

of all fear. For as life is but a journey into death, so death is but a passage back to life, and in Me the circle is ever turning.”

In love, He entered into Her, and so was reborn into life. Yet is He known as Lord of Shadows, the comforter and consoler, opener of the gates, King of the Land of Youth, the giver of peace and rest. But She is the gracious mother of all life; from Her all things proceed and to Her they return again. In Her are the mysteries of death and birth; in Her is the fulfillment of all love.

☞ NOTES

1. Oral teaching of the Faery tradition of witchcraft.
2. Oral teaching of the Faery tradition.
3. Oral teaching, Faery tradition.

☞ REFERENCES

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CHAPTER 3 I Am a Pagan

Selena Fox

I am a Pagan. I am a part of the whole of nature. The rocks, the animals, the plants, the elements are my relatives. Other humans are my sisters and brothers, whatever their races, colours, ages, nationalities, creeds, or sexual preferences. The earth is my mother and the sky is my father. The sun and moon are my grandparents, and the stars my ancestors. I am part of this large family of nature, not the master of it. I have my own special part to play and I seek to play that part to the best of my ability. I seek to live in harmony with others in the family of nature, treating others with respect, not abuse.

I am a Pagan. I celebrate the changing seasons, the turning of the Wheel of the Year with music, feasting, rituals, and celebrations. Halloween is a time for paying homage to my ancestors and friends who have passed into the spirit world and a time to gaze into the future. Yule, the winter solstice, is a festival of peace, light, and celebration of the new sun, and my home is filled with the sacred holly, mistletoe, and evergreen. Candlemas, Imbolg, or groundhog day at the beginning of February is a festival of purification. A time for clearing

away blockages to prepare for the coming of spring and new growth. Ostara, the spring equinox, I celebrate the greening of the earth by sharing coloured eggs with friends. May Eve is a festival of fertility and creativity, and I decorate myself with bright colours and flowers and dance the maypole to bless gardens and projects. Summer solstice, Leitha, is a grand gathering time when I meet old friends and greet new ones, and celebrate the change of the sun by burning the Yule wreath made six months before. Lughnassad, Lammas, is a celebration of summer and I give thanks for the first fruits of the harvest, and energize harvests to come. Fall equinox, Mabon, is the time of thanksgiving for the harvests I've gathered. And at Samhain, the year starts again.

I am a Pagan. I pay attention to the seasons within myself—of beginnings, growth, fruition, harvest, endings, rest, and beginnings again. Life is a circle with many cycles.

I am a Pagan. I work magic by the moon to help and to heal myself and others. I activate beginnings in the waxing, energize manifestations at the full, clear away obstructions at the waning, and experience the wisdom of transformation at the dark. I take part in circles at the new and full moons, and I know that my circles are part of the whole web of circles that meet at these times around the planet.

I am a Pagan. With every death there is a rebirth. For every problem there is a solution and an opportunity for growth. I create my own reality with my thoughts, feelings, and actions. Whatever I send out always returns. I seek to abide by the Rede: An ye harm none, do what ye will. When I work magic, before I raise and direct energy, I seek always to look at the larger picture, of which my needs are only a part. When problems come my way, I seek to understand their cause and messages as part of my finding a solution. In doing healing work, I seek to correct the underlying cause, rather than just treat symptoms.

I am a Pagan. I acknowledge that the divine is everywhere, in the energy of life. I am animistic. I sense the life force in the oak tree, on the hill, in the herbs in the garden, in the birds singing at the window, in the boulders on the hill, in myself, and yes, even in "things" such as my car and computer. I understand that everything has its physical and non-physical aspect. The physical and spiritual are deeply intertwined, not separate, and one is not better than the other.

I am a Pagan. I know that divine force has many facets and I acknowledge a variety of Goddesses and Gods. I also understand the underlying unity of all. My encounters with Pagan Goddesses and Gods have transformed and enriched my life. Hecate appeared at a death to teach me of release and rebirth. As a young child, Artemis flowed through me to scare off a rapist. Selene of the bright moon brings me visions and my name. I have heard Pan play his pipes in the glade, and Cernunnos has appeared to me in the forest as a young stag. I've experienced the union of the Goddess and God while making love to my mate in the fields on Beltane Eve. Bast has helped me find lost cats for others. Isis has spoken to me in bursts of radiance in the deep of the night and in flows of energy through my hands while doing healings.

I am a Pagan. My worship is one of communion, not grovelling. I shape my views with others when I sense it is right, but I do not proselytize—there are many ways, not one way, of spiritual growth. My holy places are under the open sky ... in the stone circle in the oak grove on the top of the mound ... on the vision rock on the high cliff ... in the ring in the open meadow ... in the sweatlodge by the stream ... by the clear pool of the sacred spring. Yet my worship can be anywhere ... my magic circle is portable. I can call to the four quarters, to the earth and the sky, and to the central spirit point wherever I may be.

I am a Pagan. I journey to the Otherworld in my dreams, my meditations, my rituals. I use magical tools to aid me in my journeys and my magics—incense, cauldron, candles, chalices of water, pentacles of salt, crystals, feathers, bells, rattle and drum, wand and staff, athame, mirror. I fly with my consciousness through time and space. I return with insights. I go between the worlds for healing, growth, and transformation. Psychic perception is a natural, not a supernatural, part of living.

I am a Pagan. I attune myself to the four elements of nature—earth, air, fire, water, and to the fifth element, spirit, which is a force that connects all. I see these elements as parts of myself—my physical body is my earth, my intellect my air, my emotions my water, my will my fire, and my inner self my spirit. I endeavour to keep myself healthy and in balance in all these parts of self.

I am a Pagan. I hear the cries of Mother Earth. I see the pollution of the air, the soil, the waters. I see the games being played by nations with the

fire of nuclear weapons. I see spiritual pollution too—selfishness, hatred, greed for money and for power, despair. I sense these things, but I sense too a cleansing, healing energy manifesting on the planet. I know that I can help bring the planet into greater balance by seeking balance in my own life. I know that my attitudes, my way of living can make a difference. I endeavour to be a channel for healing and balance.

I am a Pagan.

CHAPTER 4 A Religion without Converts

Margot Adler

how do people become neopagans? This question assumes great importance when we consider that neopagan groups rarely proselytize and certain of them are quite selective. There are few converts. In most cases, word of mouth, a discussion between friends, a lecture, a book, or an article provides the entry point. But these events merely confirm some original, private experience, so that the most common feeling of those who have named themselves Pagans is something like “I finally found a group that has the same religious perceptions I always had.” A common phrase you hear is “I’ve come home,” or, as one woman told me excitedly after a lecture, “I always knew I had a religion, I just never knew it had a name.”

Alison Harlow, a systems analyst at a large medical research centre in California, described her first experience this way:

It was Christmas Eve and I was singing in the choir of a lovely church at the edge of a lake, and the church was filled with beautiful decorations.

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