



By Rev. HPS. Rowan Wakefield

The Pentagram, a continuous knot, (can be) drawn with one stroke of the pen. Written, carved or modeled, the Pentacle is a five-pointed interlaced star with one point directed upward. The Pythagoreans (followers of the philosophical teachings of Greek mathematician Pythagoras) called it the pent-alpha (because it looked like five capital 'A's' interconnected), and revered it as the symbol of creation and perfection. Amongst the Druids it was called the sign of the Godhead. During the middle ages this sign was also popularly believed to be a protection against demonic forces. Although most modern Witches don't believe in demons, the Pentagram is often worn as jewelry by Wiccans in the form of rings, pendants and talismans. And is used as well by many other modern Pagan practitioners. As such, it is a symbol of religious faith. Equally significant to the wearer as is the cross to a Christian or the six-pointed Star of David, to a Jew. Often it is made of silver, the metal relating to the Moon Goddess and psychic power, but can be fashioned of any material. The symbolism of the five points of the Pentagram in modern Witchcraft are, the four elements that support life on this physical plane of existence, Fire, Earth, Air and Water. Plus the fifth (and upward pointing) realm of Spirit, which Wiccans believe transcends, encompasses and permeates the material world.

More often than not, the Pentagram is enclosed within a circle, although this is not

always the case. Circles, since ancient times have been reputed for their magical properties. Representing a continuous universal cycle, the circle is symbolic of wholeness, perfection and unity, the creation of the cosmos, the womb of The Great Mother, and the cycle of the seasons of birth, life, death and regeneration. Revered as a life affirming, protective symbol, upright Pentagrams are used to consecrate sacred space and to "ground" energy. Pentagrams are traditionally "drawn" in the air as part of the ritual practice within a modern Wiccan circle, whether it is to be a gathering of Celebration, Rite of Passage or a "Working Circle".

The Pentacle was a common amulet of protection and healing in ancient Babylon, where it was inscribed on pots to keep their contents safe. The first amulet assuming holy signs was known as The Seven Seals. In the early Judeo-Christian tradition the Seals signified the secret names of God. The Pentacle, chief among them, was said to have been inscribed on King Solomon's magic ring. Some think this is why the Pentacle has been mistakenly called Solomon's Seal.

The Pentagram, when inverted (single point down, double points up), has been used as a symbolic depiction of the Pagan Horned God who was named *Pentamorph*, "He of Five Shapes," by Neo-Platonic philosophers. This inverted use is not "Evil" and not to be confused with uses in connection with Satanism. In occult symbolism, this inversion is akin to the Spirit of God taking on physical form in the world of matter.

The Church of Satan, founded in America in 1966, chose the inverted Pentagram as its symbol. Since then, satanic fears and fantasies have caused the inverted Pentagram to be

thoroughly suppressed in any use by many Wiccans, especially in the USA. Here it is largely viewed as the antithesis of Wicca, just as the inverted cross is viewed within Christianity.

Studying the basic forms of symbolism offers fascinating insights into how meanings change over the passage of time. Some fundamentalist Christians of present time so fear Satan as well as any religious concepts not their own, that they erroneously consider all Pentagrams, either upright or inverted to be equally evil, quite forgetting that their own widely depicted "Christmas Star" is frequently presented as an upright Pentagram. And as for the inverted Pentagram. It is worn by every Soldier granted The United States' highest medal for valor, (The Congressional Medal of Honor).

