to see your presence in all nature,  
O Great Ones!*



Layout of the shrine

Afterward, sit or stand for a few minutes in contemplation of the deities and of your growing relationship with them. Feel them inside and around you. Then quench the flames (use your fingers, a candle snuffer, or a knife blade. Blowing them out is an affront to the element\* of fire). Allow the incense to burn itself out, and continue on with your day or night.

If you wish, go before the shrine once a day at a prescribed time. This may be upon rising, just before sleep, or after lunch. Light the candles, attune and commune with the Goddess and God. This isn't necessary, but the steady rhythm set up by this cycle is beneficial and will improve your relationship with the deities.

Return the offerings left on the shrine to the earth at the end of each day, or when you bring more to leave.

If you cannot erect a permanent shrine, set it up each time you feel the need to use it, then store the articles away. Make the placing of the objects on the shrine a part of the ritual.

This simple rite belies its powers. The Goddess and God are real, viable entities, possessing the force that created the universe. Attuning with them changes us forever. It also sparks new hope for our planet and for our continued existence upon it.

If this rite is too formalized for you, change it or write your own. This is the basic thrust of this book: do it your way, not my way simply because I've set it down on paper. I can never fit my feet into someone else's footprints on the sand. There's no one true right and only way in Wicca; that thinking belongs to monotheistic religions that have largely become political and business institutions.

Discovering the deities of Wicca is a never-ending experience. They constantly reveal themselves. As the shamans say, "Be attentive." All nature is singing to us of her secrets. The Goddess constantly draws aside her veil; the God lights us up with inspiration and illumination. We simply don't notice.

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\* See glossary.

Don't worry what others might think if they knew you were attuning with a twenty-thousand-year-old Goddess. Their feelings and thoughts concerning your religion are of no consequence. If you feel the need to shelter your experiences from others, do so, not out of fear or embarrassment, but because we're truly all on separate paths. Everyone isn't suited to Wicca.

There are some who say that we (and anyone else who won't follow their rituals or embrace their theology) are worshipping Satan. Not that we know it, of course; Satan is too tricky for that, according to these experts.

Such people can't believe that any religion but their own can be meaningful, fulfilling, and true to its adherent. So if we worship the God and Goddess, they say, we're denying all good and are worshipping Satan, the embodiment of all negativity and evil.

Wiccans aren't so close-minded. Perhaps it's the greatest of all human vanities to assume that one's religion is the only way to deity. Such beliefs have caused incalculable bloodshed and the rise of the hideous concept of holy wars.

The basis of this misconception seems to be the concept of a pristine, pure, positive being—God. If this deity is the sum of all good, worshippers believe that there must be an equally negative one as well. Thus, Satan.

The Wicca don't accept such ideas. *We acknowledge the dark aspects of the Goddess and the God as well as the bright.* All nature is composed of opposites, and this polarity is also resident within ourselves. The darkest human traits as well as the brightest are locked within our unconsciousness. It is only our ability to rise above destructive urges, to channel such energies into positive thoughts and actions, that separates us from mass-murderers and sociopaths.

Yes, the God and Goddess have dark aspects, but this needn't scare us off. Look at some of the manifestations of their powers. From a ravaging flood comes rich soil in which new plants thrive. Death brings a deeper appreciation of life to the living and rest for the transcended one. "Good" and "evil" are often identical in nature,

depending on one's viewpoint. Additionally, out of every evil, some good is eventually born.

Any and all religions are real, the genuine article, to their practitioners. There can never be one religion, prophet, or savior that will satisfy all six billion humans. Each of us must find our ideal way to attune with deity. For some, it's Wicca.

Wiccans emphasize the bright aspects of the deities because this gives us purpose to grow and evolve to the highest realm of existence. When death, destruction, hurt, pain, and anger appear in our lives (as they must), we can turn to the Goddess and God and know that this is a part of them too. We needn't blame a devil on these natural aspects of life and call upon a pure-white god to fend them off.

In truly understanding the Goddess and God, one comes to understand life, for the two are inextricably entwined. Live your earthly life fully, but try to see the spiritual aspects of your activities as well. Remember—the physical and spiritual are but reflections of each other.

When I give classes, one question seems to come up frequently:

“What is the meaning of life?”

It may be asked with a laugh, but this is the one question that, if answered, satisfies any others we may have. It is the problem every religion and philosophical system has struggled to solve.

Anyone can find the answer through the simple technique of living and observing life. Though two people won't find the same answers, they can find them together.

The Goddess and God are of nature, both the delightful and the dark. We don't worship nature as such; some Wiccans probably wouldn't even say that they worship the Goddess and God. We don't bow down to the deities; we work with them to create a better world.

This is what makes Wicca a truly participatory religion.

## Magic

IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE even among the masses that Witches practice magic. They may have misguided ideas concerning the type of magic performed, but the Witch is firmly linked in popular thought with the magical arts.

Wicca is, as we have seen, a religion that embraces magic as one of its basic concepts. This isn't unusual. In fact, it's often difficult to discern where religion ends and magic begins in any faith.

Still, magic plays a special role in Wicca. It allows us to improve our lives and return energy to our ravaged planet. Wiccans also develop special relationships with the Goddess and God through magic. This doesn't mean that every spell is a prayer, nor are invocations differently worded spells. Through working with the powers that the God and the Goddess embody, we grow close to them. Calling upon their names and visualizing their presence during spells and rites creates a bond between deity and human. Thus, in Wicca, magic is a religious practice.

I've defined magic a number of times in my books. Surprisingly, this is a difficult task. My latest, most refined definition is:

*Magic is the projection of natural energies to produce needed effects.*

There are three main sources of this energy—personal power, earth power, and divine power.

**Personal power** is the life force that sustains our earthly existences.

It powers our bodies. We absorb energy from the moon and sun, from water and food. We release it during movement, exercise, sex, and childbirth. Even exhaling releases some power, though we recoup the loss through inhaling.

In magic, personal power is aroused, infused with a specific purpose, released, and directed toward its goal.

**Earth power** is that which resides within our planet and in its natural products. Stones, trees, wind, flames, water, crystals, and scents all possess unique, specific powers that can be used during magical ritual.

A Wiccan may dip a quartz crystal in salt water to cleanse it and then press it against an ailing person's body to send its healing energies within. Or, herbs may be sprinkled around a candle that is burned to produce a specific magical effect. Oils are rubbed onto the body to effect internal changes.

**Divine power** is the manifestation of personal power and earth power. This is the energy that exists within the Goddess and God—the life force, the source of universal power that created everything in existence.

Wiccans invoke the Goddess and God to bless their magic with power. During ritual they may direct personal power to the deities, asking that a specific need be met. This is truly religious magic.

And so, magic is a process in which Wiccans work in harmony with the universal power source that we envision as the Goddess and God, as well as with personal and earth energies, to improve our lives and to lend energy to Earth. Magic is a method whereby individuals under none but self-determined predestination take control of their lives.

Contrary to popular belief, magic isn't supernatural. True, it is an occult (hidden) practice steeped in millennia of secrecy, slander, and misinformation, but it is a natural practice utilizing genuine powers that haven't yet been discovered or labeled by science.

This doesn't invalidate magic. Even scientists don't claim to know everything about our universe. If they did, the field of scientific investigation wouldn't exist. The powers the Wiccans use will eventually be documented and so lose their mystery. Such has already partially occurred with hypnotism and psychology, and may soon happen to extrasensory perception. Magnetism, indeed, was a firmly established

aspect of magic until it was “discovered” by science. But even today, magnets are used in spells and charms, and such forces as these call up strange, old feelings.

Play with two magnets. See the invisible forces resisting and attracting in seemingly supernatural ways.

Magic is similar. Though it appears to be completely nonsensical, with no basis in fact, it operates along its own rules and logic. Simply because it isn't fully understood doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. Magic is effective in causing manifestations of needed change.

This isn't self-deception. Correctly performed magic works, and no amount of explaining away alters this fact.

Here's a description of a typical candle ritual. I'll use myself as an example. Say I need to pay a hundred-dollar phone bill but don't have the money. My magical goal: the means to pay the bill.

I decide to use a ritual to help focus my concentration and visualization (See chapter 11, “Exercises and Magical Techniques”). Checking my magical supplies, I discover that I have green candles, patchouli oil, a good selection of money-drawing herbs, parchment paper, and green ink.

At my altar, I light the candles representing the Goddess and the God while silently invoking their presence. Next, I ignite a charcoal block and sprinkle cinnamon and sage onto the block as a magical prosperity incense.

I draw a picture of the phone bill on the paper, clearly marking the amount in numerals. While drawing, I visualize that the paper is no longer just a piece of paper; it is the bill itself.

Then I sketch a square around the bill, symbolizing my control over it, and mark a large “x” through it, effectively canceling out its existence (as will occur when it is paid).

I now start to visualize the bill being paid in full. I might write this over the picture, making it appear to have been stamped with these words. I visualize myself looking in my checkbook, seeing that the balance will cover the check, and then writing the check itself.

Next, I rub a green candle with patchouli oil, from each end to the middle, while saying something like the following:

*I call upon the powers of the Mother Goddess and the Father God;  
I call upon the forces of the earth, air, fire and water;  
I call upon the sun, moon and stars  
to bring me the funds to pay this bill.*

Still visualizing, I place the candle in the holder directly over the picture of the bill. I sprinkle herbs around the candle's base, stating (and visualizing) that each is lending its energy toward my goal:

*Sage, herb of Jupiter, send your powers to my spell.  
Cinnamon, herb of the sun, send your powers to my spell.*

Once this is done, still visualizing my bill as paid in full, I light the candle and, as its flame shines, release the energy I've built up into the picture.

I let the candle burn for ten, fifteen minutes, or longer, depending on my ability to retain the visualization. I see the candle absorbing the energy I've put into the picture. I see the herbs streaming their energies into the candle flame, and the combined energies of the herbs, candle, patchouli oil, and picture—coupled with my personal power—pouring from the flame and out to bring my magical goal toward manifestation.

When I can do no more, I remove the picture, light it in the candle, hold it as it burns for a few seconds, and then throw it into the small cauldron that sits beside my altar.

Finished, I allow the candle to burn itself out, knowing that the ritual will take effect.

Within a day or two, perhaps a week, I'll either receive unexpected (or delayed) money, or will satisfy other financial obligations in a manner that frees me to pay the bill.

How does it work? From the time I decide to do an act of magic, I'm doing it. Thinking about it sets personal power into motion. Throughout the whole process—gathering supplies, drawing the bill, lighting the candle, visualizing—I'm rousing and infusing personal power with my magical need. During the rite itself, I release this power into the candle. When I finally burn the picture, the last of these energies are released and free, set to work to arrange for me to pay the bill.

I may not be able to tell you exactly *how* magic works, only that it does work. Fortunately, we don't have to know this; all we must know is how to make it work.

I'm no expert in electricity, but I can plug my toaster into a wall socket and burn my whole wheat bread. Similarly, in magic we "plug into" energies that stretch, crisscross, and zip around and through us.

There are many ways to practice magic. Wiccans generally choose simple, natural forms, though some enjoy heavy ceremony, borrowing from the classical grimoires such as *The Key of Solomon* (see bibliography). Usually, however, practicing magic involves herbs, crystals, and rocks; the use of symbols and color; magical gestures, music, voice, dance, and trance; astral projection, meditation, concentration, and visualization.

There are literally thousands of magical systems, even in Wicca. For instance, numerous magical ways exist to use crystals, or herbs, or symbols, and by combining them more systems are created.

Many, many books have been published outlining magical systems, and some of these are listed in the bibliography. In my books I've discussed the powers of the elements, crystals, and herbs. In this work, the subject of rune magic is explored as an example of a self-contained magical system with hints at combining it with others.

Such systems aren't necessary to the successful practice of magic. Performing magical rituals simply by manipulating tools such as herbs and crystals will be ineffective, for the true power of magic lies within ourselves—the gift of deity.

So no matter the magical system, personal power must be infused with the need and then released. In Wiccan magic, personal power is recognized as our direct link with the Goddess and God. Magic, therefore, is a religious act in which Wiccans unite with their deities to better themselves and their world.

This is important—magic is a positive practice. *Wiccans don't perform destructive, manipulative, or exploitive magic.* Because they recognize that the power at work in magic is, ultimately, derived from the Goddess and God, negative workings are absolutely taboo. "Evil" magic is an insult to themselves, to the human race, to Earth, the

Goddess and God, and the universe itself. The repercussions can be imagined. The energies of magic are those of life itself.

Anyone can practice magic—within a religious context or not. If certain words or gestures pop into your mind while performing a spell, and they seem right, by all means use them. If you can't find a ritual to your liking or that fits your needs, create one. You needn't write fancy poetry or choreography for thirty singing incense bearers and thirteen singing priestesses.

If nothing else, light a candle, settle down before it, and concentrate on your magical need. Trust yourself.

If you truly desire to know the nature of magic, practice it! Many are afraid of magic. They've been taught (by nonpractitioners) that it's dangerous. Don't be scared. Crossing the street is dangerous too. But if you do it properly, you're fine.

Of course, the only way you'll find this out is to cross that street. If your magic is infused with love, you'll be in no danger whatsoever.

Call upon the Goddess and God to protect you and teach you the secrets of magic. Ask stones and plants to reveal their powers—and listen. Read as much as you can, discarding negative or disturbing information.

Learn by doing, and the Goddess and God will bless you with all that you truly need.

## Tools

IN COMMON WITH most religions, certain objects are used in Wicca for ritual purposes. These tools invoke the deities, banish negativity, and direct energy through our touch and intention.

Some of the tools of the Witch (the broom, cauldron, and magic wand) have gained firm places in contemporary folklore and myth. Through the popularization of folktales and the work of Disney studios, millions know that cauldrons are used to brew up potions and that wands transform the drab into the beautiful. Most folks, however, don't know the powerful magic behind such tools and their inner symbolism within Wicca.

To practice Wicca, you may want to collect at least some of these tools. Search through antique and junk shops, swap meets, and flea markets for these treasures. Or, write or email occult suppliers (addresses in appendix I). Though difficult to find, your ritual tools are well worth any efforts expended to obtain them.

These tools aren't necessary to the practice of Wicca. They do, however, enrich rituals and symbolize complex energies. The tools have no power save for that which we lend to them.

Some say that we should use magical tools until we no longer need them. Perhaps it's better to use them as long as you feel comfortable in doing so.

### The Broom

Witches use brooms in magic and ritual. It is a tool sacred to both the Goddess and God. This is nothing new; pre-Colombian Mexico saw the worship of a type of Witch deity, Tlazelteotl, who was pictured

riding naked on a broom. The Chinese worship a broom goddess who is invoked to bring clear weather in times of rain.

Then too, probably because of its phallic shape, the broom became a powerful tool against curses and practitioners of evil magic. Laid across the threshold, the broom halted all spells sent to the house or those resident within. A broom under the pillow brought pleasant dreams and guarded the sleeper.

European Witches became identified with the broom because both were infused with magic in religious and popular thought. Witches were accused of flying on broomsticks, and this was considered proof of their alliance with “dark powers.” Such an act, if it could be performed, would indeed be supernatural and, therefore, of the Devil in their eyes, in contrast to the simple healing and love spells that Witches actually performed. Of course, the tale was invented by Witch persecutors.\*

Today the broom is still used in Wicca. A Wicca may begin a ritual by sweeping the area (indoors or out) lightly with the magic broom. After this, the altar is set up, the tools carried out, and the ritual is ready to begin (See chapter 13, “Ritual Design”).

This sweeping is more than a physical cleansing. In fact, the broom’s bristles needn’t touch the ground. While brushing, the Wiccan visualizes the broom sweeping out the astral buildup that occurs where humans live. This purifies the area to allow smoother ritual workings.

Since it is a purifier, the broom is linked with the element of water. Thus it is also used in all types of water spells, including those of love and psychic workings.

Many Witches collect brooms, and indeed their endless variety and the exotic materials used in their manufacture make this an interesting hobby.

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\* Some Wiccans claim that brooms were “ridden” while hopping along the ground, much as are hobby-horses, to promote fertility of the fields. Then, too, it is believed that tales of Witches riding brooms through the air were unsophisticated explanations of astral projection.

If you wish to make your magic broom, you might try the old magical formula of an ash staff, birch twigs, and a willow binding. The ash is protective, the birch is purifying, and the willow is sacred to the Goddess.

Of course, a branch from any tree or bush can be used in place of the broom (while cutting it, thank the tree for its sacrifice, using such words as will be found in the "An Herbal Grimoire" section of *The Standing Stones Book of Shadows*, section III). A tiny broom of pine needles can also be used.

In early American slave weddings, as well as Gypsy nuptials, the couple often ritually jumped a broomstick to solemnize their union. Such marriages were quite common until recent times, and even today Wiccan and pagan handfastings often include a broom leap.

There are many old spells involving brooms. In general, the broom is a purificatory and protective instrument, used to ritually cleanse the area for magic or to guard a home by laying it across the threshold, under the bed, in windowsills, or on doors.

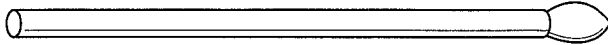
The broom used for magic, as with all magical tools, should be reserved for this purpose only. If you decide to buy a broom, try to find a round one; the flat Shaker-type brooms just don't seem to have the same effect.\*

## Wand

The wand is one of the prime magical tools. It has been used for thousands of years in magical and religious rites. It is an instrument of invocation. The Goddess and God may be called to watch the ritual with words and an uplifted wand. It is also sometimes used to direct energy, to draw magical symbols or a circle on the ground, to point toward danger while perfectly balanced on the Witch's palm or arm, or even to stir brew in a cauldron. The wand represents the element of air to some Wiccans, and is sacred to the God.

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\* More broom lore can be found in chapter 13 of *The Magical Household* (Llewellyn, 1987).



There are traditional woods used for the wand, including willow, elder, oak, apple, peach, hazel, cherry, and so on. Some Wiccans cut it the length from the crook of the elbow to the tip of the forefinger, but this isn't necessary. Any fairly straight piece of wood can be used; even dowels purchased from hardware stores work well, and I've seen beautifully carved and painted wands made from these.

New Age consciousness (and merchandising) has brought the wand into renewed prominence. Delightful, beautiful creations fashioned of silver and quartz crystals are now available in a wide range of sizes and prices. These certainly could be used within Wiccan ritual, though wooden wands have a longer history.

Don't worry about finding the ideal wand at first; one will come to you. I used a length of licorice root as a wand for a while and had good results with it.

Any stick you use will be infused with energy and power. Find one that feels comfortable, and it'll do just fine.

## Censer

The censer is an incense burner. It can be a complex, swinging, metal censer like those used in the Catholic church, or a simple seashell. The censer holds the smoldering incense during Wiccan rites.

If you cannot find a suitable censer, make one. Any bowl or cup half-filled with sand or salt will serve well. The salt or sand absorbs the heat from the charcoal or incense and prevents the bowl from cracking.

Incense sticks can also be pushed into the salt, or cones placed upon its surface.

Incense use in ritual and magic is an art in and of itself. When no specific incense is called for in rituals and spells, use your own intuition and creativity in determining which blend to use.

Stick, cone, or block incense can be used, but most Wiccans favor the raw or granulated incense, the type that must be burned on self-igniting charcoal briquettes, available from occult suppliers. Either is fine.

In ceremonial magic, "spirits" are sometimes commanded to appear in visible form in the smoke rising from the censer. While this isn't part of Wicca, the Goddess and God can sometimes be seen in the curling, twisting smoke. Sitting while breathing slowly and watching the smoke can be an entrancing act, and you might slip into an alternate state of consciousness.

Wiccan ritual, when performed indoors, isn't complete without incense. Outdoors a fire often substitutes, or stick-type incense is stuck into the ground. Thus, the censer is an important tool for indoor rites. To some of the Wicca, the censer represents the element of air. It is often placed before the images of the deities on the altar, if there are any.

## Cauldron

The cauldron is the Witch's tool *par excellence*. It is an ancient vessel of cooking and brew making, steeped in magical tradition and mystery. The cauldron is the container in which magical transformations occur; the sacred grail, the holy spring, the sea of primeval creation.

The Wicca see the cauldron as a symbol of the Goddess, the manifested essence of femininity and fertility. It is also symbolic of the element of water, reincarnation, immortality, and inspiration. Celtic legends concerning Kerridwen's cauldron have had a strong impact on contemporary Wicca.

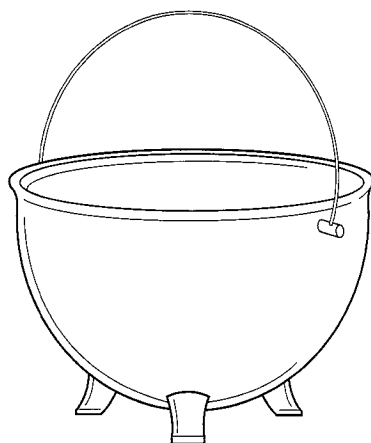
The cauldron is often a focal point of ritual. During spring rites it is sometimes filled with fresh water and flowers; during winter a fire may be kindled *within* the cauldron to represent the returning heat and

light of the sun (the God) from the cauldron (the Goddess). This links in with agricultural myths wherein the God is born in winter, reaches maturity in summer, and dies after the last harvest (see chapter 8, “The Days of Power”).

Ideally speaking, the cauldron should be of iron, resting on three legs, with its opening smaller than its widest part. Cauldrons can be difficult to find, even small ones, but a thorough search usually produces some type of cauldron. A few mail-order houses stock cauldrons, but not regularly. You may wish to query these sources.

Cauldrons come in all sizes, ranging from a few inches in diameter to monsters three feet across. I have collected a few, including an old one reserved for ritual purposes.

The cauldron can be an instrument of scrying (gazing) by filling it with water and staring into its inky depths. It can also serve as a container in which to brew up those infamous Wicca brews, but bear in mind that a large fire and plenty of patience are required to make liquids boil in larger cauldrons. Most Wiccans use stoves and cooking pots today.



If you have difficulty finding a cauldron, persevere and one will eventually materialize. It certainly can't hurt to ask the Goddess and God to send one your way.

## Magic Knife

The magic knife (or athame) has an ancient history. It isn't used for cutting purposes in Wicca, but to direct the energy raised during rites and spells. It is seldom used to invoke or call upon the deities for it is an instrument of commanding and power manipulation. We'd rather invoke the Goddess and God.

The knife is often dull, usually double-edged with a black or dark handle. Black absorbs power. When the knife is used in ritual (see *The Standing Stones Book of Shadows*) to direct energy, some of this power is absorbed into the handle—only a tiny amount—which can be called upon later. Then again, sometimes energy raised within Wiccan ritual is channeled into the knife for later use. The stories of swords with magical powers and names are quite common in mythic literature, and swords are nothing more than large knives.

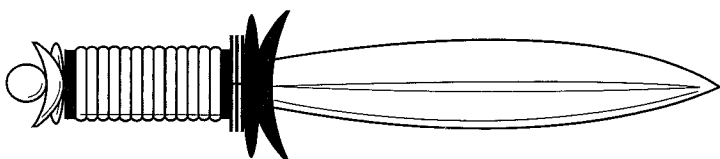
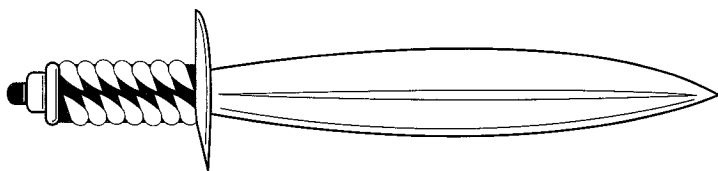
Some Wiccans engrave their knives with magical symbols, usually taken from *The Key of Solomon*, but this isn't necessary. As with most magical tools, the knife becomes powerful by your touch and usage. If you so desire, however, scratch words, symbols, or runes onto its blade or handle.

A sword is sometimes used in Wicca, as it has all the properties of the knife, but can be difficult for indoor rituals due to its size.

Because of the symbolism of the knife, which is a tool that causes change, it is commonly linked with the element of fire. Its phallic nature links it with the God.

## White-Handled Knife

The white-handled knife (sometimes called a *bolline*) is simply a practical, working knife as opposed to the purely ritualistic magic knife. It is used to cut wands or sacred herbs, inscribe symbols onto



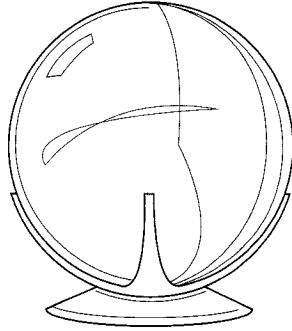
candles or on wood, clay, or wax, and in cutting cords for use in magic. It is usually white-handled to distinguish it from the magic knife.

Some Wiccan traditions dictate that the white-handled knife be used only within the magic circle. This would, of course, limit its usefulness. It seems to me that using it solely for ritual purposes (such as harvesting flowers from the garden to place on the altar during ritual) confirms the tool's sacredness and so allows its use out of "sacred space."

## Crystal Sphere

Quartz crystals are extremely popular today, but the quartz crystal sphere is an ancient magical tool. It is exquisitely expensive, selling for twenty dollars to thousands of dollars, depending on size. Most crystal balls on the market today are glass, leaded glass, or even plastic. Genuine quartz crystal spheres can be determined by their high prices and inclusions or irregularities.

The crystal has long been used in contemplative divination. The diviner gazes into the ball until the psychic faculties blossom, and images, seen in the mind or projected by it into the depths of the crystal, reveal the necessary information.



In Wiccan ritual, the crystal is sometimes placed on the altar to represent the Goddess. Its shape (spheroid) is Goddess-symbolic, as are all circles and rounds, and its icy cold temperature (another way to determine genuine rock crystal) is symbolic of the depths of the sea, the Goddess' domain.

Then, too, the crystal may be used to receive messages from the Gods, or to store energy raised in ritual. Some Wiccans scry in the crystal to call up images of the Goddess or of past lives. It is a magical object touched with the divine, and if you find one, guard it carefully.

Periodic exposure to moonlight, or rubbing the crystal with fresh mugwort, will increase its ability to spark our psychic powers. It may be the center of full moon rituals.

## Cup

The cup is simply a cauldron on a stem. It symbolizes the Goddess and fertility, and is related to the element of water. Though it can be used to hold water (which is often present on the altar), it may also contain the ritual beverage imbibed during the rite.

The cup can be made of nearly any substance: silver, brass, gold, earthenware, soapstone, alabaster, crystal, and other materials.

## Pentacle

The pentacle is usually a flat piece of brass, gold, silver, wood, wax, or clay, inscribed with certain symbols. The most common, and indeed the only necessary one, is the pentagram, the five-pointed star that has been used in magic for millennia.

The pentacle was “borrowed” from ceremonial magic. In this ancient art it was often an instrument of protection, or a tool used to evoke spirits. In Wicca, the pentacle represents the element of earth and is a convenient tool upon which to place amulets, charms, or other objects to be ritually consecrated. It is sometimes used to summon the Gods and Goddesses.

Pentacles are also hung over doors and windows to act as protective devices, or are ritually manipulated to draw money owing to the pentacle’s earth associations.



## The Book of Shadows

The Book of Shadows is a Wiccan workbook containing invocations, ritual patterns, spells, runes, rules governing magic, and so on. Some Books of Shadows are passed from one Wiccan to another, usually upon initiation, but the vast majority of Books of Shadows today are composed by each individual Wiccan.

Don't believe the stories in most other Wiccan books that one single Book of Shadows has been handed down from antiquity, for each sect of Wicca seems to claim that their own is the original, and they're all different.

Although until recently a Book of Shadows was usually handwritten, today typed or even photocopied versions are quite common. Some Wiccans are even computerizing their books—to create, as friends of mine call it, the “Floppy Disc of Shadows.”

To make your own Book of Shadows, begin with any blank book—these are available in most art stores and bookshops. If you cannot find a bound blank book, any lined exercise book will do. Simply write in this book any rituals, spells, invocations, and magical information that you have either composed or found elsewhere and would like to preserve.

Remember—all Books of Shadows (including the one in section III) are suggestions as to ritual, not “holy writ.” Never feel tied down to these words. In fact, many Witches use three-ring binders, shuffling around pages, adding or subtracting information from their Book of Shadows at will.

It is a good idea to copy your spells and rites by hand. Not only does this ensure that you've read the work completely, it also allows easier reading by candlelight. Ideally, all rites are memorized (there's nothing more distracting than having to read or glance at the book), or created spontaneously, but if you would read your rites, be sure your copies are legible by flickering firelight.

## Bell

The bell is a ritual instrument of incredible antiquity. Ringing a bell unleashes vibrations that have powerful effects according to its volume, tone, and material of construction.

The bell is a feminine symbol and so is often used to invoke the Goddess in ritual. It is also rung to ward off evil spells and spirits, to halt storms, or to evoke good energies. Placed in cupboards or hung on the door, it guards the home. Bells are sometimes rung in ritual to mark various sections and to signal a spell's beginning or end.

Any type of bell can be used.

These are some of the tools used in Wiccan ritual. Working with them, familiarizing yourself with their powers, and pouring your own energy into them, you may find their use becoming second nature. Gathering them is a problem, but this can be seen as a magical test of the seriousness of your Wiccan interest.

As you collect each tool, you can prepare it for ritual. If old, it should be stripped of all associations and energies; you don't know who owned the tool, nor to what purposes it may have been used.

To begin this process, clean the tool physically using the appropriate method. When the object is clean and dry, bury it (in the earth or a bowlful of sand or salt) for a few days, allowing the energies to disperse. An alternate method consists of plunging the tool into the sea, river, or lake, or even your own bathtub after purifying the water by adding a few pinches of salt.

Don't ruin a good piece of wood by wetting it; similarly, don't mar the finish of some other object by allowing it to contact salt. Use the most appropriate method for each tool.

After a few days, dig up the tool, wipe it clean, and it is ready for magic. If you use the water method, leave the object submerged for a few hours, then dry it. If desired, repeat until the tool is clean, refreshed, new.

There are consecration ceremonies for the Wiccan tools in section III, as well as preparation rites in the Herbal Grimoire section there. Both are optional; use as your intuition dictates.

## Music, Dance, and Gesture

WICCA UNDERSTANDS THAT what we perceive to be the difference between the physical and the nonphysical is due to our limitations as materially based beings. Some of the tools used in the practice of religion are indeed nonphysical. Three of the most effective of these are music, dance, and gesture.\*

These techniques are used to raise power, alter consciousness, and to unite with the Goddess and God—to achieve ecstasy. These tools are often part and parcel of ritual, and indeed the most effective, powerful rites can be those exclusively utilizing such tools. (A ritual comprised entirely of gestures can be found in section III: *The Standing Stones Book of Shadows*.)

Music and dance were among the earliest magical and religious acts. Our ancestors probably utilized the magic of hand signals and bodily postures before speech was fully developed. The simple gesture of pointing still has powerful emotional effects, from a witness singling out the defendant as the person involved in the crime, to a hopeful at an audition being selected among a sea of her or his peers.

The first music was probably rhythmic. Humans soon discovered that pleasing rhythms and sounds could be produced by slapping various parts of the body, especially the thighs and chest.

Clapping creates a distinctive, clean sound that is still used by some Wiccans to release personal power during magical ritual.†

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\* Music is, technically speaking, comprised of sound waves that are physically measureable. We can't hold music in our hands, however, merely the instruments that produce it.

† See Doreen Valiente's *Witchcraft For Tomorrow* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), page 182.

Rhythmic instruments such as log drums were later used to produce fuller sounds. Some rocks ring when struck, and so another type of instrument was born. Reeds, bones, and some shells produce whistling sounds when correctly blown. Shamanic systems still in existence use these tools.

Less intellectual rituals can be more effective precisely because they bypass the conscious mind and speak to the deep consciousness, the psychic awareness. Music and dance emotionally involve us in Wiccan rites.

The thought of dancing, singing, or making music embarrasses some of us. This is a natural outgrowth of our increasingly repressive society. In Wicca, however, dance and music occur *before the deities alone*. You aren't performing for a crowd, so don't worry about missing a note or tripping over your feet. *They* don't care, and no one ever need know what you do before the Gods in your rites.

Even the most unmusically inclined can bang two rocks together, shake a rattle, clap hands, or walk in circles. To this day, some of the most established and effective Wiccan covens utilize a simple circular run around the altar to raise power. So much for fancy ritual choreography.

Here's some traditional lore concerning dance, music, and gesture. If you find it appealing, feel free to incorporate it into your Wiccan rituals. But one suggestion: if you find your rites stuffy and unsatisfying, if they don't create a link with the deities, the problem may be a lack of emotional content. Music and dance can produce true involvement in the ritual and so open your awareness of the Goddess and God. During magic they may produce freer access to energy.

## Music

Music is simply a re-creation of the sounds of nature. Wind through trees, the roar of the ocean hurling itself against jagged cliffs, pattering rain, the crackling of a lightning-produced fire, the cry of birds, and roars of animals are some of the "instruments" that constitute the music of nature.

Human beings have long integrated music into religious and magical rituals for its powerful effects. Shamans use a steady drum beat to induce trance, and a drum can be used to control the pace of magical dance. Then too, music has long been celebrated for calming ferocious animals—and humans as well.\*

Music can be a part of Wiccan workings today. You might simply find appropriate pieces, selected from classical, ethnic, folk, or contemporary sources, and play these during rituals. Musically inclined Wiccans can create music before, during, or after the ritual.

My most satisfying and vivid rituals often involve music. I remember one day I hid a small tape-recorder behind a tree in the Laguna Mountains. Strangely, the music didn't intrude on the setting of wildflowers, towering pines, and ancient oaks, but heightened my solitary ritual.

If you have proficiency with an instrument, work it into your rituals. A flute, violin, recorder, guitar, folk harp, and other small instruments can easily be introduced into ritual, as can drums, rattles, bells, or even glasses of water and a knife with which to strike them. Other less portable instruments can be recorded and played back during ritual.

Such musical interludes can be used directly *prior* to the rite to set the mood; *during*, as an offering to the Goddess and God or to rouse energy; and *afterward* in pure celebration and joy. Some Wiccans compose a song that is in actuality a rite, encompassing everything from the creation of sacred space and invoking the deities to thanking them for their presence. Music magic is truly what you decide to make it.

Four distinct types of instruments have specific powers. The drum, rattle, xylophone, and all percussion instruments (save for the sistrum) are ruled by the element of *earth*. Thus, such instruments can be used to invoke fertility, increase money, find a job, and so on. They can also be used to invoke the Goddess in ritual, or to “drum up” energy to send to the earth.

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\* A fine (if fictional) account of music magic can be found in chapter xi of Gerald Gardner's novel *High Magic's Aid* (New York: Weiser, 1975).

The flute, recorder, and all wind instruments are under the dominion of *air*, the intellectual element, and so can be used to increase mental powers or visualization abilities, to discover ancient wisdom or knowledge, to improve psychic faculties, and to call upon the God.

*Fire* rules stringed instruments such as the lyre, harp (full-size or folk), guitar, mandolin, ukelele, and so on. Such instruments can be used in spells or rites involving sexuality, health and bodily strength, passion and will power, change, evolution, courage, and the destruction of harmful habits.

They are also excellent tools to use before ritual to purify the area in question, and also the celebrant. Play a particular song, sing with the instrument, or just strum around the area in a clockwise circle until the place is humming with your vibrations. Strings can also be used to invoke the God.

Resonant metal such as the cymbal, sistrum, bell, and gong are symbolic of the element of *water*. Since water encompasses healing, fertility, friendship, psychic powers, spiritual love, beauty, compassion, happiness, and other similar energies—bells, gongs, or cymbals can be featured in such spells and rites. The sistrum of Isis reminds us that resonant metal invokes the Goddess.

Musical spells (as opposed to purely verbal spells) can be simple and effective. Need money? Sit quietly dressed in green and slowly thump a drum, visualizing yourself bursting with cash while invoking the Goddess in her aspect of provider-of-abundance.

If you're depressed, find a bell with a pleasant tone and ritually strike or ring it, feeling the sound's vibrations cleansing you of the depression and lifting your spirits. Or, wear a small bell.

When you're afraid, play a six-string guitar or listen to pre-recorded guitar music while visualizing yourself as confident and courageous. Invoke the God in his horned, aggressive, protective aspect.

Singing, a combination of speech and music, can be readily integrated into Wiccan rituals. Some Wiccans set chants and invocations to music or sing as they feel compelled to during ritual.

Many Wiccans never pursue the subject of music magic and simply play recorded tunes as backgrounds to their rituals. This is fine, but

self-created music (however simple) integrated into your rituals can be more effective, as long as you like the piece.

Today a number of pre-recorded Wiccan and pagan cassette tapes are available. While widely varying in quality, it's worthwhile to pick up a few tapes by mail (see appendix I, "Occult Suppliers," for mail-order information). Some songs can be used in ritual, but most are best played while preparing for ritual, or afterward when relaxing.

Appropriate music incorporated into ritual can greatly enhance the Wiccan experience.

## Dance

Dance is certainly an ancient ritual practice. It's also a magical act, for physical movement releases energy from the body, the same energy used in magic. This "secret" was discovered early, and so dance was incorporated into magic and ritual to raise energy, to alter consciousness, or simply to honor the Goddess and God with ritual performances.

Group dances, such as the spiral dance, are often performed in coven workings. In individual workings, however, you're bound by no tradition or choreographed steps. Feel free to move in any manner you wish, no matter how child-like or wild it may seem.

In magic, many Wiccans perform a short spell or ritual manipulation of some kind (inscribing runes, tying knots, tracing pictures in sand or powdered herbs, chanting deity names) and then perform the real magic: raising and channeling magical energy. They often move in an increasingly faster clockwise circle around the altar, either alone or with a coven, watching the candles flaming on the altar, smelling the incense, overwhelming themselves with chanting and intense visualization. When the practitioner has reached the point of no return, the exact moment when the body can raise and channel no more energy, the power is released toward the magical goal. To do this, some Wicca collapse to the ground, signaling the end of what is rather peculiarly called "The Dance."

Dancing is used to raise energy as well as to facilitate attunement with the deities of nature. Dance as the wild wind; as the stream rushing down a mountain, a flame flickering from a lightning-struck tree,

as grains of sand bounding off each other in a gale, as flowers unfolding their brilliance on a sunny summer afternoon. As you dance, using whatever movements you wish, open yourself to the God and Goddess.

Think for a moment of the whirling dervishes, the untamed Gypsy dances of Europe, the sensuous belly dancing of the Middle East, and the sacred hula of old Hawaii. Dance is one of the paths to deity.

## Gesture

Gestures are silent counterparts to words. Gestures can enhance Wiccan rituals when performed in conjunction with invocations or dance, or can be used alone for their real power. Pointing (as mentioned above), the use of the first and middle fingers splayed to create a “v,” and the vulgar presentation of an upraised middle finger, demonstrate the variety of messages that can be conveyed through gesture, as well as the range of our emotional responses to them.

My introduction to Wicca happened to include some of these old gestures. In 1971 I saw some photographs\* of magical protective gestures such as the *mano figa* (a hand clenched into a fist, the thumb jutting out between the first and middle fingers) and the *mano cornuta*, a “v” formed by the first and little fingers and held upside down. Both have long been used to avert the evil eye and negativity, and the latter is used in Wicca, with points up, to represent the God in his horned aspect.

A few days later, in my first year in high school, I flashed these two gestures to a girl I’d just met. There was no logical reason to do this; it just felt right. She looked at me, smiled, and asked me if I was a Witch. I said no, but I’d like to be. She began training me.

The magical significance of gestures is complex, and stems from the powers of the hand. The hand can heal or kill, caress or stab. It is a channel through which energies are sent from the body or received from others. Our hands set up our magical altars, grasp wands and athames, and pinch out candle flames at the conclusion of magical rites.

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\* Included in Douglas Hill and Pat William’s *The Supernatural* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1965), page 200.

Hands, as the means by which most of us earn our livings, are symbolic of the physical world. But in their five digits lie the pentagram, the supreme protective magical symbol; the sum of the four elements coupled with *akasha*, the spiritual power of the universe.

The lines on our hands can, to the trained, be used to link into the deep consciousnesses and reveal things to the conscious mind that we would otherwise have difficulty knowing. The palmist doesn't read these lines as streets on a roadmap; they are a key to our souls, a fleshy mandala revealing our innermost depths.

Hands were used as the first counting devices. They were seen to have both male and female qualities and symbolism, and images of hands were used around the world as amulets.

Gestures in Wiccan ritual can easily become second nature. When invoking the Goddess and God, the hands can be held uplifted with the fingers spread to receive their power. The Goddess can be individually invoked with the left hand, the thumb and first finger held up and curled into a half-circle, while the rest of the fingers are tucked against the palm. This represents the crescent moon. The God is invoked with the first and middle fingers of the right hand raised, or with the first and fourth fingers up, the thumb holding down the others against the palm, to represent horns.

The elements can be invoked with individual gestures when approaching the four directions: a flat hand held parallel with the ground to invoke earth at the north; an upraised hand, fingers spread wide apart, to invoke air at the east; an upraised fist for the south to invite fire, and a cupped hand to the west to invoke water.

Two gestures, together with postures, have long been used to invoke the Goddess and God, and are named after them. The Goddess position is assumed by placing the feet about two feet apart on the ground, holding the hands out, palms away from you, elbows bent slightly. This position can be used to call the Goddess or to attune with her energies.

The God position consists of the feet together on the floor, body held rigidly upright, arms crossed on the chest (right over left, usually), hands held in fists. Tools such as the wand and magic knife (athame) are sometimes held in the fists, echoing the practice of

pharaohs of ancient Egypt who held a crook and flail in a similar position while trying disputes.

In coven work, the High Priestess and High Priest often assume these positions when invoking the Goddess and God. In solo workings they can be used to identify with the aspects of the Goddess and God within us, and also during separate invocatory rites.

Gestures are also used in magic. Each of the fingers relates to a specific planet as well as an ancient deity. Since pointing is a magical act and is a part of many spells, the finger can be chosen by its symbolism.

The thumb relates to Venus and to the planet Earth. Jupiter (both the planet and the god) rules the forefinger. The middle finger is ruled by the god and planet Saturn, the fourth finger the sun and Apollo, and the little finger by the planet Mercury as well as the god after which it is named.

Many spells involve pointing with the Jupiter and Saturn fingers, usually at an object to be charged or imbued with magical energy. The power is visualized as traveling straight out through the fingers and into the object.

Other ritual gestures used in Wiccan rites include the "cutting" of pentagrams at the four quarters by drawing them in the air with the magic knife, wand, or index finger. This is done to alternately banish or invoke elemental powers. It is, of course, performed with visualization.

The hand can be seen as a cauldron, since it can cup and contain water; an athame, since it is used to direct magical energy, and a wand, since it can also invoke.

Gestures are magical tools as potent as any other, ones we can always take with us, to be used when needed.

## Ritual and Preparation for Ritual

I HAVE DEFINED ritual as “a specific form of movement, manipulation of objects, or series of inner processes designed to produce desired effects” (see glossary). In Wicca, rituals are ceremonies that celebrate and strengthen our relationships with the Goddess, the God, and the earth.

These rituals need not be preplanned, rehearsed, or traditional, nor must they slavishly adhere to one particular pattern or form. Indeed, Wiccans I’ve spoken with on the subject agree that spontaneously created rituals can be the most powerful and effective.

A Wiccan rite may consist of a lone celebrant lighting a fire, chanting sacred names, and watching the moonrise. Or it may involve ten or more people, some of whom assume various roles in mythic plays, or speak long passages in honor of the Gods. The rite may be ancient or newly written. Its outer form isn’t important as long as it is successful in achieving an awareness of the deities within the Wiccan.

Wiccan ritual usually occurs on the nights of the full moon and the eight days of power, the old agricultural and seasonal festivals of Europe. Rituals are usually spiritual in nature but may also include magical workings.

In section III you’ll find a complete book of rituals, *The Standing Stones Book of Shadows*. The best way to learn Wicca is to practice it; thus through the course of time, by performing rituals such as those in this book or the ones you write yourself, you’ll gain an understanding of the true nature of Wicca.

Many people say they want to practice Wicca, but sit back and tell themselves that they can’t observe the full moon with ritual because they don’t have a teacher, aren’t initiated, or don’t know what to do.

The bath often becomes a ritual itself. Candles can be burned in the bathroom, along with incense. Fragrant oils or herbal sachets can be added to the water. My favorite purification bath sachet consists of equal parts of rosemary, fennel, lavender, basil, thyme, hyssop, vervain, mint, with a touch of ground valerian root. (This formula is derived from *The Key of Solomon*.) Place this in a cloth, tie the ends up to trap the herbs inside, and pop it into the tub.

Outdoor rituals near the ocean or lakes and streams can begin with a quick swim. Of course, bathing isn't possible prior to spontaneous rituals. Even the necessity of ritual bathing is questioned by some. If you feel comfortable bathing, do so. If you don't feel it's necessary, it isn't.

Once bathed, it's time to dress for ritual. Among many Wiccans today (particularly those influenced by the writings and ideals of Gerald Gardner, or one of his students—see bibliography), nudity is a preferable state in which to invoke the deities of nature. It is certainly true that this is the most natural condition in which the human body can be, but ritual nudity isn't for everyone. The Church did much to instill shameful feelings regarding the undraped human figure. These distorted, unnatural emotions survive today.

Many reasons are given for this insistence on ritual nudity.\* Some Wiccans state that the clothed body can't emit personal power as effectively as can a naked body, but then go on to say that when necessary, clothed rituals performed indoors are as effective as nude outdoor rites.

If clothed, Wiccans produce magic just as effective as that produced by naked Wiccans. Clothing is no barrier to the transference of power.

A more convincing explanation of Wiccan ritual nudity is that it is used for its symbolic value: mental, spiritual, as well as physical nudity before the Goddess and God symbolize the Wiccan's honesty and openness. Ritual nudity was practiced in many ancient religions and

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\* One of these that usually isn't stated is the most obvious: people like to look at naked bodies. Some unscrupulous persons form covens with the sole purpose of practicing social nudity. Such groups, it is readily apparent, aren't promoting the aims of Wicca: union of the Goddess and God and reverence for nature. I hasten to add that the majority of covens that practice ritual nudity aren't of this type.

can be found today in scattered areas of the world, so this isn't really a new idea, except to some westerners.

Though many covens insist on ritual nudity, you needn't worry about that. As a solitary practitioner the choice is yours. If you don't feel comfortable with ritual nudity, even in private, don't use it. There are many options.

Specialized dress, such as robes and tabards, are quite popular among some Wiccans. Various reasons are given for the use of robes, one of which is that slipping into garments worn only for magic lends a mystic atmosphere to such rituals and shifts your awareness to the coming proceedings, thereby promoting ritual consciousness.

Colors are also used for their specific vibrations. The listing below is a good sampling of robe colors. If I was especially interested in herb magic or performed rituals designed to halt the proliferation of nuclear power plants and weapons, I might wear a green robe to help key my rituals into earth energies. Specific robes can also be made and worn by the industrious for certain spells or cycles of spells, according to the descriptions below.

**Yellow** is an excellent color for those involved with divination.

**Purple** is favored for those who work with pure divine power (magicians) or who wish to deepen their spiritual awareness of the Goddess and God.

**Blue** is suited for healers and those who work with their psychic awareness or for attuning with the Goddess in her oceanic aspect.

**Green** empowers herbalists and magical ecologists.

**Brown** is worn by those who attune with animals or who cast spells for them.

**White** symbolizes purification and pure spirituality, and also is perfect for meditation and cleansing rituals. It is worn for full moon celebrations, or to attune with the Goddess.

**Orange or red robes** can be worn to sabbats, for protective rites, or when attuning with the God in his fiery solar aspect

**Black robes** are quite popular. Contrary to popular misconceptions, black doesn't symbolize evil. It is the absence of color. It is a protective hue and symbolizes the night, the universe, and a lack of falsehood. When a Wiccan wears a black robe, she or he is donning the blackness of outer space—symbolically, the ultimate source of divine energy.

If this is too complicated for you, simply make or buy one robe and wear it for every ritual.

Robes range from simple bath-type designs to fully hooded and lined monkish creations, complete with bell sleeves guaranteed to go up in flames if waved too close to candles. Some Wiccans wear robes with hoods, to shut off outside interference and to control sensory stimulation during ritual. This is a fine idea for magic or meditation but not for Wiccan religious rites, when we should be opening ourselves to nature rather than cutting off our connections with the physical world.

If you don't wish to dress in such a garment, are unable to sew, or simply can't find anyone to make one for you, just wear clean clothing of natural fibers such as cotton, wool, and silk.\* So long as you're comfortable with what you are (or aren't) wearing, you're doing fine. Why not experiment to see what "suits" you best?

Selecting and donning ritual jewelry naturally follows dressing. Many Wiccans have collections of exotic pieces with religious or magical designs. Then, too, amulets and talismans (devices made to ward off or to attract forces) often double as ritual jewelry. Such wonders as necklaces of amber and jet, silver or gold bands worn on the wrists,

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\* I realize that this is a heretical statement. Many Wiccans become quite angry when I suggest this. Such a reaction is the product of traditional Wiccan training. I feel, however, that wearing clean street clothing during ritual is no more absurd than is doning the ubiquitous, hot, and uncomfortable robes that so many Wiccans seem to love. To each their own.

crowns of silver set with crescent moons, rings of emeralds and pearls, even ritual garters set with tiny silver buckles are often part of Wiccan regalia.

But you needn't purchase or make such extravagances. Keep it simple for now. If you feel comfortable wearing one or two pieces of jewelry during ritual, fine! Choose designs incorporating crescents, ankhs, five-pointed stars (pentagrams), and so on. Many mail-order suppliers carry occult jewelry. If you wish to reserve such pieces for ritual wear, fine. Many do.

I'm often asked if I have a good luck charm, a piece of jewelry, an amulet, or some other power object that I always have in my possession. I don't.

This often comes as a surprise, but it is part of my magical philosophy. If I determined that one piece of jewelry (a ring, pendant, quartz crystal point, etc.) was my power object, my link with the Gods, my assurance of good luck, I'd be crushed if it was stolen, lost, misplaced or otherwise parted company with me.

I could say that the power had gone out of it, that it was a magical lemon, taken by higher beings, or that I'm not as aware as I think. But I'd still be devastated.

It isn't wise to put our hopes, dreams, and energies into physical objects. This is a limitation, a direct product of the materialism fostered upon us all our lives. It's easy to say, "I can't do a thing since I lost my lucky moonstone necklace." It's also tempting to think, "Nothing's gone right since my horned God ring disappeared."

What *isn't* easy to see is that *all the power and luck we need is within ourselves*. It isn't wrapped up in exterior objects unless we allow it to be. If we do this, we leave ourselves open to losing that part of our personal power and good fortune, something I won't willingly do.

Power objects and ritual jewelry can indeed be reminders of the Goddess and God, and symbols of our own affinities. But I feel they shouldn't be allowed to become more than that.

Still, I do have a few pieces (a silver pentagram, an image of the Goddess, an Egyptian ankh, a Hawaiian fishhook that symbolizes the