

Witchcraft Dictionary

ADEPT: An individual who through serious study and accomplishments is considered highly proficient in a particular magickal system. A person can be an adept at Egyptian magickal practices, but a total failure at practical kitchen magick.

AKASHA: The Fifth element, the omnipresent spiritual power that permeates the universe. It is related to outer space, inner space, the unmanifest, and the life force.
See Also Elements

AKASHIC RECORDS: In the early part of this century the famed psychic Edgar Cayce brought to general society the thought form of Akashic records. Supposedly, there is a giant data base somewhere that can be accessed for information on subjects such as past lives, healing, and other magickal/spiritual practices. This record system cannot be accessed by material equipment, such as PC networking with a larger computer. In this case, the mind of the psychic or Witch accesses the data through Universal Connections.

ALTAR: A special, flat surface set aside exclusively for magickal workings or religious acknowledgment.

AMULET: Usually considered an object of protection that has been charged to deflect specific negative energies or thought forms. Amulets can be made of feathers, plants, beads, etc. The horseshoe and the four-leaf-clover are two examples of amulets.
See Also Talisman

ANKH: An Egyptian hieroglyphic that is widely used as a symbol for life, love and reincarnation. It is depicted as a cross with a looped top.

ARADIA: A champion Italian Goddess sworn to protect her people against the aggression of masculine faith and its persecutors during the reign of medieval terror. The original Aradia was a female Christ figure in Italy who taught around 1353. She was imprisoned more than once, escaped several times and eventually disappeared. The second Aradia you will hear about is Leland's Aradia, a book detailing information from an Italian Gypsy Witch. The third Aradia is the daughter of Diana and Lucifer (God of the Sun). She is considered the Queen of the Witches.

ARCANA: The two halves of a Tarot deck. The Major Arcana consists of 22 trumps depicting dominant occurrences in our lives. The Minor Arcana consists of 56 suit cards (sometimes called the lesser Arcana) that assist in fleshing out the trump situations, or indicate smaller occurrences in our lives. See also Tarot Cards.

ARCHETYPES: (EF) Extremely basic forms within the human psyche; the archaic "racial memories." Refer to the works of Dr. Carl Jung.

ASTRAL: (SR) This word conjures lots of definitions. To keep it simple, let's describe it as another dimension of reality. Referred to as "dreamtime". This reference is from the Australian Aboriginal people and their teachings, which are well worth further study.

ASTRAL TRAVEL/PROJECTION: The process of separating your astral body from your physical one to accomplish travel in the astral plane or dreamtime.

ATHAME: A cleansed and consecrated ceremonial knife used in ritual work by Witches. The knife is never used for blood-letting, and rarely used to cut anything on the material plane.

BANE: Another word for bad, evil, destructive.

BANISH: To magically end something or exorcise unwanted entities. To rid the presence of.

BI-LOCATION: This is an interesting practice. You use a type of astral projection to travel in everyday reality by retaining the capability to be aware of your present surroundings. Synonymous terms are Over-looking and mind-travel.

BIND: To magically restrain something or someone.

BLOOD OF THE MOON: A woman's menstrual cycle. If this cycle occurs over a Full or New Moon (and you can arrange that) she is far more powerful than during any other time of the month, as long as she acknowledges this strength within herself. For too many years women have been told that they must regard their cycle with an unkind eye, calling it a curse when actually it is a boon. Society has so dictated this to them that many feel weak, tired and disoriented because they are supposed to. Wrong. If you can rearrange your thinking on this matter, the Blood of the Moon can pack a powerful wallop for you. if you feel spacy, try grounding.

BOLLINE: A curved, white-handled knife used for practical magickal purposes such as cutting. For instance, the knife can be used to harvest herbs, cut a branch for a wand, inscribe candles, etc.

BURNING TIMES: In reference to a historical time from around 1000 CE through the 17th century when it is said that over nine million people were tortured and burned by church and public officials on the assumption that they were the Christian version of Witches. This turned into an extremely profitable venture, as all land and property was seized from the accused individual and portions given to the accuser (in reward fashion) and the remainder seized by the church officials. Historians indicated that the majority of people tortured and murdered were women and children.

CABALA: Also seen as Kabbala, Kabbalah and Qabala. The ancient Hebrew magickal system.

CALL: Invoking Divine Forces.

CHAKRAS: Seven major energy vortexes found in the human body. Each is usually associated with a color. These vortexes are: crown - white; forehead (third eye position) - purple; throat - blue; chest - pink or green; navel - yellow; abdomen - orange; groin - red. Smaller vortexes are located in the hands and feet, as well.

CHARGE, THE: Originally written in modern form by Doreen Valiente, it is a story of the message from the Goddess to Her children.

CHANNELING: New Age practice wherein you allow a disincarnate entity to "borrow" your body to speak to others either through automatic writing or verbally. Channeling does not have a very good track record simply because it is difficult to prove and the information imparted is usually not about things that can be "tested." Subjects normally involve distance prophecy, what the after-life is like, the structure of other dimensions, words of wisdom that everybody really needs to know before it is too late, etc. Channeling is the new buzz-word for mediumship. The best known and most accurate medium within our present century was the later Edgar Cayce. Most book stores will carry some of his material and it is well worth your time to read. Channeling is not the same as contacting the dead for information or help.

CHARMS: Can either be an amulet or talisman that has been charged by saying an incantation over it and instilling it with energy for a specific task.

CONE OF POWER: Psychic energy raised and focused by either an individual or group mind (coven) to achieve a definite purpose. The most interesting Cone of Power raised in recent history was that of the Witches of England who stood together, despite their differences, to turn Hitler back from the shores of their beloved country.

CLEANSING: The act of removing any negative energy, vibrations or images from an object or place by utilizing positive, psychic energy.

CONSECRATION: The act of blessing an object or place by instilling it with positive energy.

COVEN: A group of thirteen or fewer Witches that work together in an organized fashion for positive magickal endeavors or to perform religious ceremonies. The covenstead is the meeting place of the Witches, and is often a fixed building or place where the Witch can feel safe and at home.

DAYS OF POWER: Although usually referred to as Sabbats, these are other days throughout the year that can be considered days of power. These days can be triggered by astrological occurrences, your birthday, a woman's menstrual cycle (also know as the Blood of the Moon), or your dedication/initiation anniversary.

DEDICATION: Unlike the initiation ceremony that brings one into an order, the dedication of a Witch is that process where the individual accepts the Craft as their path, and vows to study and learn all that is necessary to reach adeptship in a given tradition. In a dedication, you consciously prepare yourself to accept something new into your life and stick with it, regardless of the highs and lows this action may produce.

DEOSIL: Clockwise movement. Most rituals and ceremonies, even spells, call for deosil movement at some point in their construction.

DIVINATION: The art of using magickal tools and symbols to gather information from the Collective unconscious on the nature of people, places, things, and events in the past, present and future.

DOWSING: The art/science of using a pendulum or stick to find the actual location of a person, place, thing or element. Dowsing can also be used to answer yes or not questions. and quite a science has developed by holding a pendulum over a specially designed chart to answer specific questions on life patterns.

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON: A ritual used during the Full Moon by Witches to empower themselves and unite their essence with a particular deity, usually the Goddess.

EARTH MAGICK: A practical form of magick wherein the powers and forces of Earth Mother are used to conduct magickal workings or celebrations. Usually items associated with the Earth and nature hold a particular significance in the ritual or spell.

ELDER: Many Wiccan organizations have a group or board of Elders who oversee the operations of the church and its variety of functions. These people have usually gained their positions through a combination of their abilities which may include education, experience, magickal adeptship and counseling.

ELEMENTS: Usually counted as four: Earth, Air, Fire, Water. However, many Witches add Spirit or Akasha to this category, as well. Each element has a direction within a magick circle or working: East = Air; South = Fire; West = Water; North = Earth; Center = Spirit or Akasha.

ENCHANTMENT: A magickal object that must be kept absolutely secret and hidden from all human eyes and affects a hidden aura. Enchantments must be charmed first. Gems and magickal writing are good items for Enchantments

EVOCATION: To call something out from within.

FAMILIAR: An animal who has a spiritual bond with a Witch; often is the family pet. Familiars can also be entities who are created to protect your home from the astral.

FASCINATION: A mental effort to control another animal or person's mind. It has been referred to as "mind-bending." Although the technique of fascination runs a borderline when considering humans, it should not be totally trashed. Using it for a love spell would be unethical, and much like committing psychological rape. But if you found yourself in an unsafe situation where your person (or friend or family member) is in real physical danger. I wouldn't have the guts to tell you not to use all the tools and skills available to you.

GAEA/GAIA: Greek Goddess, now meaning Earth Mother or Mother Earth. Environmental action groups use this term almost as much as we do, if not more these days.

GREEN MAN: Another name for the God, as in his kingdom of the forest.

GUARDIANS: Ceremonial magicians use the Guardians of the Watchtowers or Guardians of the Four Quarters. Some Witches use them, too. There are those that see these Guardians as ugly little biddies, such as lizards, dragons, etc. But Silver envisions them as the angels Michael, Ariel, Raphael and Gabriel.

HANDBASTING: A Wiccan or Pagan marriage ceremony.

INITIATION: An experience that so transforms the individual that their concept of personal and worldly reality has been altered. A dedication ceremony should not be confused with an initiation.

INVOCATION: To bring something in from without.

KARMA: The belief that one's thoughts and deeds can be either counted against them or added to their spiritual path during several life times. In Sanskrit it means "action." Follow the law of cause and effect.

LEFT-HAND PATH: A term that points to those people who feel that they are justified in using magick for purposes that are not constructive to other human beings. It is a reference that they are possibly a self-serving individual. Conversely, the right-hand path is considered positive in nature.

MACROCOSM: The world around us.

MICROCOSM: The world within us.

MAGIC(K): The art and science of focusing your will and emotions to effect change both in the world around you and the world within you. Magick is neither good nor evil, positive nor negative. It is the use of the power that determines the path it will take.

MAGICK CIRCLE: A circular boundary drawn in visionary blue flames or white light that protects the Witch from outside forces while conducting ritual magick. One must never step outside the circle while performing a ritual unless the appropriate precautions have been taken to cut a door. Nor should anyone step in during a ritual, unless they are following a pathway made for them. The door is usually cut with the athame or wand. The circle should never be left hanging after your ritual is over. This means that it must be closed just as ceremoniously as it was opened. The magick circle is considered the doorway between the worlds and allow us to move between the two. Some Witches draw the circle in the physical, either permanently on the floor or for temporary use with herbs, sand, salt, chalk or a nine-foot cord. The circle is still cast with blue or white light by the High Priestess/Priest or individual designated to do so. In some covens, the person in charge of a particular quarter is responsible for preparing the area before the coven members arrive. This includes cleaning the area, cleansing, consecrating, and making sure all the necessary supplies have been transported to the location.

MAGICKAL SYSTEMS: Can refer to Traditions, denominations, sects, or pantheons. It is a basic set of guidelines relating to specific Gods and Goddesses or cultural traditions.

NEW AGE: Usually refers to mixing metaphysical practices with a structured religion.

PAGANS/NEOPAGANS: Follower of a nature-based religion. The term Neopagan means "new Pagan" and is not a popular term. It seems to be a direct result of the New Age lingo.

PANTHEON: A Collection or group of Gods and Goddesses in a particular religious or mythical structure. Example are: Greek pantheon, Roman pantheon, Egyptian pantheon, Teutonic pantheon, etc.

PENTACLE: A circle surrounding a five-pointed, upright star (known as a pentagram). Worn as a symbol of a Witch's belief and used in magickal workings and ceremonies. Each point on the star has a specific meaning: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Pentacles are never worn inverted in the Craft. Witches consider this blasphemy of their faith. However, an inverted pentagram is used in some second degree initiations, not to indicate evil, but to fulfill a function of growth.

PRIESTESS: A female dedicated to both the service of her chosen deity(ies) and humankind. A High Priestess is the feminine leader of a coven or Wiccan organization and plays the role of Goddess in certain ceremonies. A solitary Witch can be a Priestess by dedicating herself to a particular God or Goddess.

PRIEST: A male dedicated to both the service of his chosen deity(ies) and humankind. a High Priest is the male leader of a coven or Wiccan organization and plays the role of the God in certain ceremonies.

(NOTE) Neither male nor female has dominion over the other in the Craft. The High Priest and High Priestess in a coven environment should work as a balanced team. On occasion they draw the energy of the God and Goddess respective to their sex in order to further a positive magickal working or celebrate a holiday/ These people must be skilled in magick and ceremony, but they also need maturity, wisdom and a great deal of humility. They are required to be diplomatic and merciful when the situation demands. Their job is not an easy one. You will hear reference to the Great Rite, wherein the High Priest and High Priestess magickally draw the energy of the God and Goddess through sexual interaction, either simulated or real. However, if intercourse actually takes place, it is almost always done in privacy, out of sight of the other coven members. In the 1970s sexual intercourse among coven members was prominent in some traditions. In the 1990s with the threat of the AIDS virus and society's shift to more conservative views on sexuality, actual intercourse is not as widely practiced. Sex magick is NOT a requirement for any individual to practice Witchcraft.

PROJECTIVE ENERGY: That which is electrical, forward-moving, active. Projective energy is protective.
See also Receptive Energy.

RECEPTIVE ENERGY: The opposite of Projective Energy; magnetic, soothing, attracting energy often used for meditation, promoting love, calm and quiet.

REINCARNATION: The belief that one has lived before in another lifetime.

RITUAL: A focused mental/physical ceremony to either honor or thank one's chosen pantheon, or to perform a specific magickal working or act.

RUNES: A set of symbols that are used both in divination and magickal workings. There are several types of runes with different origins. A few are the Norse, Scandinavian and Germanic runes. Unlike the Tarot, they are an integral part of the magickal system with its own pantheon, should you care to use it. They can function as an alphabet and are useful in vision questing, dream recall and controlling your environment.

SCRYING: A divination method using specific tools such as a bowl of inked water, a mirror, crystal ball, etc., where the diviner "sees" either normal visual pictures, mental visual pictures, or information without any pictures at all!

SIGIL: A magickally oriented seal, sign, glyph, or other device used in a magickal working. The most powerful sigils are those that you create yourself. Sigils can be used on letters, packages, clothing, on paper tucked in your pocket, etc.

SKYFATHER: Assigning deification to the sky as a male entity. Although shamanistic in its origin, it compliments Earth Mother perfectly. Skyfather is also used by several Native American belief systems.

SKYCLAD: In some traditions, for example the Alexandrian, it is the act of celebrating or doing a magickal working in the nude. This should not be misconstrued with sexual contact. There are many solitaires that prefer to work skyclad, feeling that the absence of clothing leaves their energy unhindered during the ceremony.

SPELL: Extended mental and emotional energy spoken aloud, written, spoken to oneself, drawn or even danced. To work, it should be clear, concise, focused and emotional. The need must be present to bring any spell to a successful culmination.

SPIRAL: The sacred spiral plays an important part in magickal workings. It is the symbol of "coming into being." A spiral dance celebrates the spiral symbolism.

TALISMAN: An object that has been magickally charged in order to bring something to the bearer. Such an item could be a gemstone to win a court case, or a drawing to put in your pocket that will bring good luck.

TAROT CARDS: A set of 78 cards which carry pictures and symbols used to connect the diviner with the collective unconscious. One knows the specific origin of the cards, and there are many beautiful decks now on the market. Although the Rider/Waite deck is well known, Silver prefers the Witches' Tarot or the Robin Wood Deck. The cards can be used to determine the past, present and future of an event or person and can become powerful tools in magickal workings and rituals.

TAROLOGIST: One who is adept at the art and science of handling the Tarot.

VISION QUESTING: Using astral projection, bi-location, or dreamtime to accomplish a specific goal.
Also called pathworking.

WEBWEAVING: Networking with other magickal people through conversation, in writing, or by computer to gather information to mutually assist each party in their studies and life goals.

WHEEL OF THE YEAR: One full cycle of the seasonal year, beginning with the Samhain celebration.

WIDDERSHINS: Counterclockwise motion used in some magickal workings or ceremonies.

WORKING: As in **MAGICKAL WORKING**. The process of using magick to reach a desired positive goal.

YIN/YANG: The twin poles of energy. The yin/yang concept is one system of viewing the universal energies.
Yin corresponds to Receptive Energy and yang to Projective Energy