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Was The Spring Equinox Celebrated In Ancient Scotland & Ireland?

Rick Tschauer

The short answer is yes. We know that because some of the Neolithic chambered cairns in those countries are oriented such that the rising sun on the equinox shines down the tunnel entry and illuminates pictographs in the rear of the cairn. Many of these cairns occupy hilltops. Cairn T atop a hill at Loughcrew in County Meath, Ireland (Figure 1.) is a good example. On the equinox, a local group opens the cairn so pilgrims can enter and experience this transcendent moment. The cairn is one of 23 cairns and stone circles in this complex. It dates to approximately 3300 BCE, long before the Tuatha de Danu are

said to have landed in Ireland.

The hill, known as Slieve na Calliagh, is the highest point in County Meath. Slieve na Calliagh means "mountain of the Cailleach," the divine hag of winter in Irish and Scottish mythology.

The Cailleach is credited with creating many of the mountains in Scotland and Ireland by dropping stones from Her magic pouch, or Her apron, depending on the legend.

The backstone of the chamber is lit, by a beam of light, at sunrise on the Spring and Autumnal Equinoxes. The sun

light is shaped by the stones of the entrance and passage, and descends the backstone, while moving from left to the right, illuminating the solar symbols (Figure 3.).

Some archeologists speculate that these cairns were temporary burials for important people, while others believe they were built to mark the day of the equinox, and together with many other chambered cairns in Ireland and Scotland, form a calendar. But, why mark the Equinox? Maybe because chickens need about 12 hours of sunlight to be productive
Continued on page 3...



Figure 3 Sun symbols on the backstone at Cairn T at Loughcrew. Courtesy BoyneValleyTours.com – used with permission.



FROM THE EDITOR



Ostara is synonymous with optimism. The sun shines more frequently and we all seem to feel lighter and gladder because of it. Birds are returning and their song announces morning once again. Genetically and collectively, just as our agricultural ancestors did, we breathe a sigh of relief for having survived winter and watch the land for tender green shoots. We are excited to get outdoors, get our hands in the soil, and return to communal activities. We hope that whatever eggs and rabbit adventures you have, they are happy, safe and satisfying. From all of us here at Metaphysical Times, we wish you a happy Spring and a blessed Ostara.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the sale of Metaphysical Times new age newspaper. It's creation was a directive given to me by my spirit guides. It's sale was too. My team and I grew this small niche publication with local readership into a global venture. Writers from all over the world now vie for column space, and it is distributed in 22 states and 2 other countries. This is my final issue. The new owners Twisted Souls Press, are poised to take it to the next level, nationally and internationally. Thank you all for your support in this endeavor!

Terri

Metaphysical Times

The Metaphysical Times is a new age newspaper published in both print and digital editions, published eight times per year. Each issue is themed to match the Sabbats of the Wheel of the Year. This publication is a voice for alternative spiritual and holistic health communities. Our aim is to promote spiritual wellness for all.

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- Yule - December 2
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- Ostara - March 4

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Divining the Muse in the Tarot

Lorraine Schein

The word “muse” has as one of its derivations, “to think, remember; show, warn, foretell...” Since the meaning of the word relates it to some of the same reasons that we read the Tarot, we should be able to divine the Muse in the cards.

As a poet who reads the Tarot for herself, on questions involving her writing, I have found guidance in its symbols and representations of artistic creativity. Some of its cards hold special significance for the artist, acting as guideposts for the creative process. And several of the female figures in the cards even look Muse-like!

But who are the Muses? In earlier times, these nine Greek Goddesses were worshiped in threefold form. Thus, the Muses’ origins reveal them to be connected to, and maybe even identical with, the pagan Triple Goddess. They were born of the union of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) and their birthplace was a special dancing ground and sanctuary. They also often visited Mount

Helicon, where two springs, Aganippe and Hippocrene, bestowed poetic inspiration upon those who drank their waters. Beside these fountains, the Muses would dance gracefully, while singing in perfect harmony.

Robert Graves, in his classic book *The White Goddess*, says of them: “The willow (Helice in Greek) gave its name to Helicon, the abode of the Nine Muses, orgiastic priestesses of the Moon-goddess.”

And Nor Hall in *The Moon and the Virgin*, referring to *The White Goddess*, writes:

“...women who are poets write out of the experience of themselves as source. Inspiration comes from the cauldron of Cerridwen (a Celtic goddess who is herself the cauldron) that contains a mash of barley, acorns, honey, bull's blood, and the sacred herbs ivy and laurel. The poetry-inducing contents of the cauldron are brewed together with the intent of making your senses burst. Intoxication, like

inspiration, can enlarge a person enough for the goddess to enter. She comes unexpectedly from above or below as the moon-faced sibyl or bloody one.”

The Major Arcana

The High Priestess is the Moon-goddess herself, the black and white pillars on either side of her representing both the moon-faced sibyl and the bloody one. She may indicate a woman in your life of great hidden or psychic knowledge, who may help your art by revealing her secrets. Or it could be your own inner wisdom - your accessing of the unknown, intuitive aspect of yourself, perhaps through an interest in paganism, solitary spirituality or meditation. She marks a time of withdrawal and inward-looking that is necessary for creative work. She is a guide to the unmapped inner regions of the self.

But, if you draw the card of the Moon, you are on your own. There are no people in this landscape - only a crayfish, dog

and wolf, representing our animal instincts and fears.

If you want to further explore tarot cards and writing, I recommend is *The Creative Tarot* by Jessica Crispin. It is great for beginners, as well as experienced Tarot readers, and gives many ideas for exploring your writing, including card spreads to help you with writer’s block, determining the direction of a creative project, or finding inspiration. ☞

Lorraine Schein is a NY writer. Her work has appeared in Strange Horizons, VICE Terraform, Syntax and Salt, and Little Blue Marble and in the anthologies Tragedy Queens: Stories Inspired by Lana del Rey & Sylvia Plath, and Spectral Lines: Poems About Scientists. The Futurist's Mistress, her poetry book, is available from mayapplepress.com.



...Continued from page 1

egg layers. Anything less, and they lay fewer eggs.

Therefore, the Spring Equinox marks the time when hens become more productive: an important milestone for our ancestors! Note that at least

three of the petroglyphs at Loughcrew resemble decorated eggs (Figure 3). Is it possible that the cairn was aligned to alert people that chickens were about to start laying again? It was the end of the dark time, food stores were likely running out (except for sheep’s milk, as

sheep started lactating around Imbolc), so the promise of a new food source would have been cause to celebrate! In the end, we really don’t know for sure. ☞



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Fire Symbolism in Hindu Mythology

Shashi Kadapa

In Hindu mythology, Agni, or fire has several symbols and meanings. Agni is the Fire God, the Guardian Deity, and one of the five elements. Prakarti, or material existence, is brought by the combination of all five elements, space (ākāśa), water (ap), air (vāyu), and earth (pṛithvī), bound together by Agni. In the Vedas, holy Hindu scriptures, Agni is the God who is most invoked; he is a purifier, and is the main deity in all rituals and in funerals.

Agni is considered a primordial power that consumes, transforms, and conveys. Agni is not an inanimate object; but a God, who serves as a link between Gods and humans. In holy rituals, offerings are placed in the havana kunda, holy fireplace, where fire consumes the items. The belief is that fire consumes the offerings, cleanses them, and takes them to the deity - for whom a puja is performed.

Origins

Fire was considered as a God in the ancient Hindu Holy Scriptures, the Vedas, the Puranas, the Brahmanas, and other texts written in the Vedic period, around 3500 BC. Agni is mentioned as a God in the Sanskrit texts of *Maitrayani Samhita* and *Kathaka Samhita*. According to these texts, the universe started with nothing, and neither day nor night existed. Only Prajapati, or Brahman, existed and he was the creator of Brahma. Brahma then created the heavenly bodies and the three worlds. When Prajapati formed Brahma, Agni emerged from his forehead in the form of heat, light, day, and night. Agni is conceptualized as one of the trinities, whose twin brother was Indira, the king of Gods and who ruled storms, war, and rain. The scriptures say that Agni sits on the chariot of Surya and the Sun God is his other brother.

Agni has several names, and some of them are: Pavaka, sanctifier of everything; Havyavahana, carrier of the sacrificial butter; Saptajihvi, having seven tongues of flame; Vahni, who travels with the wind, and many others.

Fire forms a very important part of Hindu rituals. The Sanskrit mantras, chants from

the Veda's, are chanted in Gayari meter rhythm of three lines, and oblations are offered to the fire. The chants, combined with the fire, are the primordial harmony of creation. By reciting the mantras, the cosmos is born again and filled with nourishing forms of creation.

Symbolism and Iconography of Agni

The Agama text, another Hindu book, speaks of iconography. Agni is depicted in a red complexion having one to three heads, and four arms. His vehicle is a ram and he has a halo of flames on his crown. He is shown as having a pot belly - since he consumes all offerings - and holds a rosary, a flaming spear, an axe, sphere, fan, and a torch. The main forms of Agni are: the Sun, lightning, and fire. Goddess Svaha is his consort, and many Sanskrit hymns end with invocation to the goddess. The scriptures also depict Agni with two crossed sticks, the parents, with the top being the male, and the lower, the female. After the initial mating, Agni is born as a small puff of smoke and sparks. This spark later grows and becomes a flame, consuming the parents.

The *Guatami Upanishad*, from the Rig Veda, speaks of five types of fire. The first is Svargaloka, where the Sun is the samit or sacrificial stick, Sun rays are smiles, day is flame, moon is ember, and stars are sparks. The second is Parjanya and this fire has air as the samit, cloud is the smoke, flame is the lightning, thunder is coal, roar and sizzle of fire are sparks, while somaraja is symbolized by oblations. The third form of fire is Earth, year as the samit, sky is the smoke, night is symbolized by flame, eyes are identified as live coals, ears form the sparks, and oblation is food from which humans arise. The fourth form of fire is man, with his voice as the samit, his life is smoke, his tongue symbolizing flame, and his eyes are live embers. The fifth form of fire is a woman with copulation between man and woman forming the live coals, pleasure is the spark, and oblation is the semen from which humans are born.

Humans have three types of fire in them. The first is krodha-agni, or fire that consumes the self. The second is kama Agni, or lust - and excessive and impure lust and infidelity, consumes a person. The third is udara Agni, or the fire of digestion, and a person needs to consume only the amount that he can digest, as greed leads to impious behavior.

It is important to note that sacred wood used in fire for holy rituals are from specific trees. Sandalwood sticks are the most holy; but they are expensive, and used by Kings for important rituals. Other trees that are used are: Banyan, Fig, and Mango. It is important to gather fallen sticks, or ones that are dead, because cutting a tree for the holy rituals is forbidden since it is himsa, or violence.

Use of Fire in Rituals

As mentioned earlier, Agni is a purifier and messenger who carries offerings of holy rituals to Gods. In temples, the holy fireplace is kept in the southeast corner. In weddings, the groom and bride carry out the saptapadi - or seven steps around a fire. This circumambulation symbolizes that Agni has witnessed the wedding. In Hindu rituals, or Agnihotra, a holy fire is kept burning at home - and sacrifices in the form of milk, clarified butter, and seeds are offered. Agni symbolizes purity, and the worshiper expatiates sins through prayer to Agni. In Diwali, the festival

of light, the house is adorned with small oil lamps, and symbolism is that Agni is light and power and drives away darkness or evil. During Holi, the festival of colors, an effigy of Kama, the God of love is burnt, to symbolize man's control over lust. Some Hindus bury the dead, while others cremate them. Fire is supposed to cleanse the body of all evil, and carry the soul onward to heaven or hell.

Use of Fire in War

The Hindu epics, such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, speak of the Agni astra or divine fire weapon. This divine weapon is bestowed only on a few chosen warriors and it should not be used in anger. The Agni astra emits a continuous wall of moving flame that can burn a whole region. The fire cannot be extinguished by ordinary methods. It can perhaps be countered with Varuna, or rain astra.

In conclusion, to Hindus, Agni is not just a fire, but it is revered as a God. 🙏

Based in Pune, India, Shashi Kadapa is the managing editor of ActiveMuse, a journal of literature. Thrice nominated for Pushcart Prize, he is a two-time award winner of the IHRAF, NY short story competition. Writing across various genres, his works have been published in more than 40 UK, U.S. print and online anthologies. His works are listed here: http://www.activemuse.org/Shashi/Shashi_Pubs.html

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Musick & Magick

Ginger Ackley

There was something I discovered in my earliest wanderings on the path. I found that when I sang a spell or a prayer, the connection to the elements or to Spirit was stronger and faster!

It is a natural part of my Craft. I've been singing and making up little songs for as long as I can remember - and that covers quite a number of years! But it wasn't until I incorporated it as part of my ritual and magical workings, that I was shown the true, deep power that music holds.

From familiar chants, to a tune that just pops into your head as you're casting a spell, music can be the element that elevates your efforts and gives you a way to strongly focus your energy. Think of music as an audio wand or athame - and you'll understand. It has the power to cement information and ideas in your mind. It can also lift you out of the mundane and into a higher vibration when you are working with energy. It can help you memorize a ritual.

For example: how did you learn the ABCs? I'm pretty sure that you can sing the ABC tune even today. However, if you had to learn the alphabet without the benefits of music, it would have been far more difficult to memorize those twenty-six letters.

Chant is one of the oldest and most powerful musical mediums available. It exists in every culture, in every age and just about every spiritual path. Chants can be a single note or a short musical phrase, repeated over and over. They can also be used in a call and response, where a leader sings a line or two and the community answers with a simple sung response. It resonates on the deepest level of the human psyche. A quick search of the internet provides marvelous resources from the ancient Egyptian "A Ka Dua" and the Om mantras to our familiar pagan chants like "We All Come From The Goddess."

When we use chant as a tool in our rituals and spells, it serves to disconnect our conscious thoughts from the mundane. It opens a channel that allows our intention to freely flow between us and Spirit.

To demonstrate this, just say the names in the Goddess Chant, "Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hekate, Demeter, Kali, Innanna." Now, sing it aloud with it's familiar melody. Feel the difference?

Chants are also very effective when they are not in your native tongue. There are many beautiful chants that are written in Latin, Greek and other mystical languages. I have found that singing in a different language allows my mind to jump to the essence of the words without intellectual filters.

Another technique is to simply vocalize sounds, holding your intention in your mind. Each sound we make has a certain vibration. Try singing Om or the names of vowels, AEIOU, on a single note or a scale. No real words. It is just music magick!

Beyond chants lie songs. They don't employ the short, frequent repetitions. Instead, they engage our thoughts and memory with verses and refrains or a chorus. This musical form can tell stories or guide meditations. We can use it to cast circles and honor the elements. Listen to Wendy Rule, Libana and Lisa Thiel for great examples.

Many traditions have their own collection of chants and songs. Try searching for "pagan chant" or "elemental chant" and you'll find wonderful resources! There are songs and chants for every celebration and festival in the Pagan year, too!

The COVID pandemic and subsequent restricted travel brought a lot of downtime to many musicians. I was not one of them! True, all of my regular festivals disappeared from my

calendar, but the muse took the opportunity and kicked things into high gear. I was constantly busy writing down new songs and trying to record them! Then, EnCHANTica happened!

In late 2019, EnCHANTica began as a monthly gathering at my local metaphysical shop, The New Moon. My hope was to start a group within our Pagan community that focused on learning to employ music to enhance our community rituals as well as our daily routines. I remember when the lockdown happened. It was the Wednesday I was supposed to be singing at the shop. When I spoke with the shop owner, she suggested I take it online - and that's what I did, with only an hour and a half to figure out how. I've been doing it every week since March 2020!

The first few times, I focused on singing and playing existing Pagan chants and songs. I could feel the fear, the confusion and sadness out there and I wanted to give folks something familiar they could hold onto and repeat during those very stressful days. However, the more I played Pagan covers, the more open I became to what the muse wanted me to play!

I started hearing melodies in my sleep and lyrics would flow in with the tunes. Most of them involved connections with the elements and spirit. Later, I was given songs and chants of healing, courage and community. The muse didn't care if I was at home or driving, so I quickly learned to keep my phone nearby so I could catch what She was sending - without causing a traffic hazard!

When I started sharing these new songs, I was hesitant. But the comments and reactions to the new music was incredible! Somehow, every new song seemed to be exactly what someone listening needed to

hear. There were evenings I unknowingly sang for families that were dealing with a death in the family. I would get messages thanking me for helping with all kinds of challenges. Now, I have listeners from all over the world.

This kind of Music has a power that is way beyond my ken - and that is such a good feeling! That's why I'll often spell it MUSICK - because it's real MAGICK!

So, invite the muse when you start to work your own magic. Chant while you are doing the dishes. Try using the sound of your vacuum cleaner as a drone and sing around it. Sing the word "heal" or "peace" when you see someone's request for help online. Imagine the elements lifting and carrying it to the person in need. Hum a note for each direction as you raise a circle. Sing the names of the directions and deities. Set up a playlist of chants and songs to accompany you during your day. Chant words of peace in a traffic jam and see what happens! (It doesn't always clear the traffic, but you'll come through it a lot happier!)

Music is a beautiful shortcut to Spirit and one that works real magic every time. ☺

Ginger is an award winning singer and songwriter living in Cleveland, Ohio. She follows a solitary eclectic path and is very much led by the Muse. She has published 7 music albums and regularly performs at festivals from Ohio to Florida. She has recently released her first children's book with two more in process. Her weekly Facebook music hour, EnCHANTica, streams every Wednesday at 7 pm EST from The New Moon - Enchantica Circle page.



Featured Stone: Blue Apatite



Blue Apatite helps to cleanse the aura of cluttered energies, balance the chakras, and maintain a Yin-Yang balance. It enhances the manifestation of ideas into reality. It also helps to bring clarity of mind and expansion of insight. It heightens communication and self-expression. Blue Apatite can also help to maintain focus during meditation and can stimulate the development of psychic abilities.

Ostara Crystals

Nixie Vale

One of the things that feature heavily in my craft and on my altars is crystals. Choosing what crystals work with the energies of Ostara can be difficult. The energy at Ostara is all about balanced energy. Here are some of the crystals that I have found that work well at Ostara as part of my own path. What you find here you may not find in other books about crystals.

Carnelian – Carnelian is associated with vitality, empowerment, life, drive and creativity. This is an action crystal, and it will happily give you a kick up the bottom to get you moving. For me Carnelian is all about the courage that you have burning within.

Moonstone – Moonstone is one of my favorite crystals for this time of year because there are so many changes happening before our eyes – even if we cannot see or understand them. Moonstone can help you through the energies that come with the changing of the seasons

Chrysocolla – Chrysocolla is a crystal that can really help you with anxiety during stressful times, especially times of transition. Chrysocolla has your back as it radiates peace

and really pulls the balancing nature of the Equinox forward, helping you to bring the four states of being into balance.

Amethyst – Amethyst is known as a Master Healer and the Stone of Sobriety. Having a crystal that can help keep your mind clear and sharp is always good. Amethyst is a fantastic crystal to have in your kit, it is great for protection, dispelling negativity all while calming the mind and the spirit. It is a powerhouse of a crystal!

Bloodstone – There are two types of bloodstone; Setonite which is known as African Bloodstone and Heliotrope which is also known as Indian Bloodstone. For me, Bloodstones are very protective crystals, and when I am feeling particularly vulnerable, I pair with Black Tourmaline. Once upon a time Bloodstone was known as the “Martyr’s Stone”. Many early Christian’s carved scenes of the crucifixion into this stone, because of a legend that Jesus’ blood fell to the ground, staining the Green Jasper at the base of the Cross red.

Onyx – Onyx comes in a variety of colors but the most common is Black Onyx. Onyx helps you to work through your trauma,

fears and worries; it is known as a stone of strength and endurance. It provides you a stable foundation on which to work from, and this pairs nicely with the balanced energy of the Equinox.

Clear Quartz – In the crystal world, Clear Quartz is a blank slate, which allows it to be substituted for any other crystal. Quartz is also an amplifier, so if you pair it with another crystal (or numerous ones) it will amplify their energy. If you have a Quartz point it will direct that amplified energy to a specific point. It’s also fantastic if you’re just starting out and don’t have a big collection of crystals.

Amazonite – Amazonite helps you see things from different points of view. This stone gives you a certain degree of clear-headedness. It is also one of my favorites for the throat chakra. When I need to speak my truth, I turn to Amazonite. It’s also a very watery energy, which can be helpful to those with fiery temperaments.

Apatite – Apatite has an incredible energy, and it’s one I always turn to when I need a little inspiration or a boost to my creativity. This stone is associated with the throat

chakra as well, but it is about the inner truth.

Larimar – Larimar brings clear communication, but the stone has a very peaceful energy, like being on a sandy beach watching the tides come and go. I adore the energy of Larimar because of its balancing energy.

Serpentine - Serpentine’s energy is all about transformation and transition. It can help you leave the sluggish energy of the Winter months. Serpentine is also known as an Earth healer promoting grounding and growth.

Moss Agate – Moss Agate is deeply nourishing and protective. ☸

Nixie Vale has been a Witch for 24 years, and more recently she has become known as the Rainbow Witch. She is a qualified crystal healer, meditation instructor. She has studied color psychology, healing and magic. Nixie has written and published a number of Almanacs, and her book Wicca: Charms, Potions and Lore . She has written over 300 articles and blogs on varying subjects from crystals and color to hints, tips and tricks for practicing. Nixie is passionate about her craft, and loves to spend time discussing the craft.

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Four Book Reviews by a Beginner Witch

Elizabeth Tidwell

After stumbling upon modern witchery last year, the first thing I wanted to do was dig into some books. I wasn't yet sure if I wanted to practice it myself or if I was mostly interested as an outsider; but, I knew I wanted a closer look. How did modern witchcraft work? What kinds of rituals, tools, and skills were needed? What does it look like to be a modern witch? Could I be one? These are the questions I took with me as I dove into the following books.

Enchantments: A Modern Witch's Guide to Self-Possession by Mya Spalter (Lenny, 2018)

Enchantments was a perfect fit for my introduction to witchery. This non-fiction account is part memoir, part how-to, and all engaging spunk and practicality. Spalter worked for many years at Enchantments, New York City's oldest occult shop, and her book includes vignettes from the store: its sought-after spells and merchandise, tidbits of its history, and close encounters with its customers. Now the shop is firmly on my "must see in NYC" list.

Spalter covers everything from color magic to astrology, the wheel of the year to uncrossing, money magic to magical collaboration. While it is a broad application of magical topics, she doesn't sacrifice depth. I never felt like the content was too basic to be useful, even as a complete noob. Spalter manages to give us a glimpse into her magical life, illustrating how she works her magic into the fabric of her days, the cadence of her years, and in a way that is natural and fairly no-nonsense. She makes magic approachable, achievable, sensible, personal, and fun.

Many chapters include a list of suggested titles for further reading, and the occasional illustrations (by Caroline Paquita) are zany and pair perfectly with the tone of the book. Spalter includes frequent subsections in the text, set apart with brackets, that give further information related to her current topic. Sometimes these include history of a deity, a quick aside about the shop, a DIY substitution, more technical information, and more. These additions lend depth and breadth to the larger chapter and are always fascinating.

The real appeal of this book is

Spalter herself. It is a riot to hang out with her while reading her words; she's hilarious, wise, experienced, practical, and vastly knowledgeable. She shares her guidance in such an engaging and unique voice that every reader is bound to consider Spalter their own close friend by the time they set the book down. I recommend this book for other beginner witches, but magical folk of all backgrounds will find something to enjoy with Enchantments.



Practical Magic: A Beginner's Guide to Crystals, Horoscopes, Psychics, & Spells by Nikki Van De Car (Running Press, 2017)

The best word to describe this book is beautiful. The luxe heft of the pages, the artful layout, and the breathtaking illustrations by Katie Vernon make this book a showpiece. Gorgeous full-page watercolor paintings start each chapter, and small illustrations are sprinkled throughout, truly elevating the reading experience.

After reading Enchantments, I was eager to expand my repertoire and dig a little deeper into application. However, I found this book to be too broad, too shallow, introducing a hodgepodge of topics seemingly in order to simply cover a bit of everything. Van De Car presents auras, palmistry, tarot, herbalism, spell-making, astrology, pagan holidays, chakras, crystals, dream interpretation, and more. It's an impressive set, to be sure. It is a primer on what metaphysical subjects are out there, and perhaps a beginner eclectic witch would find it enticing to explore such variety.

Pick up this book if you are interested in the barest introductions to a range of mystical topics, or enjoy a witchy showpiece book; but, skip it if you're looking to deepen your practice.



Witchery: Embrace the Witch Within by Juliet Diaz (Hay House, 2019)

Witchery is perhaps the perfect beginner witch handbook. It is chock-full of useful spells,

rituals, potions, and practices that are practical and straightforward. It's a lovely book, read cover to cover; but, the table of contents also gathers and organizes the practices in such a way that it's easy to pull this book from your shelf and use it like a spellbook - rather than simply an engaging narrative.

Diaz is a hereditary witch and the wisdom that comes from a long line of magical family members radiates from this book. She writes with the quiet power that comes from knowing and honoring who you are and being lifted by those who support you. It's clear throughout the book that amplifying this power in others is her deepest wish with this book. The first words, even before the table of contents, are: "Being a witch is an embodiment of your truth in all its power." Diaz masterfully shows us how to actually accomplish that.

Her book is supportive and inspiring, without being didactic or saccharine: This is no sappy self-help bestseller. Her tone is more wise older sister than peppy life coach. She is well-suited to the task of educating new witches and holds a Master of Science in Herbal Medicine. This expertise shines through in her chapters detailing herbal magick. Her spells are a beautiful balance of precision and intuition.

I particularly valued her final chapter, "Practice Responsibly," which included guidelines on healing the earth and a discussion on integrity in witchery. It's important for everyone to remember the role of respect in witchcraft; but very likely, there are many beginning witches who simply aren't aware of the potential pitfalls of cultural appropriation they may stumble into unwittingly. Diaz handles the subject thoughtfully and clearly.

Gift this book to every beginning witch you know, and be sure to check it out for some handy spells and sincere witch-to-witch support for yourself.



Herbal Magic: A Handbook of Natural Spells, Charms, and Potions by Aurora Kane (Wellfleet Press, 2021)

I stumbled upon this herbal handbook in T.J. Maxx and immediately sat down in the aisle to flip through the pages. I was stunned by the gorgeous botanical illustrations and didn't want to set it down long enough to get up off the aisle floor and walk through the checkout line. But I eventually did, and voraciously consumed this book in less than 48 hours.

Yes, even the significant portion of the book that functions as an herbal directory, which are hardly considered page-turners by most readers, kept me entranced. Between the detailed illustrations, correspondences, magical properties, and suggested uses, I was delighted to unearth this treasure of a handbook. The directory is both concise and well-rounded, useful and lyrical.

Beyond the herbal compendium, Herbal Magic includes guidance on how to conduct herbal magic, how to amplify herbal magic with a variety of correspondences (including planets, elements, colors, candles, crystals, and more), and how to grow, gather, and consume magical herbs. Kane's chapter on herbal magic lore was instructional and delightful - and included spells, rituals, and recipes to end the book on a practical note.

Green witches will particularly enjoy this book; but, anyone looking to deepen their understanding of herbal spell and potion-making, will benefit from this gorgeous and charming handbook. 🌿

Elizabeth Tidwell was drawn to witchery in 2021 and her life is much more magical these days. Now a certified Reiki Master, she launched Lightning Peak Wellness in order to provide healing, self-connection, and improved well-being to as many people as she can. She lives in Pleasant Grove, Utah with her husband, daughter, chiweenie, and crested gecko. Find her on Facebook and Instagram @LightningPeakWellness or her website, LightningPeakWellness.com.

Who is Ostara and Why is the Spring Equinox Named After Her?

Rick Tschauder

The Spring Equinox, also known as Ostara, occurs usually around March 20th when both the light and darkness are in perfect balance. Until the Fall Equinox, days will be longer than the nights. Ostara marks the beginning of the light half of the year and is located on the east edge of the wheel. The origins of the name Ostara are controversial. If you search the internet, you will find sites that conflate Her to Ishtar, Eostre, or Austra. Which is correct? The answer may be all of them - or none!

Some believe the origins were in Babylon with the Goddess Ishtar. During the migrations out of the Near East, the Jasmine clan¹ (Jasmine being one of the seven original genetic mothers of Europe) first migrated into the Valley of the Danube, spreading their influence and agriculture there. A second wave of the clan spread through the Mediterranean basin, reaching the British Isles about one-thousand years later, and reaching Scotland about 4000 BCE. Today, about 20% of all Britons carry mitochondrial DNA evidence of the Jasmine clan.

Others believe Goddess Eostre (Ostara) is Germanic, or possibly Roman, originating in West Saxony. *Eostre* derives from Proto-Germanic *Austrō*, meaning "to shine." Evidence is furnished by over 150 Romano-Germanic votive inscriptions to deities named the matron *Austriahenea*, found near Morken-Harff and datable to around 150-250 CE. Most of these inscriptions are in an incomplete state; yet, most are complete enough for reasonable clarity of the inscriptions.

According to German folklorist Jacob Grimm in *Deutsche Mythologie*, Ostara was a dawn Goddess. Grimm borrowed from the scribe the Venerable Bede, who in the 8th century

speculated that Eostremonath must have been named for a Germanic goddess of spring. Grimm notes that the Old High German adverb *ôstar* means "expresses movement towards the rising sun," as did the Old Norse term *austr* - and potentially also Anglo-Saxon *ēastor* and Gothic *áustr*. He compares these terms to the Latin term *auster*. Grimm says that the cult of the goddess *Austrō* may have worshiped an Old Norse form, *Austra*, and that her cult may have already been extinct by the time of Christianization.

Ostara, or *Eástre*, seems therefore to have been the divinity of the radiant dawn, of returning light. It was likely an occasion for lighting bonfires and the drawing of water for healing. According to Grimm, maidens clothed in white, who, on Ostara, show themselves in clefts of rock and on mountains, are suggestive of the ancient Goddess.

Everything about Ostara can be traced back to Bede's speculation. No lore survives. So, did She exist? Does She exist? She exists, if you are willing to accept anecdotal sources.

So how did Ostara come to be the Neo-Pagan name for the Spring Equinox? By the mid-1960s, the Wheel of the Year had been coined to describe the yearly cycle of the witches' sabbats. Author Aidan Kelly, one of the co-founders of the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), gave names to the Summer Solstice (Litha) and equinox holidays (Ostara and Mabon) of Wicca in 1974, which were subsequently promoted by Timothy Zell through his *Green Egg* magazine. In his own words, Kelly explains why he chose Ostara for the Spring Equinox³,

"It offended my aesthetic sensibilities that there seemed to be no Pagan names for the

summer solstice or the fall equinox equivalent to Yule or Beltane—so I decided to supply them. The spring equinox was almost a nonissue. The Venerable Bede says that it was sacred to a Saxon Goddess, Ostara or Eostre, from whom we get the name Easter, which, almost everywhere else, is called something like *Pasch*, derived, of course, from *Pesach*."

So, Kelly merely continued Bede's speculation that was made popular by Jacob Grimm – who, as we know, wrote fairy tales.

Therefore, we have a sabbat named after Goddess that may or may not exist. She has no lore. We can only attest to Her existence through Unverified Personal Gnosis (UPG), or in some cases through Generally Accepted Gnosis. There are groups who have experienced Her presence, and people who have drawn Her down. Are their stories credible?

Author Jason Mankey once related a story about a time his group, the Oak Court Coven, performed a ritual and his wife Ari, who is High Priestess of that group, invoked Ostara/Eostre. The Goddess responded. In Jason's words²:

"We call the Goddess and I watch my wife change before my eyes. The energy in the room becomes different, her walk becomes lighter, her voice a little higher. After a few moments it's obvious that something much younger in temperament stands before me. The lips of my wife move but the words that come from her mouth belong to someone else, something else, Eostre. She looks around the circle like an extremely self-confident twelve year old, but curious as to why everyone else is staring at her so intently.

After the goddess acclimates to our circle I suggest to her that she receive all of those

assembled. We all watch her pause, unsure of what to say (much like any twelve year old might do in such a situation). I see our Lady glance down at the ritual script on the altar and she sighs a bit before saying "I believe you have something for me to read?" I nod in the affirmative and this alien voice that is (and most definitely is not) my wife begins reading my rather lame invocation to be used in case the Goddess doesn't show up. Watching the reactions of the coven and our guests I notice that they are all just as startled as I am. This is not our High Priestess."

Ari doesn't completely remember the experience, as is often the case with deity assumption; however, the Oak Court Coven is a credible group that includes a handful of well-known Wiccans.

Ostara is a celebration of a new dawn, a new beginning. Like all new religions, Neo-Paganism borrows from those spiritual paths that preceded it, taking what works and discarding what doesn't. As individual Pagans, we often do this as well. If Ostara didn't exist in the ancient past, She does today. Deities evolve, grow, change. Some people may object to Aidan Kelly naming a sabbat after a deity. None of the sabbats that he didn't name are named after deities. It is clear though, that the Spring Equinox is Ostara's day. Honoring Her that day just feels right. Hail to the Dawn Goddess! Hail Ostara! ☽

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2. <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/aidankelly/2017/05/naming-ostara-litha-mabon/>
3 https://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2015/03/looking-for-eostre/2/?fbclid=IwAROMleFkYlfQnDnMF8H42QvXsr_xpNzme-o8GikDBiajNZnyry4AR7uy88

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Spring Equinox

Emma Gardner

Most of the modern holidays that one holds dear can be traced in some form to ancient festivals. Spring Equinox origins have been traced to cultures all over the world and is considered a time of sacrifice and fertility rites. One can see similarities in Christianity with the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and the crucifixion of Christ.

This year's equinox falls on Sunday, March 20th. Neolithic people in Ireland built chambered cairns to mark the equinox, including those at Knowth and Cairn T at Loughcrew, both in County Meath, Ireland. When the equinox sunrise hits the passage at Cairn T at Loughcrew, the back of the chambers is lit up by the sun. This no longer happens at Knowth, but site investigators believe it might have happened 5,000 years ago, due to the passage's east-west orientation. Historians and architects have found evidence of burials and rituals at these sites. Modern rituals continue near these sites and allow others to experience ceremonies, meditations, workshops that can help people understand pagan traditions in the past.

Modern rituals for the solstice include creating a breathing space of changing ideas, feelings, impressions, and desires. It is a time for couples and relationships to be

refreshed after a long winter of being stuck inside. This is also a time of doing shadow work and getting back into balance. In a modern way, it is a spring cleaning of the body as well as in the place of lodging. Eggs are a symbol of rebirth and, as such, play a significant role in many rituals. Cooking and decorating eggs gives the chance to pay homage to the coming of spring and rebirth.

The time between March 18 to April 20 is considered the Alder Month or Fearn by the modern Celtic Tree Calendar. It is the time when the Alder trees start growing by the riverbanks and the world is noticing the buds of spring approaching. It is considered a time of balance and rebirth. This is also the time when Ostara is celebrated.

Winters were hard in the past and many times Spring Equinox rituals would come

after loss and food shortages. People were beginning to get through their food supplies and things were looking bleak. I wrote a poem dedicated to the Spring Equinox and Brigid.

*The bleak winter's storms have passed
Strains of fire dance over the forest floor
Though sustenance is dwindling and
Death has not been kind
The promise of renewal, rekindles spirits.
Blessed Brigid cover us in your mantle
And keep us protected and in wisdom we ask
The rejuvenating rays envelope us in heat
Just as relit forge fills the smithy's chambers.
Though emerald tones have dulled
And strains had pulled us into the dark.
The wheel is bringing us back to*

*the light
Hope is renewed as the day and night
Are in equal balance.
As the moon rises and each day dawns,
Warmth is promised as buds explore the earth
May Dagda's cauldron bless us
Until the spring begins anew.*

Poems can be tailored to one's god or goddess. For a full ritual, many people cook bread or color eggs to bless the returning warmth and balance to the earth. Many blessings to all on their Ostara rituals.



Relationships, Part III

Ed Kohout

In the last installments of Relationships, we focused on Mercury being the basic conduit of communication, and then Venus/Mars as counterparts of basic gender polarity.

We now move forward with the next natural polarity: Sun and Moon, one of the four planetary polarities of our system: Sun/Moon, Venus/Mars, Jupiter/Saturn, and Uranus/Neptune.

The Sun/Moon pair is unique in the sense that they are not "planets" by the modern astronomical definition; but, astrology still treats them as such. Astrology classifies Sun

and Moon differently from the other planets by calling them luminaries, which comes from the notion that these are the only two bodies that give off light, even though we know the Moon can only send us light that it reflects from the Sun.

Therefore, astrologically, the Sun is indicative of output, and the Moon of input and reflection. The Sun is about will, vitality, purpose, and power of the self. The Moon is about emotions, instincts, and introspection. The Sun is how we give of ourselves, while the Moon is how we receive the external world. Both are basic components of our personality, and how others see us.

When doing an astrological analysis of the horoscope, we would first look at what aspects the Sun and Moon are in to see how this polarity is imbued in the person. Astrology has divided this up

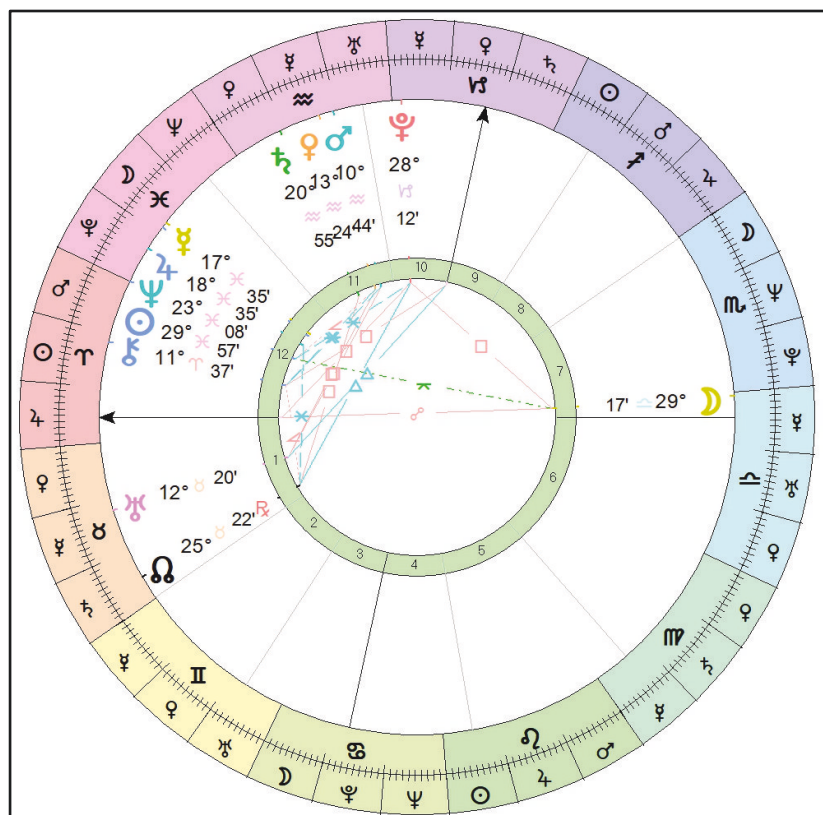
into harmonious and a-harmonious aspects. In simple terms, harmonious aspects are

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Ostara 2022: Spring and Revolution are in the Air

Leah Mueller



Ostara 2022 - March 20, 2022, 8:32 AM

Ostara, also known as Vernal Equinox, is a moment of balance before the daylight hours begin to overtake the darker ones. In many cultures, Ostara is seen as the first day of Spring; but in some pagan traditions, it marks the midpoint of the season. Whatever you call it, this equinox fills many of us with hope - as temperatures warm (at least in the Northern Hemisphere), leaves and flowers bud, and people finally come out of hibernation.

This year's Ostara falls on March 20, 2022, 8:32 AM Mountain Standard Time. Studying the astrological chart for that moment, I am struck by the large number of planets in the signs of Aquarius and Pisces. These signs represent the end of the 12-sign astrological circle — dissemination of needed information to the masses (Aquarius), followed by compassion and unity (Pisces). They make a potent combo, and we will all experience their energy collectively - as well as

personally.

Venus in Aquarius remains in tight conjunction with Mars. It will conjoin Saturn by the end of the week, and the energy will become more somber. During the few days leading up to and away from Ostara, we will feel the charge of two especially tense, 90-degree angles. Venus and Mars will both square off with Uranus in Taurus, creating the urge for revolt. Uranus is known for its predilection towards wars, revolutions, and riots. On a personal level, it represents the desire to break away from restrictions. If you already find a circumstance in your life to be unbearable, you'll have even less patience for it now. You might want to get off the fence, break through your inertia and ambivalence, and make the change you've needed for a long time.

Uranus-ruled, fixed-air Aquarius represents futuristic ideas, while Venus-ruled, fixed earth Taurus likes to cling to the familiar. So, the clash, both

personally and globally, is between old and new ways of approaching problems. Do we follow the rules or rebel? Either way, it's bound to be interesting. Get out the popcorn! Fixed signs don't like to give in, and squares are not easily resolved. And when Uranus is involved, anything can happen!

The intense energy is softened somewhat by an upcoming conjunction between Mercury and Neptune in the spiritual, ultra-sensitive sign of Pisces. This conjunction will be exact on March 23, but you will already be able to feel it on the equinox. Neptune rules Pisces, so qualities of fantasy, spirituality, and escapism will be doubly emphasized. We seek to blur the lines that divide us, but we can forget to discriminate. We also need to resist the urge to simply hide from our problems through excessive self-medication.

The Mercury/Neptune conjunction is further amplified by the presence of Jupiter. That's a lot of Pisces! Jupiter likes to go big or go home. It seeks to inflate everything it touches. The sign doesn't know what moderation means! When it hangs out with Mercury, big ideas come to the fore, but they might not be realistic. With Neptune, compassionate ideals become extra-expansive. How this 3-way conjunction will manifest is anybody's guess. It might help to soften some of the harshness of the Venus/Mars/Saturn/Uranus squares. Focus on the vision of what you want, both for yourself and humanity. Then get busy and do your utmost to make it happen.

Minutes after Ostara becomes exact, Libra moon moves into Scorpio. This will happen right after a volatile lunar square to transformational Pluto

(Scorpio's ruler) in Capricorn. The moon changes signs every 2-3 days, so its journey from Libra to Scorpio is a monthly event. Moods often shift abruptly during this transition. The Libran tendency towards cooperation and harmony morphs into the moody, Scorpionic intensity. This month, you might notice that change even more than usual, since the other planetary aspects are so volatile. Scorpio moon will make a series of oppositions and squares to Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Uranus during the two days following Ostara. Remember, all these planets are in fixed signs. People are liable to insist upon their own points of view, and you might find yourself doing so, as well. Make sure whatever you're arguing about is really worth fighting for, and remember to listen to what other people say.

If you have planets in the fixed signs of Leo, Aquarius, Taurus, and Scorpio, you may feel this energy even more intensely. Look to see where these signs fall in your own chart. If you have Piscean planets, you might feel right at home, and even emerge as a peacemaker. Whatever your planetary imprints, take good care of yourself. Spring should be a happy time. Get out and enjoy the sun whenever you can!

Leah Mueller (she, her) is a professional astrologer/tarot reader, indie writer and spoken word performer from Bisbee, Arizona. She is the author of nine prose and poetry books, published by numerous small presses. Her latest chapbook, "Land of Eternal Thirst" (Dumpster Fire Press) was released in 2021. Leah's work appears in Rattle, Midway Journal, Citron Review, The Spectacle, Miracle Monocle, Outlook Springs, Atticus Review, Your Impossible Voice, and elsewhere. Visit her website at www.leahmueller.org.

Astrological House - Courtesy of Wikipedia

House	Related Sign	Latin motto	Translation	Modern title
1st	Aries	Vita	Life	House of Self
2nd	Taurus	Lucrum	Gain	House of Value
3rd	Gemini	Fratres	Order	House of Sharing
4th	Cancer	Genitor	Parent	House of Home and Family
5th	Leo	Nati	Children	House of Pleasure
6th	Virgo	Valetudo	Health	House of Health
7th	Libra	Uxor	Spouse	House of Balance
8th	Scorpio	Mors	Death	House of Transformation
9th	Sagittarius	Iter	Passage	House of Purpose
10th	Capricorn	Regnum	Kingdom	House of Enterprise
11th	Aquarius	Benefacta	Support	House of Blessings
12th	Pisces	Carcer	Rehabilitation	House of Sacrifice

...Continued from page 9

conjunctions, sextiles, and trines, while the a-harmonious aspects are squares. Oppositions in astrology can be a balancing influence.

then birthdates to look for would be those where the Sun is at or near 15° of Aquarius, around the first week of February. While it is never that simple, it provides a baseline for chart compatibility.

The Moon, being connected to our emotional selves, naturally tends to govern our domestic lives, or the home. “Will there be harmony in the home?” is an important question to ask when analyzing the charts of people who

want to live together. Judging the relationship between two charts is called synastry in astrology, which literally means: how do the stars sync up in two or more charts. The bugaboo is to find which other influences will be disruptive. It should be said that, if one half of the relationship is naturally prone to violence in the natus, the chances of the domestic situation to be non-violent are greatly diminished. For example, Mars and Saturn

connections with the Moon may denote violence and are best avoided. Another highly important factor to consider is the midpoint of the Sun and Moon, which astrology assigns as the label, SO/MO, with the SO being shorthand for Sol, the Latin word for the Sun.

This midpoint is theoretically the axis where both planets express themselves symbiotically, or where they are working themselves out. Every human has to find a balance between the inner life and the outer, public life. SO/MO is where we find that in the natal chart.

Thus, not only does the relationship have basic Sun and Moon interfaces, it also has points where each native can help or harm the other. We sometimes find that a person can be helped by a partner if the partner has a benefic planet, such as Venus or Jupiter, aligning with the person’s SO/MO. Conversely, if the partner’s Saturn is on the other’s SO/MO, the SO/MO person is likely to be hampered and feel restricted in the relationship.

When it comes to intimate relationships, Sun/Moon and Venus/Mars are the crucial and critical factors to examine in synastry, as the former represents fundamental personality, and the latter represents attraction and desire. If both elements are mostly favorable, the relationship should be as well.

This wraps up our look at the five inner planets: Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, and Mars - which define our basic personality of needs, wants, desires, likes, dislikes, and doings.

In Part IV, we will explore how the first layer of outer planets – Jupiter and Saturn – work in relationships, and how energies from the collective society outside of our relationships interact with us as individuals and couples.☺

Ed has been practicing astrology for 25 years. His special area of interest is the history of astrology and mundane astrology. He is currently working on a book about the history of Mars from ancient times up to the present.

Vedic astrology, which is practiced in India when arranging marriages, has a plethora of synergistic scenarios to consider in a match, called yogas. Learn more about Vedic astrology: <https://www.astrosage.com/magazine/learn/learn-astrology-tutorial-vedic-astrology.asp>

With intimate relationships, we tend to seek partners who help us balance our existence. In astrology, a person who identifies with female energy could look at the sign their moon is in, and compare that to the sun sign of their partner’s chart or vice versa. A Scorpio sun may want to be with a Taurus moon, though other positions of planets may give nuance to this.

For instance, if the Moon is calculated to be at 15° of Leo,

Astrological Inspirational Guidance for March & April

Robert Vecchio

Here are my inspired guidance predictions for the month of March and April, based on the sun signs. To channel these messages, I have drawn cards from “Whispers of Lord Ganesha,” Oracle cards by Angela Hartfield with artwork by Ekaterina Golovanova and published by Blue Angel.

March

Aries - Your three cards are wholeness, reflection, and delight. It is important to stay in the present. Do not allow yourself to dwell in the past, which no longer serves your progress forward. Thank the past for the wonderful memories and find joy in the relationships that you have created along the way. Open up your heart to the proper person; but, also open your heart to yourself. Self-love is very important as you deal with issues from your past.

Taurus - Your three cards are positive outlook, be candid, and decision. The mind is your most powerful tool that you have and it is important to keep your words and actions in a positive manner. Be decisive in the decisions that you make and always speak your truth. Do not let anyone, or anything, influence you from doing what you truly want to do. Trust your intuition but do so in a calm manner.

Gemini - Your three cards are sustenance, inner knowing, and fulfillment. You have everything that you need within you to move forward. Feeling fulfilled with your life is worth more than anything else in this world. Realize that everything you have been manifesting will come to you. It is important to keep the faith and believe in the process. Know that you truly deserve happiness; and in order to find it, you need to remain calm with your emotions. Meditation is key in achieving this.

Cancer - Your three cards are priorities, determination, and divine support. You need to make yourself a top priority in your life. If you don’t take care of your needs, you will not move forward spiritually. There is fire, determination, and passion within you to make your dreams come true. Believe in yourself and go after what you want. It is never too late to learn something new or start your new adventure. The universe has your back and will guide you accordingly. They want to see you succeed and will help you along the way. Pay attention to the signs as they are all around you.

Leo - Your three cards are prosperity, priorities, and openness. Be open to new surroundings and new opportunities. This will lead you to

love, money, success, happiness and anything else that will make you feel prosperous. Take time for yourself and put your needs first. You can overcome any obstacle that is put in front of you. Keep it slow and steady. Be wary of anyone trying to advise you otherwise.

Virgo - Your three cards are joy, beginnings, and understanding. Today is the best day to start something new. Stop procrastinating and just do it already. Throw caution to the wind as this new venture will bring you joy and happiness. Keep your eye on the prize and stay focused. Remain calm and stay balanced as you navigate this new journey. The power and strength from within will make everything come together.

Libra - Your three cards are spiritual practice, delight, and surrender. Keep putting forth the effort and you will reap the rewards. Believe in yourself and follow your dreams and aspirations. You need to find more joy and happiness in your life. Allow the universe to take control - because they want to see you succeed. Meditate and allow the signs to be shown to you. Amazing opportunities will show themselves to you.

Scorpio - Your three cards are empowerment, generosity, and inner knowing. You are the most powerful tool that you have. Your mind can make anything come true. Stop always giving to others when you need to give to yourself first. Self-care is extremely important to move forward in a positive direction. Keeping your thoughts and actions in balance will lead to tranquility in your life. Trust your intuition.

Sagittarius - Your three cards are surrender, concentration, and wholeness. Focus on the task at hand and stop procrastinating. Find whatever is missing in your life and get it. That could also include emotional healing from any kind of trauma. You need to be whole once again. Allow the universe to show you the way to move forward. Positivity can overcome any obstacle in your way. You are capable of doing anything that you want to in this life - nothing is off limits.

Capricorn - Your three cards are surrender, fulfillment, and splendor. It is very important to take time for yourself. You are constantly on the go; whereas, you need to stop and enjoy the beauties of life. Remember that whatever you are manifesting will come to reality. Allow the universe to work its magick. It believes in you - you should too! Open up your heart to the proper person and allow yourself to love

yourself. Self-love is key to happiness.

Aquarius - Your three cards are relaxation, decision, and wholeness. It is so important to get plenty of rest. You need it. Decisions need to be made with a clear mind and heart. Find whatever is missing in your life and go after it. There is no time like the present. Keep chasing your dreams and going after what you want. Be open to any and all opportunities as they present themselves to you. Make the right choices.

Pisces - Your three cards are determination, splendor, and childlike expression. Go after your childhood dreams. You have the fire, power, and passion within you to make all of your dreams come true. In the process, don’t forget to take time for yourself by doing things that you enjoy. All work and no play is not good. Just remember, it is never too late to start something new. Do what you love and you will never work a day in your life. Follow your heart and stay grounded.

April

Aries-Your three cards are surrender, guidance, and empowerment. You are the most powerful tool that you have available. Anything is possible as long as you stay motivated and focused. Reach out to your guides to help you along the way. They are here to help you because they want to see you succeed. But you must allow the universe to take its time and enjoy the process. Listen to the messages and look for the signs as they are all around you.

Taurus-Your three cards are blessings, empowerment, and generosity. The universe has so many great things in store for you. Be open to their many gifts and affirmations. Remain calm and make the proper decisions that you need to in order to benefit you in the future. You are always taking care of others when you need to be taking care of you first. Your mind is a very powerful tool that can create anything that you need. Be specific in your thoughts and actions

Gemini-Your three cards are steadfastness, energetic movement, and reflection. It is all about moving forward not backward. Stay strong in your beliefs and your decisions. Be concise in your communication. It is OK to think about the good times that you have had in the past and the lessons that you have learned but do not dwell in the past. You can’t change the past. Stay in the now. Obstacles are thrown our way in order to teach us lessons.

There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Cancer-Your three cards are cultivation, determination, and relaxation. It is important to know that your hard work is paying off. Everything that you have been working toward and manifesting is coming to you. You need to stay grounded and centered while everything is going on. Let any unwanted energy go back into the universe where it belongs. It is not serving you correctly. You can power through any obstacle that is put in front of you.

Leo-Your three cards are relaxation, delight, and protection. All work and no play is not good for your well-being. It is so important to do things that make you happy and feel fulfilled. Think before you act but realize that the universe has your back. It is ok to step out of your comfort zone and do something that challenges you. Life is all about learning lessons. You will never move forward if you stay complacent.

Virgo-Your three cards are decisions, blessings, and spiritual quest. There is no time like the present to deal with situations that you have been putting off dealing with. They are given to you in order to teach you lessons. Once dealt with, better opportunities and new energy can come into your life. You are putting off the inevitable. Stop procrastinating because you need to move forward with your life. It is all part of your journey. You can do it.

Libra-Your three cards are inner knowing, relaxation, and fulfillment. This is all about staying motivated in order to make your dreams a reality. Hard work and determination is key to succeeding in life. Stay true to yourself while taking time for yourself. Listen to your body. Understand that the answers that you seek are within you. Allow self-love into your life and stop being your own worst critic. Not everything needs to be done right now. Pace yourself.

Scorpio-Your three cards are fulfillment, determination, and belonging. Keep an open mind and learn as much as possible. Never stop learning. Sometimes you may question what you are doing with your life. Find the truth within yourself and be the answer that you seek. Ground yourself while staying in the moment. Don’t get too ahead of yourself. Change one thing at a time. By doing so, everything will begin to get in balance.

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Sagittarius-Your three cards are enlightenment, belonging, and wholeness. Open up your crown chakra in order to receive the messages that the universe is trying to send you. Meditate often. The messages and signs will flow freely to you. Staying in the now will provide clarity to you so you can decide what to do next. Make decisions from your heart and out of love. The answers are clear. Peace and harmony will prevail.

Capricorn-Your three cards are fulfillment, energetic movement, and enlightenment. There is so much power in knowledge. Your mind is the most powerful tool that you have available. Use it to make all of your dreams come true. Keep your energy high and move forward. The world is at your fingertips. Allow the messages and signs to come to you. The universe is sending you everything that you need and want. It may not come the way that you expect it to. Be open to change.

Aquarius-Your three cards are prosperity, delight, and harmony. It is so important to find peace and harmony in your life. Do more of whatever makes you happy. You create your own reality. Change your thoughts, words and actions from negative to positive. This will lead you to a more productive and prosperous life. Remember to laugh more. It will create positive changes in you. Success is all around you.

Pisces-Your three cards are decision, courage, and divine support. There are a lot of decisions that you need to deal with. They could come

from within. Have the courage to speak your truth. Be a leader and not a follower. Know that the universe will not steer you wrong. They want you to succeed and learn the proper lessons. You have all the tools within you to make up your mind and stick with it. Allow yourself to feel free but cutting the cords of whatever no longer serves you.

Robert, a psychic medium, hails from New Jersey, United States, and is High Priest of the Practical Magick II coven.



In loving tribute & remembrance of DawnStar Sunpath, 2/25/1953 – 4/6/2021 as we approach the one-year anniversary of her passing from Covid 19.

Most, if not all of you here today, probably do not know who DawnStar Sunpath was. Some of you may have known her personally, but I want to take a moment to share with you the DawnStar Sunpath I knew & loved. I met Dawn & Roger at a meditation group in Pocatello, ID. She was a spark & a light; always shining. The things I know about Dawn are that she was strong, bold, positive, a warrior, kind, & honest.

She always believed in the positive, she was a great healer, crone, protector, witch & High Priestess of the Gathering. (Not to mention wife, mother, sister, friend, grandma, & then some.) She always told people to hug "Heart to Heart" & always think, believe & say what you want to happen & never allow fear or doubt to muddy your water. She had a quirky sense of humor & was never afraid to laugh at herself.

She & Roger sort of ended up in Inkom, ID by accident. They were going through on their way to Montana to look at a property, stopped here for

lunch & saw a "For Sale" ad. They called the realtor who met them a short time later to show them the house. They fell in love, made an offer & bang, boom...the rest is history. Talk about FATE. In 2021 was the first winter they stayed in Idaho rather than going to CA since I met them. We had so many plans for the winter, but unfortunately the universe had other plans.

Dawn was a Sun Dancer. She participated in 4 Sun Dances here in Bannock County, meaning she went into the Arena of the Medicine Wheel & she danced, fasted & thirst for nearly 4 days. She danced from sunup to sundown, in the heat of the typical July weather in Idaho. I was in complete awe of her strength, endurance & ability. I was out there every year she danced, to support her & send her Reiki energy.

Dawn was a fire tender & was trained in the tradition of tending the fire for sweat lodges. She has tended fire for Crete Brown & her sweat lodge in Pocatello, helped to train other fire tenders & supported

those who went to sweat. She was an amazing bead worker & crafter as well. Dawn designed costumes for a movie filmed in CA & was an extra in some of the scenes. She sold her beadwork creations at many market settings & Roger has mounted several of them in her memory. She loved animals, especially horses, wolves & birds. She welcomed everyone into her home & onto her land & was humble beyond words. She preferred to live a very quiet life. Her family has donated hundreds of her books to The Gathering to help create a lending library to be called The Owl's Nest, in her honor & to fulfill her desires to help everyone along their path.



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Dawn was my High Priestess, Soul Sister & beloved friend. She was my right hand in our group & she is truly one of the biggest reasons we have a group. We are known today as The Gathering. Our group has ebbed & flowed over the past 10 plus years of its existence. Currently we have 122 members.

Dawn helped with healings with her & Roger's "Vibe Machine." She was a Reiki Healer & practiced Shamanistic tradition with pipe ceremonies, as well as Roger's personal system he provides to those in need. Dawn was a breast cancer survivor, not through traditional modern medicine, but through diet, belief, Vibing & natural healing.

I handfasted Dawn & Roger on Samhain/Halloween 2015, nearly 7 years ago, then legally married them November 2020, as well. Dawn & Roger celebrated 24 years together the weekend before she fell ill.

In 2019, many of us gathered on a mountain top to honor DawnStar with a Croning Ceremony. She entered the sacred ceremony area on a path of purple rose petals, beneath an archway of swords. We had Butterfly iced tea. Many shared their memories of knowing her. Family joined us from CA as well that day. I presented her with the purple top hat I found for her in a shop in Edinburg, Scotland. I added her High Priestess crown & a wreath of purple flowers & ribbons. I also wove her a purple & silver cord with an owl to be added to her belt of cords. It was a remarkable day of drumming & celebration.

I know how much she appreciated everyone praying for her & sending her positive

energy when she was in the hospital. She told me she could feel the love, light, energy & prayers. I told her to rest, let the doctors do their thing & trust that we had the rest covered for her, ultimately the universe had other plans. While she was sedated, I visited with her in the in between daily. The first day she was dancing, spinning & flying with her mother, Ginger, who passed a year & a half before Dawn. The second day I found her sitting beneath a great Oak tree with her faithful white wolf snuggled in beside her. I told her family we were going to have to talk fast to get her to come back, because she was in paradise. Unfortunately, I was more right than I realized, & Dawn passed a short time later, suddenly in her sleep.

A Celebration of Life will be held in her honor on the 1-year anniversary of her passing. A funerary ritual will be conducted by myself, her daughter Candice & members of The Gathering as well a Native American one, conducted by her husband Roger. Her ashes will join with the ash of her mother, in the "Medicine Wheel" on the property. She would not want us to mourn her passing, but to continue to celebrate her life & light by walking our paths & helping others to do the same. The blessing of the Witch is eternal life & while her body may have worn out, her SOUL will shine forever in our hearts & our minds. 🕯️

Celest Sunn is the High Priestess of The Gathering. A natural born Psychic, Medium, Healer & Guide. She is an Ordained Minister of the nondenominational Church of Spiritual Humanism. She has an office in Pocatello, for sessions by appointment only & occasionally available in Idaho Falls.

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In Spring, Mysteries Are Still Awake

The Imaginator

...As if they ever slept in the winter.

How silly it is to think that mysteries are only reserved for certain times of the year—October is the guiltiest of this!—when in truth they are snuggled in the corner of our everyday lives, disregarding the concerns of mundane chronology. As deliberate disturbances against the norm, mysteries inhabit a more peculiar paradigm, one in which the mind is more apt to accept the marvelous and disregard the real, even if only for a moment. Usually, they come in the form of questions that may not necessarily have answers.

The word mystery has its etymological roots in the Greek's mysterion, which could be translated as an initiate whose knowledge originates from sacred rites among other closely associated definitions. Now, in the present day, this word simply stands as a placeholder for the unknown, and has as its connotation, a touch of the fabulous. It can also translate, much more simply, as a literary genre.

Mystery and its representation appear muddled, though. The word is a modern charlatan of its past self. Its current meaning (a guesstimate, not an absolute) is simply this: ensconced information whose sole purpose is to be resolved in a neat and orderly fashion and then discarded right after. But to restrain the definition of mystery is unfathomable! How can one claim to understand, let alone define, a word whose silhouette is the undefinable? Yet, often it is true that mysteries are destroyed by the very information presented to us; once it is solved, each one becomes inert, a finished thing. Gone.

A true mystery is unsolvable, but there lies the allure. The proper attitude for mystery appreciation will not be found in a how (can it be solved?) but in a why (is it there?), which will, in turn, lead into the following conversation:

“Why do mysteries exist?”

“Because we do not know everything.”

“So, do you chase them, knowing that you might never truly have the answer?”

Thus, the investigators can discuss what most mysteries truly masquerade as: an atmosphere of glorious impossibility that becomes manifest for deeper contemplation. Not existing for the sake of a solution, but for the sake of its own self. Kōan meditation is like this, bridging the relationship between the self and unknown. Of course, a further step back reveals this is just one possible definition of the word mystery. This version of the word's meaning is not necessarily the only truth.

That is how it will always appear, as many versions and interpretations. The juxtaposition of truth and spirituality collide and fuse to form a path where there is an abundance of many truths, many paths; singularity is possible, but the end result is multitudinous. Could there just be one answer? Or is sifting

through the mysteries a metonym to indulge in the fear of the unknown, coupled with an intense curiosity and an innate desire to find answers to anything and everything? But what will happen should these answers be found? Satisfaction? To think that these mysteries can be solved and should be solved could be the product of a modern world. Be wary of that. Read Pablo Neruda's *The Book of Questions*.

Contemplate a mystery, let it exist, and then leave it. A miraculous transformation of its own nature will come to pass, and then the fear of the unknown becomes an allure of the unknown, an inevitable result. ☸

The Imaginator works to change the consensus reality by using the nature of words to carefully manipulate the ontology of what he views as "The Waking World". He is an occultist with a high interest in esoteric Daoism and chaos magic, often blending the two with the occasional surrealist technique to create works that attempt to blur the line between sleeping and dreaming. When he is not writing, he is reading, and when he is not reading, he is writing. It is an endless cycle of love. The Imaginator can be reached at theimaginatorknows@gmail.com

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