

The Great Rite, Sex Magick, and Wiccan Philosophy: Andy Galadriel

Wicca as a nature religion demands a deep respect and appreciation for all Nature's processes. Wicca also encourages not only a mystical relationship with her hidden mysteries, but a practical relationship as well. The fertility celebration is directed inwardly to influence the creativity of the mind, as well as outwardly to influence the environment.

In Wicca, initiation means transformation, and another aspect of Wicca is the sacralization of sex. To Wiccans sex is the creative energy of the Universe, and as such it is performed with reverence. This simple transformation of attitude makes a gigantic difference in the way one views lovemaking.

In the initiatory journey, the "Great Rite" is performed - not between two people in their characteristic roles of Priest/ess and initiate, or as two members of the circle - but as God and Goddess. The union that follows recaptures in the magickal imagination of the lovers the moment of creation. Through the Great Rite Wicca opens the doorway to an appreciation of the hidden sexuality. By celebrating sexual union not only as a sensual and emotional phenomena, but as a ritualistic sacramental act, it invites the initiate to realize the spiritual aspects of sexual union. This ennobles sex into an aesthetic and spiritual experience.

Wicca takes into account the complete person - body, mind and emotions, and spirit, and interweaves these into a fulfilled human life..Spirituality and sensuality join hand in hand.

The Sacred Marriage: Celebrated at Beltane and Hallowmas - the transference of power from male to female in accord with the half of the year they are symbolized as ruling. As the high priestess comes to office the sacred marriage would occur between her and the ruling priest. And at Samhain the same would happen - thus the Heirogamos is clearly more of an initiatory ritual than a fertility one.

Many celtic legends show the love union occurring between a pagan hero and a goddess figure who's name usually means the earth (or the country). The pagan hero who confronts the goddess in a supernatural world, parallels the Wiccan initiate who enters the supernatural world of the magic circle and encounters its priestess. The fruit of the union is usually not fertility, but power, sovereignty, the pagan hero becomes the Lord of the Goddess' Kingdom. This again implies the ideals of initiation - realization and transformation. The Great Rite is a rediscovery of the spiritual dimensions of the sexual union. Sacramental sexual expression is one of the highest forms of love.

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Thru uniting the sensual and the spiritual, the observable and the ever-mysterious, The Great Rite brings the person into direct confrontation and contact with the Gods.

★ Examine all of this, the idea of the 'center', the circle and spiral, and show the Great Rite as the Mandala of life.

The circle is a boundary which delineates between the ordinary and the magical realms. Entering the magick circle symbolizes and actualizes the initiates entrance into the hidden dimensions of minds and of nature. Each time the initiate re-enters the circle it is a rediscovery of the worlds of magick. Besides space, the circle also designates a special or sacred time - another suspension of the ordinary.

Like the Faeryland of the Celts, which signifies magickal time and place, the Wiccan circle is also the home of the gods and goddesses. It is the sphere of being to which the word non-being may also be applied, where archetypes of the inner self are projected onto external reality, and given name and form. Like the alchemical retort it is the container of mysterious power. It is the container whereby all 5 elements flow harmoniously. The circles circumference is the chalice, a cosmic vehicle into which is released, both by the initiates, and from the universe, the energy emanations of the heart of nature. To travel to the center of the circle, to the place of the mystical Great Rite, is to bypass the world of name and form and to journey to the center of the universe. In Celtic legends the pagan hero found his magick circle - Faeryland- after long and difficult wanderings over the sea of the unconscious. Illusions, tests and trials confronted them, but in every case the encounter with Faeryland was worth the effort. For who is it that rules Faeryland - A woman - the Goddess - the Priestess...

But all of this represents only one form of the Great Rite. The other form is the union of the male and female forces within, thus resulting in the creation of the 'hermaphrodite' or the divine androgyne.

Each of us, regardless of our physical gender, is a 'two-sexed' being - a hermaphrodite. This hermaphroditic nature is most important to understand if one is to achieve balanced spiritual growth. The experience of mature occult hermaphroditism is carefully marked out in older texts, altho many of these were put into secret symbolism. Here we shall explore the ancient myths of hermaphrodites, as well as some of the occult meanings of this state.

From earliest times there have been stories of two sexed beings. These have occurred consistently in all of the ancient religious cultures. In particular, many creation myths start with a two sexed being which then splits into male-female, which gives rise to the rest of creation.

Some esoteric traditions taught that the sun is male and the moon female, and that this is mirrored in human experience as masculine spiritual light of the mind and the feminine reflective light of the body. Other traditions taught that the sky was male and the earth female. Or that the Great Spirit was female, and that the forces of sexuality, birth and nurturing are all processes within us basic to our spiritual growth.

Thru all of these differences there is an underlying unity. One of these is that most systems recognize a descending force which comes from above, and an ever present ascending force which is all around us. A Great Father or God, who is uncreated but can descend into the universe of matter, and a Great Mother or Goddess, who is the creation all around us, and which can ascend to ever greater peaks of experience. Another unity in thought was that both forces, male and female, existed in and thru out everything.

In the ancient Egyptian, Middle Eastern, Hindu and Chinese Alchemy, in the ancient sciences of Greece, Egypt and China, and in the physiology of the nerve and blood systems in India, the Middle East and Central America are found unusually consistent teaching about the occult energies which saturate our beings and our environment. The descending Father Force and the everpresent and ascending Mother Force are represented as going up and down the human body and saturating it with their energies. These forces travel thru the body by means of a psycho energy systems which correspond to our physical nerve and blood systems. This psychic nerve system is hermaphroditic - it is made up of a male and female half which exist side by side.

The male/right body half of our psychic nerve system generates and collects energies which are like those of the sun and fire. They are hot, active and aggressive. The female/left body half collects and generates energies which are like those of the moon and water - cool, passive, moist and restful. Once these energies have been generated and collected they pass thru the major male and female psychic nerves thru out the body, and then into more numerous minor nerves, until finally the whole of our psychic and physical bodies are permeated with these male and female energies in varying proportions, and to varying degrees of intensity and quantity.

These energies are very real, and can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched by our occult senses, as well as our normal, physical senses. These energies have definite effects on our bodies, and can be influenced by the way we think, act, breathe, eat and make love.

SEXUAL RITUALS

When we speak of sexual rites one must bear in mind that they are designed to reach that point beyond the ego's time and space, and make it a reality. The Great Rite woos us into realizing the Life beyond Life.

One of the first steps you must work on overcoming is the various sexual preferences and prejudices, and learn how to channel your sexual expressions without attached feelings of guilt or jealousy. Negative emotional reactions can destroy the value of sexual rites.

In today's society our inheritance of mystical sexual rituals is treated as an embarrassment - as something to play down and to hide. The sexually oriented religion is not preserved by those who seek their enlightenment from contemporary spiritual paths, but by those who listen to the depths of wisdom, forever unaltered. A nature religion always embraces one supreme goal - to know experientially from within and without the supreme sacredness of nature and the awesome unknowable power which comes from sex.

D.H, Lawrence says, "O what a catastrophe for man when he cut himself off from the rhythm of the year, from his unison with sun and earth. What a catastrophe and what a maiming of love when it was made a merely personal feeling, taken away from the rising and setting of the sun, and cut off from the magickal connections with the solstices and equinoxes. We are bleeding from the roots because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars, and love is a grinning mockery, because, poor blossom, we picked it from the Tree of Life, and expected it to keep blooming."

The Tantric term "chakra puja" means circle of worshippers. The term mahamudra means 'Great ritual of the heart.' The left hand path originally referred to the feminine mysteries - the right hand path to the masculine. They were 'of the heart,' and 'of the mind' - to know and to understand.

Some of the similarities between the Wiccan and the tantric paths are that both use circle worship, the pentagram, the hexagram, the four stations or quarters, ritual nudity, the Great Rite, a dualistic belief, and sexual union as a sacrament.

The Wiccan religion, rather than altering its sexual rites to suit the minds of inhibited people, must instead recognize the part it plays, and restore it with dignity.

All restrictions, legal bonds, and conventions must be suspended within the circle.

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THE WICCAN FERTILITY RITUALS

Even when the fertility rite is honored for its agricultural aims, their principle was never so much how to teach the crops to grow, but rather that the unrestrained sexual excitement serves to bring one in tune with the functioning of the earth, and with the reality of the earth mother, increasing the worshippers consciousness of her as a Living Being. Transcending its function of sympathetic magick, it becomes a means of expanding our awareness of lifes processes.

The Wiccan sexual orgy is a religious festival in whcih the enjoyment of sensual delight is merged with spiritual exuberance. This harmonious spirit, besides being a source of pure delight is also an enourmous reservoir of power. It is the intimate attunement to one another that sexual contact establishes, the love and respect shared with the members of the circle, and the religious affinity and experience that they all possess, that renders the power raising abilities to incredible heights. In a circle made up of people bound to each other in a spirit of love, and in the worshop of nature it adds and reinforces a complete cycle of spiritual growth and joy. The purpose of these rituals is to recapture the sacrament of sex.

The greatest gift that can be given to the gods is the Sacred Fire - the Flame of Love. During this time all feelings of possession, of oneness and seperateness must be set out - shut off. This is why most seasonal (sexual) celebrations utilized the toppling of standard norms - turned the tables so to speak. Thus marital conventions and other bonds were suspended for a time.

Sexual union in a reverent ritual atmosphere ia an extremely powerful and beautiful form of worship because it combines the most intense states of being we can experience - sex and prayer. By itself sex is the most important and powerful experience in ordinary life. Combined with the attitude of worship the sexual experience is heightened to the extreme. When sex and worship are combined both can achive their transcendent heights.

In Tantra that path is called the "way of the Hero" - for sexual magick strips away our masks and reveals our fears. Our philosophies, our inhibitions, our conventions and our psychology mean nothing in the awe of love's mysterious union. This moment, the eternal now, when all roles cease and we learn what it is to love the god-dess, it is for this moment of intense realization that sex magick strives for.

Having sex within the circle also takes it out of its ordinary realm - into the other worlds. Transposed into a pure time and space, in a dimension of its own, the amplification of men and women occurs. The joy of the God and Goddess united in the magick circle can become a reality only thru experience. First we must arrive at that special place within ourselves where we realize the need to awaken the sleeping goddess.

Sexual ecstasy equals religious mystery. And from our periodic encounters with the gods we learn the raw natural forces, and how to bring the gift of wisdom into the ordinary world, thus giving us a taste of the transpersonal.

All life is an energy transformer -- turning food into energy for the sustaining of life. Meditate on the brain and the spine as a gigantic spermatozoan.

Note that there are 22 paths on the Tree, 22 major arcana, and 22 nerve ganglions in the spine.

The Pingala energies are the right hand path. The Ida energies are the left hand path. The sushumna or spinal column is the middle pillar. This is also known as the Royal road or Noble Path. This is also one translation of the word Tarot.

The Path of the Dove - when the energy comes down from the crown chakra.

The Path of the Serpent - when the energy ascends from the base chakra.

*If you awaken the chakras you will awaken the kundalini, and she will then awaken the chakras to new and greater heights.

The awakening of the Hearth Goddess - She who tends the Fire, is another term for this.

One natural occurrence where Ida and Pingala meet and enter into the sushumna is sexual orgasm.

The term Devadasi means slaves to the god force. This was the word for Temple priestesses of Tantra. They were considered to be divine, and were treated as goddesses.

Tantra believes that sexuality is the path to freedom. They study the subtleties of lovemaking - its perfumes, colors, adornments, foods and drugs.