

The image is a book cover for 'WITCHES WORKSHOP HANDBOOK'. It features a photograph of a woman in a white, flowing dress standing in a dimly lit room. She has her arms raised and is surrounded by smoke or mist. In the foreground, a large, bright flame burns in a container on a large, circular pentagram drawn on the floor. The pentagram contains various symbols and text. The room has a brick wall, a tapestry, and a mirror. The title 'WITCHES WORKSHOP HANDBOOK' is written in a large, serif font at the top. At the bottom, the subtitle 'A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKSHOP' and the author's name 'BY TIM HARTRIDGE' are written in a smaller, serif font. The entire cover is framed by a dark red border with pentagram symbols in the corners.

WITCHES WORKSHOP HANDBOOK

A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR
PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKSHOP
BY TIM HARTRIDGE

W I T C H E S W O R K S H O P
A PROJECT CREATED BY TIM HARTRIDGE

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A SHORT GUIDE TO PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKSHOP

BY TIM HARTRIDGE

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W I T C H E S W O R K S H O P



Guidelines to working in a Witch's Circle

1. PARTICIPATION

These notes are intended to familiarise you with the introductory ritual practices and some Wiccan conventions. A few people may find the practices initially challenging, but I would encourage you to allow yourself the opportunity of the experience. Please keep in mind this workshop is for the purpose of learning, and so no question is considered too basic. If you feel something has not been covered to your satisfaction don't hesitate to ask for more information.

To assist in making your experience significant and authentic, there are two things that I ask. The first is to be open to new ideas or approaches to the subject; some of the ideas presented may be different from what you have read. The second is to be willing to participate and to give things a try, even if you should find things challenging.

2. WORKING IN A CIRCLE

The following points are some of the basic conventions to working in a Wiccan Circle that you can expect to be applied in the workshop.

I. Be personally responsible. This means that you agree not to do anything that might endanger either yourself or others in the workshop. Your behaviour should always be polite and considerate. If you have a concern please do not hesitate to discuss this with Tim.

II. If you need to leave either the workshop space or the Circle during ritual you do not need permission, but you will do so in such a way so as not to disturb or disrupt others. It is generally courteous to have

the acknowledgment of the facilitator. If a ceremony is under way this will mean breaking the Circle and opening a gateway. Opening and closing a gateway can be done in the following way:

Stand at the nearest point to the exit, visualising a veil at the edge of the Circle, hold your hands in front of you similar to a prayer position. Now, slowly render open an imagined veil by parting your hands. Step through, pause and visualise yourself gently closing the veil behind you, again with your hands. When you wish to return do exactly the same thing to re-enter.

III. Respect the wishes of someone if they do not want to be touched. If someone's hands are touching you in a too intimate way, making you uncomfortable you should let them know immediately. This doesn't have to be awkward; you can simply make your feelings very clear by taking hold of the person's hand and moving it firmly and deliberately elsewhere. That way, neither one of you has to convey a stilted verbal message, or make you feel as though you are disrupting the general flow, especially if it occurs during ritual. If the situation concerns you then speak to Tim.

The same principle applies for the Wiccan convention of passing the ritual Cup of wine with a kiss. The kiss is intended to be much like the French do in greeting another, that is, a kiss on the cheek. A kiss on the lips is okay, but only if it is mutually agreeable.

IV. A tolerant and respectful attitude toward the beliefs of others should be in evidence and practiced by the way you communicate to one another. The workshop functions from the premise of not asking you to believe in anything, but rather to use your personal experience as the basis of your understanding.

If you have a criticism of someone or another group it should be confined to a clear-cut and intelligent critique of their point of view, theories or practices, rather than merely some personal attack or



dislike. Gossip is not tolerated. Those better acquainted with the broader Pagan community understand only too well the destructive and divisive effects this can have.

Finally, treat the experiences shared by others as the intimate and sacred mysteries of the Circle. While I never ask people to keep anything secret, I would ask you to keep these things sacred. A few words of advice - you'll save yourself a lot of heartache if you only share your experiences with people who have the maturity to appreciate such things.



What is Witchcraft?

1. FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO RECENT PAST

From the time of pre-history and in the images of Stone Age art are depicted the preterhuman forms dancing among the animals. The images of Horned gods and Great Mother goddesses are the recognizable faces given to psycho-spiritual images whose carved and painted forms appear in so many sacred places and sacred objects. During the many Ages of Humankind and through innumerable cultures that followed from these remote times, are two enduring images that have remained active in the Psyche of humankind – the Horned God and the Great Goddess. The re-emergence of these same two recognisable forms have come down to us in Witchcults of Western Europe as the Devil and the Witch.

Since before Medieval times these two archetypal forms, a masculine Divine Animal God and a feminine Universal Goddess, became distorted into symbols of Evil through the teachings of a growing dominance of Christian religions, especially in Europe. Converted into a Horned Devil and the Hag Witch, it is these images which remain current in many peoples' minds when the word Witchcraft is mentioned. Contemporary Witches have both drawn upon and rejected these images, generally preferring to revive the more positive forms of expression of ancient Pagan psycho-spiritual practices.

It might be argued that the inspiration and revival of interest in Witchcraft is a response from the deep Psyche (Soul) and our awareness of our connection with the world. The Pagan world-view, which can generally be described as Mother Nature, is the outer expression of the Divine. It is here we see one of the strongest contrasts between monotheistic (one-god) religions and the polytheistic (many-gods) religions. That is, the One-God dominant over and outside of Nature, verses the Many-Gods within and as Nature.

Another contrast between the religious views is the general monothestic rejection and repression of the psychic experience. This contrasts with the Witches' practice of embracing and valuing the psychic experience. Witchcraft actively encourages and acknowledges a psychic dimension to life and gives expression to it through the many techniques and practices found in Magick.

Ultimately there is a great divide between the two theologies: the absolutism of the monothesists (ie, those that belief there is only one *true* god); versus the polythesists (ie, those that believe in many gods) who generally have a live and let approach to spirituality.



2. CONTEMPORARY WITCHCRAFT

Generally speaking, the modern expression of Witchcraft was inspired by the late Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964). Through his written works he reintroduced the old Anglo-Saxon word for Witch, Wica (sic), and this has become the accepted name for the some of the spiritual practices of modern Witchcraft.



Gerald Brosseau Gardner
(1884-1964)

Gardner's involvement in British Witchcraft was from sometime in the 1930's. His first published work was "A Goddess Arrives", 1939. He was acknowledged as a folklorist and amateur anthropologist. His academic interest in Witchcraft and magick can be traced from several sources - the works of anthropologist Dr. Margaret Murray, and his association with the master occultist Aleister Crowley, who admitted Gardner into the O.T.O. (a magickal order). His practical involvement was through his own initiation and participation in a Witches' Coven said to be still surviving in the New Forest area of England.

Gardner was one of the first people in modern times to use the word *Wicca* to describe Witchcraft. The word *wica* (sic) was defined by Gardner to have originally meant 'wise', and hence Witchcraft was simply the 'craft of the wise'. However, research has generally refuted

this definition, offering instead several other possible origins of the word *Wicca*: 'wicca' Old English, related to Middle Low German 'wicken', to conjure; 'vicka' Swedish, to move to and fro; and again the Old English 'wice' and 'wic', probably from the Germanic 'wik', meaning to bend. Whatever the true meaning, Gardner thought it a good idea to rename Witchcraft to *Wicca* and it has stuck. (Incidentally, the Old English word *wicca* was likely to have been pronounced 'wicch-a', and hence 'wice' was *witchy*, or simply *witch*.)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF WICCAN RITUAL:

Within modern *Wicca* certain rituals are held in common. The following is a basic ritual formula used by many contemporary Wiccans:

The Witch robes him/herself or works *skyklad* (i.e. naked). A *Circle* is cast with the ritual sword or knife (*athame*) and then is consecrated with the four elements (earth, water air, and fire). Then stellar or elemental nature deities are invoked at the cardinal points of the Circle. An invocation is then incanted to a specific God or Goddess to imbue the Witch with the god's qualities. At Full Moon and Dark of the Moon there are also specific rites that are used to manifest the divine within Witch as the Moon goddess.

Whether working alone or within a Coven, the Witch might perform a whirling dance within the Circle called raising a *Cone of Power*. This is a stepping, pacing dance done faster and faster until a powerful psychic tourbillion or *Cone of Power* is raised. When executed correctly the energy raised charges the Witch's subtle and physical body, producing an ecstasy of psychic currents and experiences, the *psychic reflex*. This may manifest through the Witch in acts of psychic projection through spell casting, divination, or evocation of familiar spirits.

Ritual and dance represent just two of the *Eight Magickal Paths* or practices used by some contemporary Witches. The other practices include: herbal knowledge; the ability to concentrate the will; experience of trance states which includes astral projection; the control and stimulation of psychic (vital) forces earthed in the body; the invocation of the gods; and the application of sexual magick.



4. A DEFINITION OF WITCHCRAFT

*Witchcraft is a practical system of mysticism
whose method is known as Magick.*

Defining the key words from the above description –

Witch: one who functions either consciously or unconsciously in the psychic realm. ('Psychic' from Ancient Greek *psyche* the domain of the soul, spirit or mind.)

Witchcraft: a developed or 'crafted' natural ability to function in the psychic realm. Wicca: merely another term for Witch and Witchcraft.

Mysticism: the direct experience of communion with the Divine,

usually experienced in an ecstatic or elevated state of consciousness. (Related to *Mystery* Latin *myein* meaning, to close one's eyes, and *mystes* one initiated, particularly one initiated into a Mystery religion.) *Magick*: in its highest form it can be described as the fulfilment of personal destiny via self knowledge. In the lower forms – that is more down to earth and practical forms – it can be the attempted influence of mundane reality.

In discussing this particular definition of Witchcraft our focus is upon the personal experience within the psyche rather than the idea of adopting a Witch-persona. I would argue that it is the individual's ability to experience the *Witch* as a psychic phenomena of the *Self* rather than the mere adoption of a belief system that ultimately determines who is a Witch. Some people have a natural propensity to manifest and give life to the *Witch within* and experience this as an evolving and living psychic identify. In the right environment this may develop through an ever-widening variety of experiences, which is expressed as *Magick*.

5. WICCA VERSES WITCHCRAFT

Although the real reasons are not certain as to why Gerald Gardner re-introduced the term Wicca instead of the more commonly used word Witchcraft, few would argue that most contemporary Witch covens clearly prefer the term *Wicca*. The reason for this is not hard to find given the stigma attached to the word Witchcraft.

The arguments for and against a preference in describing oneself as either a *Witch* or *Wiccan* evidence a great deal of literalism about those who practice Witchcraft. However, if we embrace the idea of viewing Witchcraft as more a psychic phenomena of the Self, this then opens us to other possibilities. (By *psychic* the inferred meaning is a part of one's *Psyche*, or personal Unconscious.) It is less then about religion and more to do with the practice of *Magick* and Initiation into the Mysteries.

6. THE NATURAL OR WILD WITCH

In other words one may not be a 'witch' 24 hours of the day, but at certain times the emergence can be felt. This is usually at times of psychic stress. In fact, many of the practices of Witchcraft help aid this emergence. These include the use of inspired ritual and the sensuality of nudity and dance, things that help us to step aside from ego-centred consciousness. This psychic awakening of the natural Witch can therefore be experienced by any sincere person if they are prepared to explore their wild and uninhibited nature, for it is in these neglected places of the psyche that the instinctual witch can thrive and be directly experienced.

This is the domain of the natural or wild Witch, who unapologetically awakens from deep within the psyche. This Witch is that part of ourselves that yearns for the return of night (the unconscious hours), who leads us to seek out the uncivilised parts of our nature so that we may cultivate and extend Her powers. This Witch is unrestrained by social *mores*, a true heretic of society and makes us connect with our true ourselves when we feel we don't fit in.

When being a Witch is experienced in this way, as our link to the wild, we may begin to reanimate our primitive and forgotten powers. Being a Witch under these conditions is not a religious label, but is more to do with experiencing our instinctual and psychic powers as an expression of magick. These natural instincts may manifest in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar forms. Our intuition is one such form it can take, while others include clairvoyance, astral and psychic projections and even a natural ability to heal; all are manifestations of the Witch.



7. CONCLUSION

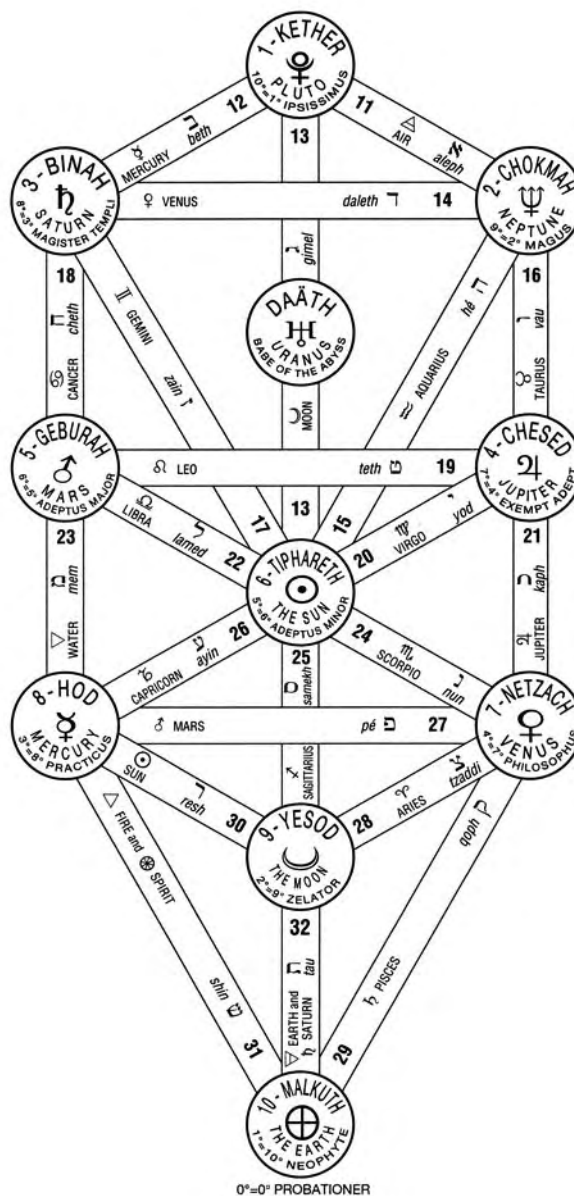
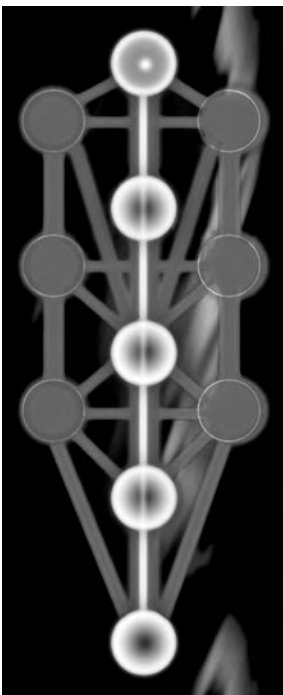
This approach in using an alternative interpretation to what it may mean to be a Witch places a greater emphasis upon the personal psychic function and the importance of personal experience. By looking for the *Witch within* we may begin to think in terms of wanting to do more than simply learn from others. We are more likely to seek self-Initiation into the Mysteries; to be using self-initiative in the contribution of our own psychic study and knowledge base; and we will almost certainly find greater value in our own experiences above that of others as a basis for belief. Perhaps old Gerald Gardner had it right when he spoke of Witchcraft in the following terms:

"It is the old case of: Unless you experience it yourself you will never believe. When you have experienced it, you don't believe, you know."

(quote from "Witchcraft Today", Gerald Gardner, 1954.)

The symbolic form of the Tree of Life glyph, showing the Sephiroth (emanations) and Paths with special attention drawn to the “Middle Pillar”.

On a macrocosmic level the Tree of Life is an esoteric representation of the Universe, while at a microcosmic level it depicts the psychic anatomy of humankind.



Middle Pillar Meditation

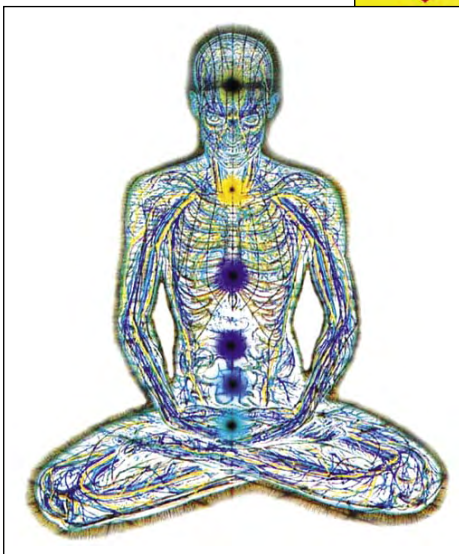
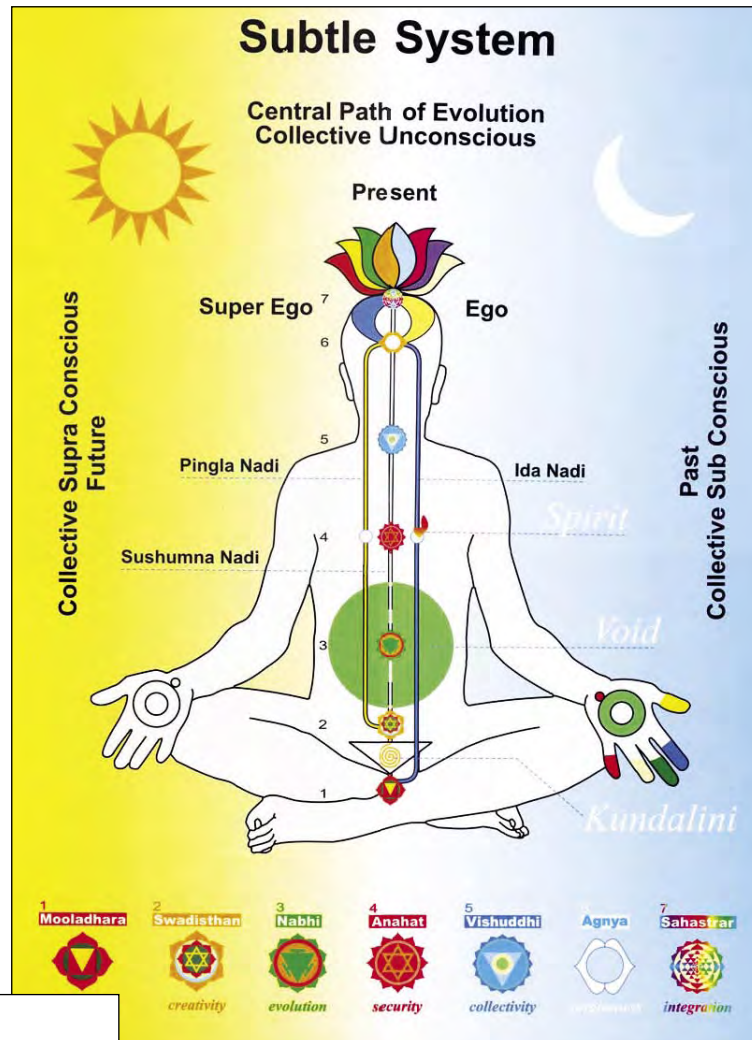
The name “Middle Pillar” is a reference to the central column or pillar shown on the “Tree of Life” illustration; an esoteric map of the universe, as well as a guide to the psychic anatomy of human beings. This ritual meditation was originally used by the magickal Order known as the Golden Dawn, active at the turn of the century. The practice was later expanded upon by Aleister Crowley when he joined the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) and later for his own Order the Astrum Argentum (A.A.). It is from this period where New Aeon or Thelemic components were introduced. Its present form, as used by Dark Circle, was developed by Tim Hartridge.

The purpose of the Middle Pillar practice is to aid in bringing about awareness of the subtle energy centres (generally called “chakra”) of the psychic anatomy. The subtle energy, known variously as chi, prana or just *vital force*, is conceived of as being present in all living things. In humans and no doubt other living organisms this vital force becomes concentrated through the centres in the body called *chakra*, where they take on more specific types of functions. For example the Third Eye chakra helps to activate clairvoyance.

The Middle Pillar as a ritual practice cannot only be used as a means of opening awareness of a subtle energy field in an individual, but can also be used in a group; and will assist in connecting the members to a *group-mind*, technically known as an *egregor*.

The following practice is divided in to two parts. The first part is designed to activate awareness of the subtle energy and the chakra points, while the second part of the practice is devised to activate the group-mind, while also making a connection to the current of the Aeon, the pervading energy of our Age.

Left: The Chakra system illustrated with the channels that connect the flow of prana through them. Supplementary to the Chakra are the Nadis (*gates*) that allow a vital flow from outside the psychosoma system to the more subtle *bodies*. Some Nadi are physical such as the nerves, veins and arteries, (see below) and some nadi are invisible. Both are said to work upon our system from both a pranic level as well as mental level.



According to the Indian scholar and Tantric initiate Harish Johari, the Chakra system is active at a subtle level producing psychic states that affect the body, mind and spirit. Conscious awareness of the Chakra system helps aid our awakening of corresponding psychic and somatic functions. Ritual, asana, mudra and breathing are ways that may aid us in establishing a direct awareness of this subtle system. "Knowledge about the chakras can be a valuable key to introspection." (*Chakras* by Harish Johari)

Chakra System

CORRESPONDING GEMSTONES AND COLOURS

The following table is not based upon any traditional correspondences, rather it is an intuitive expression of corresponded gemstones and colours for the psychic anatomy as related to the Middle Pillar.

CHAKRA	GEMSTONE	COLOUR
Crown	Diamond, Lapis Lazuli	White, Indigo, night sky
Third Eye	Sapphire	Deep Blue
Mouth	Moonstone	Pale Blue
Throat	Emerald	Green
Heart	Topaz	Golden (Yellow, dawn)
Solar Plexus	Amber	Orange
Navel	Rose Quartz	Pink
Sex	Ruby	Deep Red (Scarlet, flame)
Feet	Onyx (Lodestone)	Black (Russet, earth)
Whole Body	Opal	Myriad of colours

Ritual Movement & Voice

A FEW PRACTICAL NOTES

The movements for this ritual practice should be done slowly, so that you glide gracefully through the field around the body. The fields surrounding the body are referred to as the Etheric field and the Aura.

By using the sensitivity of your finger tips, try to feel the etheric and auric fields as you move your hands, arms and body. If you wish, alternate your hand gestures with an open hand and that of the *Wand/Will* mudra. This mudra is performed by placing the thumb between the index and middle finger.

The vocal sounding of the words and names used in this ritual in particular should be done in such a way so as to resonate a vibration through the body. You may also imagine that you are projecting the flow around the body and outwardly in all directions.



The Stele of Revealing, or more formally known as the Stele of Ankh-af-na-khonsu. The stele displays Nut/Nuit arched over Hadit, shown as the winged sun-disk. Seated on the throne is Horus, known as Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and the priest Ankh-af-na-khonsu.

Analysis of Words Magickal Exegesis: a short list

Gods and Goddesses:

NUIT: (pronounced Nu-ee). Nuit, Ancient Egyptian goddess of the night sky, depicted with a deep blue body filled with stars. The Thelemic magickal designation “*Infinite space and infinite stars*” conceals Nuit's secret other name *Isis*.

HADIT: (Had-de) The infinitely small atomic point, the bindu. A Thelemic god, but considered the complement to Nuit. He is the infinitely small point and heart of every star.

RA-HOOR-KHUIT: the *Child* of Hadit and Nuit, the event-act, the now. A title of Ancient Egyptian god Horus as the *Enterer*; literally meaning - *The crowned and conquering child*.

AIWAZ: The medium or channel permeating the present current of the Aeon (Age); zeitgeist. The Thelemic spirit which communicated the Holy Book *Liber AL*.

THERION: Literally, the *wild*, the life-force within us, the animal powers. Ancient Greek name equated with the Horned Gods whose power is in the phallus.

BABALON: Literally, the *Gate of the Sun*, the seductive powers, the kalas. A Thelemic deity and feminine form of Baal whose powers are in the vagina.

Magickal Words:

LAShTAL: LA (Nuit) united with AL (Hadit) and the field of their interplay ShT (Set), the fire of the serpent (Kundalini).

THELEMA: Literally Ancient Greek the *Will*. *Will* in Magick is not ordinary *willfulness*, but the *True Will* of destiny.

FIAOF: Individual letters represent a magickal theory/formula:
F = 00, ∞ infinity; I = Isis, birth; A = Apophis, death; O =
Osiris, rebirth; F = infinity. From *Infinity* we are *Born*, we
Die, and are *Reborn* into *Infinity*.

AGAPE: *Love*, Greco-Roman, the creative act and compliment of
Magickal Will. Equated with ancient *love feasts* and Venus
as art and beauty, a true expression of Self.

AUM: Also AUMGN and OM, the root vibration of *Creation*. An
expression of Thelema-Agape.

ABRAHADABRA: Not the corrupted *abra-cad-abra*, but the formula
of the *Great Work*, the accomplishment of *True Will*. In
Alchemy the great work or *Magnum Opus* is the process of
creating (*Agape*) true gold (*Thelema*). In other words, *finding
value in your True Self*.

Middle Pillar Ritual

STAGE 1: CREATING THE MIDDLE PILLAR



MC "I open my arms and embrace the infinite stars of space. I open my mind and I hear the call of the celestial name of the Mother of Night – NUIT."

(ALL Raise both hands above and outstretched over the head. Slowly rotating, call "NUIT" into space with the MC. Visualise yourself expanding through the crown of your head into an ever widening horizon of the night sky.)

MC "I tremble, I shiver, and light pours through my body. My feet dissolve and I descend a deep, deep well in whose waters are reflected the light of a single star – HADIT."

(ALL Draw hands down the centre of the body to touch the ground. With the body now squatting, call "HADIT". Visualise the infinite stars of space converging through the crown of your head. Imagine as the light rushes through your body, you are drawn downward into an abyss where the radiant light of a single star ripples in the deep waters of Time.)



MC "I draw to my heart, my centre, the event-act, the now – "RA-HOOR-KHUIT."

(ALL Standing erect, hands touching the chest, calling RA-HOOR-KHUIT. Visualise your centre of being floating in an abyss between the infinite expanse of space above and infinite deep below. At your centre, feel pure conscious awareness.)

SATGE 2: ACTIVATING THE CHAKRAS

As each of the following psychic centres are touched upon, visualise starlight radiating down the central column and outward through the chakras.



MC "The third eye – VISION."
(ALL Using yours hands in the mudra of the "wand of Will" touch the centre of the forehead and direct consciousness into the Ajna chakra, the Third Eye.)

MC "Lips – SPEECH."
(ALL Touching the lips, draw consciousness to the mouth and lips, the centre of invocation and evocation)

MC "Throat – EXPRESSION"
(ALL Touch the throat, and cry "AIWAZ", whilst letting hands and arms spread out from this centre. Once fully extended, then bring them slowly back to the centre of the breast.)



MC To the heart centre – "LOVE".
(ALL With hands on the breast.)

MC To the Solar Plexus centre – "ENERGY".
(ALL Touch the Solar Plexus, and cry "THERION", whilst letting the hands and arms spread wide from this centre. Again once extended, bring them slowly back to the navel.)

MC To the Naval centre – "WELL-BEING".
(ALL With hands now on the naval.)

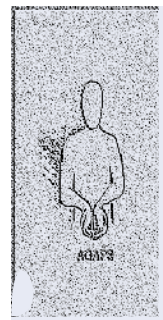
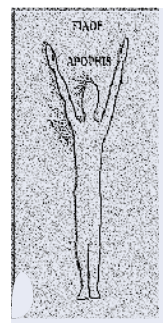
MC To the Sexual centre – "INSTINCT"
(ALL Touch the sexual centre and vibrate "BABALON", let the hands and arms spread wide.)



STAGE 3: ACTIVATING THE GROUP MIND OF THE COVEN AS A PSYCHIC CURRENT



1. Hands curve and grasp the other as in the Yin–Yang/ Yab–Yum mudra, and call – “LASH TAL”.
2. Right hand upheld in the mudra of the wand, and the right foot extended, call – “THELEMA”.
3. The formula of FIAOF is executed and pronounced in the following way:
 - i. Call – “OOee”. Grasp with the index finger and thumb of the right hand, the left breast, cupping the left arm beneath as is supporting a child.
 - ii. Call – “Yaa”. Stiffen the body and extend arms to form a trident.
 - iii. Call – “Yoy”. Cross arms on the breast and bow head slightly, finishing with an “OO” sound.
4. Cup hands together raising ring and little fingers perpendicular to the rest and call – “AGAPE”.
5. Link hands with others in a circle (or if working alone simply open one’s arms wide) and call – “AUM”.
6. With everyone grasping hands and a circle thus formed, the ritualists begin to rotate in a ring, chanting – “ABRAHADABRA”. The chant increases in pace, building to a climax, when the MC opens the spinning circle so that individuals orbit on the spot.



Elemental Tables

The four primal Elements (and even the abstract fifth) can be used to catalogue and map not only of the physical universe, but of the emotional, mental and spiritual worlds as well. The tables below, known as *Tables of Correspondence*, illustrate this concept.

N.B. Orientation is applied for the Southern Hemisphere.

FIRE

Spiritual	Principle of Light.
Mental	Element of Action.
Emotional/astral	Virtues: courage, initiative, enthusiasm. Vices: anger, jealousy, vindictiveness.
Mundane	Fire, solar energy, generation of body energy.
Season, Time	Summer. Noon.
Direction, Zodiac	North. Leo, Sagittarius, Aries.
Colours, Metals	Red, orange. Gold, iron.
Process	Combustion.
Charge/Quality	Electric (shining, expansive, hot/dry).

WATER

Spiritual	Principle of Love.
Mental	Element of Fluidity (Creativity).
Emotional/astral	Virtues: compassion, tenderness, forgiveness. Vices: treachery, emotionalism, instability.
Mundane	Water, rain, sea, saps, bodily fluids.
Season, Time	Autumn. Dusk.
Direction, Zodiac	West. Scorpio, Pisces, Cancer.
Colours, Metals	Blue, sea green. Silver.
Process	Dissolution.
Charge/Quality	Magnetic (reflective, contracts, cool/moist).

AIR

Spiritual	Principle of Life.
Mental	Element of Intellect.
Emotional/astral	Virtues: diligence, optimism, dexterity. Vices: Frivolity, gossiping, boasting.
Mundane	Air, fragrance, winds, breathing.
Season, Time	Spring. Dawn.
Direction, Zodiac	East. Aquarius, Gemini, Libra.
Colours, Metals	Yellow, pale blue. Mercury
Process	Evaporation.
Charge/Quality	Neutral (porous, light, warm/moist).

EARTH

Spiritual	Principle of Law.
Mental	Element of Solidity
Emotional/astral	Virtues: patience, endurance, reliability. Vices: Laziness, stagnation, depression.
Mundane	Earth, minerals, skeletal system.
Season, Time	Winter. Midnight.
Direction, Zodiac	South. Taurus, Virgo, Libra.
Colours, Metals	Olive green, russet, sand yellow, black. Lead.
Process	Decomposition.
Charge/Quality	Electromagnetic (dark, heavy, cool/dry).

Casting the Witch's Circle

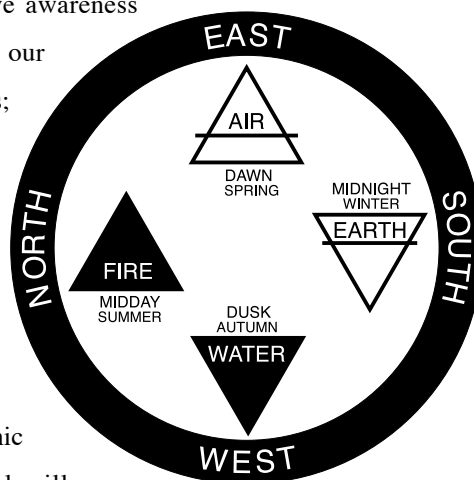
WHY WITCHES USE A CIRCLE

The main *psychic* purpose in the creation of a ritual Circle is as a gateway between the conscious and unconscious content of the Witch. Consciousness is viewed as our cognitive awareness to the sensate and thinking functions in us and our unconscious as our intuitive and feeling functions; the juxtaposition between the rational world and the irrational, the faculty of dreams and psychic content.

Whether the Circle is created for individual use or within a group, it usually acts as a bridge from the conscious Self to unconscious or psychic content. Accessing individual psychic material will most likely also lead to a psychic connection of Collective Unconscious material. So at a mundane level the Circle acts as a symbol of the psychic reality encompassing the Self and a Collective reality.

Much of what we will examine in the workshop holds an emphasis on the Circle as both a *bridge* or *passageway* to psychic work, as well as a *container* of psychic energy. In this respect I am especially interested in the alchemical model where the Circle is equivalent to the *Vas* or *Crucible*, or in the language of the Witch, the *Cauldron*.

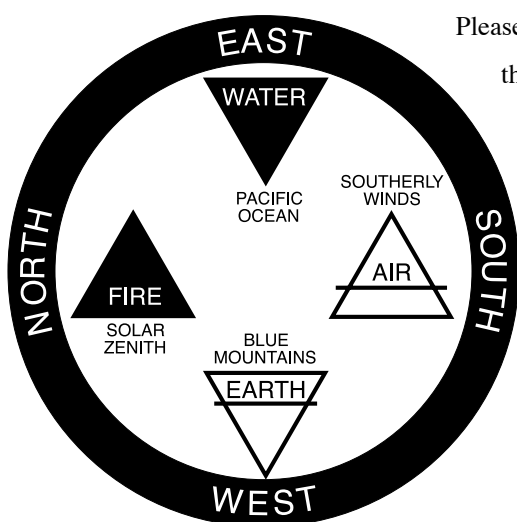
In general, the Circle is not for the purpose of keeping things out as is sometimes supposed; rather, it aids the Witch on pathways within. Of course, a Witch might construct a Circle for a variety of ritual uses, including the keeping of things out, but more generally it's for inner work that connects one to the psychic reality.



An example of an Elemental Circle with Solar and Seasonal correspondences for the Southern Hemisphere.

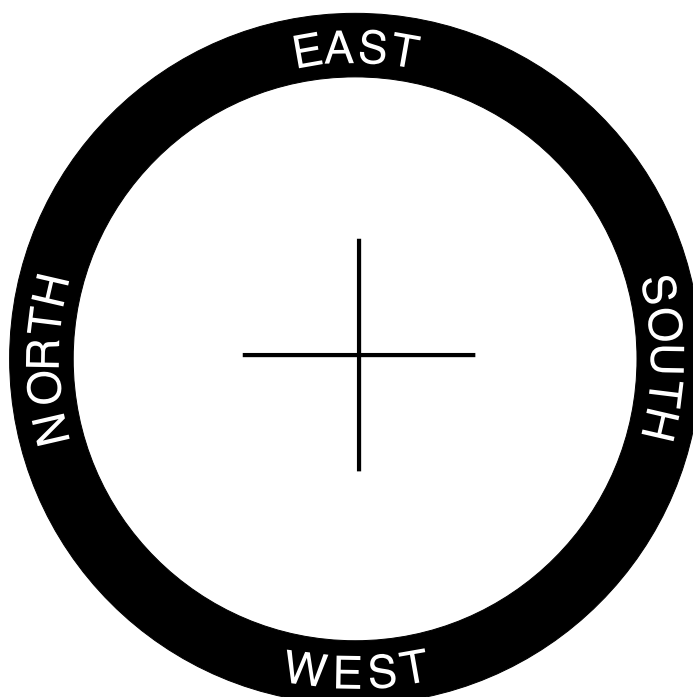
In the following notes are two examples of the spells and rituals used to cast the Circle that our Coven employs. These are a good starting point but once you have mastered the basic method I'd like to recommend you adapt or create your own preferred methods.

A GENERAL NOTE ABOUT RITUAL



An Elemental Circle
taking into account local
environmental conditions
for Sydney.

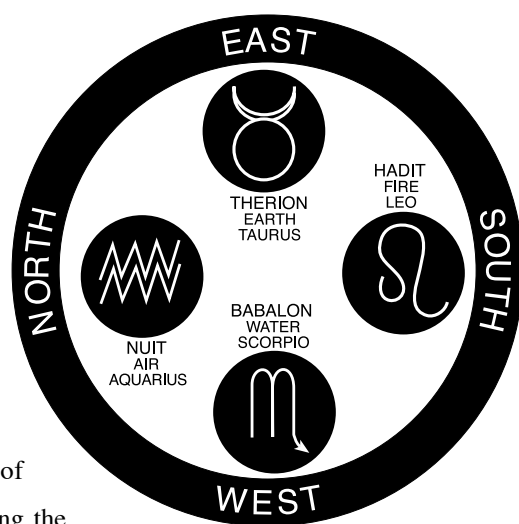
Please keep in mind that successful results are achieved through properly developed techniques and are not in anyway dependent on good "ritual theatre". This is not to say that aesthetics can't play a part. They can, and I personally take great care to develop ritual in a form which assists me aesthetically, but not at the sacrifice of magickal results. In other words any artistic enhancements that are incorporated in ritual should serve a useful purpose and not be an end in itself.



Make a suggestion
for the orientation of
the Elements for your
local habitat or region.

Basic Circle Rite

The ritualist (Master/Mistress of Ceremonies, MC) sits or stands with others in a circle. It is helpful to have the floor or ground marked (suggest using flour [if outdoors], masking tape, a silken cord, a rope or a specially designed ritual mat). If a ritual sword is available the MC can trace the Circle by turning on the spot, or walking around the perimeter of the Circle or (when sitting with others) by passing the sword around the Circle, from one person to the next. As the Circle is formed, the ritualists should visualise the electric-blue light of *etheric energy* (ie, vital force, life force) forming and building around the group.



Using the elemental
Zodiac to determine
corresponding cardinal
directions.

RITUAL FOCUS AND INTENTION

As each element is passed around, the Circle members try to acquire some of the qualities of the element they are holding. One objective of the ritual is to share your associations with the other members of the Circle. Here is a brief list of the key associations with the elemental tools.

Spirit/Group Mind/Sword - the ritual intention, the group cohesion.

EARTH / NANTA - heavy and solid; the body, experienced through the physical world.

WATER / HCOMA - cool and fluid; astral body, emotional experiences.

AIR / EXARP - lightness and expansive; mind and sense of Self, abstract qualities.

FIRE / BITOM - warmth and energetic; spirit and soul, divine or universal principals

When building the Circle using this method, it is useful to think of the process and the elements in the following way:

The Sword is representative of the Group Mind or Will; the ritual intention or purpose might be stated as part of the ritual dedication. As the Earth Pantacle is passed try identifying with the material things that make-up the Circle – our bodies, the ground, physical space being used. As the Water Cup is passed around, try identifying with the emotional energy of Coven, your own feelings as well as the Coven. As the Air Censer is passed, hold your thought as a charged intention, the Coven's creative impulse. Finally, as the Fire Brazier is passed around imagine the spirit of the Coven charged with life and vitality.

The overall purpose in this type of Circle casting is to try and define a psychic body of the Coven and then embody the four fundamental components: earth-body, water-emotion, air-mind, and fire-spirit. A group working this way regularly together will soon manifest a group-consciousness with an inner soul.

THE CIRCLE CASTING

Words for the Circle Spell by the MC are:

"Sword (Rood) cuts (marks) a circle round about;"

The response by circle members is:

"Power stay in, world stay out."

This spell is repeated at least 3 times, or until the sword returns to the MC. The MC then seals the circle with the words:

"The Sword (Rood) has cut (marked) a circle round about;"

And the response is:

"A world within, a world without."

USING THE ELEMENTS

The four elements are passed around from one person to the next, or if you are working as a solitary then each element can be carried around

the perimeter of Circle. You can use each element in an order to suit your purposes, but usually do earth, water, air and fire. While the elements are passed around the Circle the spirit names are vocalised. This is done by resonating the words with a long breath. The idea being to harmonise your energy with the essence of the element through sound. I prefer to use the Enochian elemental names because these are considered to be a type of purely elemental energy. (*See notes on the Enochian names.*)

"EXARP" (air - censer of incense); "HCOMA" (water - chalice of water); "NANTA" (earth - pantacle of earth); and "BITOM" (fire - brazier of fire). As each element is passed around, individual ritualists try to acquire some of the qualities of the element they handle.

Once the elementals have all been passed around, the Coven take hands and breathe slowly and deeply, try to connect to the flow of energy moving within the Circle. Imagine this energy as flowing in through one hand on an inward breath, and flowing on through the other hand on the outward breath.

Before finishing the Circle casting the MC might summarise the qualities of the elements and how these are held in the hands and bodies of the Coven members. As a final gesture the a *Grail Cup* or *Loving Cup* is passed around the Circle a couple of times, sharing either wine or herbal brew (eg lemon, ginger and mugwort). Before passing the Grail, it is held to the centre and all touch and hold it as some appropriate toast is made, such as –

*"Drink from the Cup of Witches' Wine,
And remeber ancient rites forgooten by time.
Sup from the crimson Chalice,
and be free from those who wish you malice."*

Enochian Elemental Names

*A brief note about the Elemental names used in
the Circle casting rituals.*

The origin of the four elemental names (Nanta, Hcoma, Exarp, Bitom), are from the works of two 16th century occultists, Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelley. Dr Dee was the astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I, and together with Sir Edward Kelley conducted experiments in spirit vision via a *Shew Stone*, i.e. a crystal ball, (currently housed in the British Museum). Descriptions of their magickal work explain how an angel would appear in the shew stone and proceed to dictate to Dee and Kelley how they would be able to communicate with Angels via an angelic language. The method entailed using a set of elaborate tablets inscribed with the angelic alphabet. This language and alphabet was named by Dr Dee, *Enochian*, after the biblical prophet Enoch, of whom it was also said spoke with Angels.

The names we use are derives from the *Tablet of Union*. These four names act as access points for the essence of each of the four prime elements: *earth, water, air and fire*. In other words, the sound of these words act to stimulate in the ritualist the potential of all the qualities of the particular element. The idea behind using these names is to aid the ritualist in making a connection with the qualities of the corresponding element.

I have found using these names certainly assists me in making a connection to the elementals and imbues the ritual space with a natural balance. As a practical tool in group ritual, it has assisted the ritualists in producing a tangible *body* of the circle, a pure elemental atmosphere in which the coven could work.

An Alternate Circle Rite

COMBINING THE USE OF THE ELEMENTAL PENTAGRAM INVOCATIONS:



AIR

MC is at centre of the space. If the circle is cast with others, then they can attend to the elements at the quarters, holding them up as each quarter is addressed. Alternatively, the Coven may follow the MC around the Circle from the side and/or behind as the four pentagrams and Circle are traced.

MC holds the sword or their personal Athame to their forehead before beginning at each quarter and focuses upon the quality of the element assigned. As each elemental pentagram is traced the spirit names or essences (also known as Enochian words of power) are resonated by the ritualists.

MC facing east draws an invoking Air pentagram and resonates the name:

"EXARP". (The resonance should extend in and through the pentagram opening an astral doorway.)

The MC then continues,

"Hear me in the East and recognise mine intention."

Turning slowly, a quarter of the circle, to the North, the MC says:

"East by Air to North by Fire, the line is cast and the two are one."

MC facing north draws an invoking fire pentagram:

"BITOM - Hear me in the North and recognise mine intention."

Turning say:

"North by Fire to West by Water, the line is cast and the two are one."

MC facing west draws an invoking water pentagram:



WATER



FIRE



EARTH

"HCOMA - Hear me in the West and recognise mine intention.

Turning say:

"West by Water to South by Earth, the line is cast and the two are one."

MC facing south draws an invoking earth pentagram:

"NANTA - Hear me in the South and recognise mine intention."

Turning finally back to the east quarter, the MC says:

"South by Earth returning to East by Air, the line is cast and All are One."

THE CONSECRATION OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The attendants of water (west) and earth (south) bring the chalice of water and the pantacle of earth (with the container of salt) to the centre of the circle. The chalice is held on the pantacle and a little salt is mixed in the water chalice. The following spell is then recited:

EARTH & WATER

South Quarter ritualist:

"Let the Salt of the Earth admonish the Water to bear the virtue of the Great Sea."

West Quarter ritualist, taking a handful of water, traces an equal-armed cross in the air with the words:

"Mother be thou adored."

The attendant of the West then carries the chalice around the circle starting at the East (or from wherever the circle casting has started). The other ritualists chant: "HCOMA". (If desired, the ritualist may sprinkle the water as he/she moves around the circle).

Next, the attendant of the South carries the pantacle around the circle, presenting it at each quarter (again starting at the East), while the other ritualists chant: "NANTA".

FIRE & AIR

The attendants of air (east) and fire (north) fuel the censer with incense (air) and light a flame in the brazier (fire – using methylated spirits). The elements are then brought to the centre of the circle and held one above the other. The ritualist of the East Quarter then says:

"Let Fire and Air make sweet the world."

The ritualist of the North Quarter, making the sign of the cross with the flaming brazier, then says:

"Father be thou adored."

Each element (the flaming brazier and censer of incense) is carried around the circle. While the others, using *conscious pore breathing** and visualisations, chant the appropriate calls: "*BITOM*" (fire), and "*EXARP*" (air). In this way the elemental qualities build, imbuing the circle with the qualities of the element.

Thus the Circle is cast.

**Conscious pore breathing* is a technique usually applied in the Franz Bardon's Hermetic magical practices. It involves simply visualising the breath being drawn in and out through every pore in the body. When continued for some minutes the effect is subliminally transferred to the etheric field (subtle energy field) of the body. An overall sensation of expanding and contracting may be felt and later elemental qualities are consciously impregnated using the catalyst of the breath. The elemental qualities are for example warmth with fire, coolness with water, lightness with air, and heaviness with earth. See Hermetic Magick notes within.



The Witches Rune

A traditional chant for raising a *Cone of Power* during dance.

"Eko, Eko, Azarak; Eko, Eko, Zamilak;

Darksome night and shining moon,

East then South, then West then North,

Harken to the Witches' Rune –

Here we come to call ye forth.

Earth and Water, Air and Fire,

Wand and Pentacle and Sword,

Work ye unto our desire,

Harken ye unto our word!

Cords and Censer, Scourge and Knife,

Powers of the Witch's blade –

Waken all ye unto life,

Come ye as the charm is made!

Queen of Heaven, Queen of Hell,

Hornèd Hunter of the Night –

Lend your power unto the spell,

And work our Will by magick rite!

By all the power of Land and Sea,

By all the might of Moon and Sun,

As I do Will, So Mote It Be;

Chant the spell and be it done.

Eko, Eko, Azarak; Eko, Eko, Zamilak.

(Repeat for as long as you can or until energy climaxes)

Azarak, Zamilak, .

Azarak, Azarak, Azarak"

(All drop to the ground and attempt to leap the abyss of the gateway between the worlds.)

WITCHES WORKSHOP HANDBOOK

PART TWO PRACTICUM