

No. 49

Pan Gala

A PAGAN JOURNAL FOR THINKING PEOPLE

RAVEN GRIMASSI

*Pursuing the Path
of the Ancients*

PLUS

- Pagan Business 101
- 5 Steps for a More Magical Workplace
- Voudou Money Magic for When It Really Counts

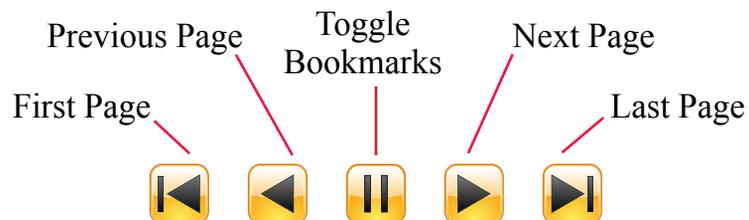


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ON THE COVER:

Raven Grimassi – Pursuing the Path of the Ancients

A practitioner and teacher of Witchcraft for over thirty years, Raven Grimassi is an initiate of several Witchcraft traditions and the Directing Elder of the Arician Tradition, a system of Italian Witchcraft. His greatest interest lies in the subjects of Italian and Hereditary Witchcraft, and the works of Charles Leland. Raven divides his time between writing, directing the Arician Tradition, and developing The College of the Crossroads, an online mystery school. He is devoted to preserving and teaching the Mystery Traditions of pre-Christian Europe. *Interview by Michael Night Sky ... 22*

PanGaia: A Pagan Journal for Thinking People

SPECIAL SECTION: MONEY MAGIC

The Alchemy of Abundance: Practical Money Magic

Our most valuable asset isn't our jewelry, our bank account, or even the property we own – it's our mind. The way we think about our wealth will always be more important than the actual amount. *By Lisa McSherry ... 28*

Workin' for a Livin': Five Steps for a More Magical Workplace

In my view of the perfect world, we would all make our living in some other way that satisfies our Pagan inclinations. Alas, most of us spend our days toiling away at more mundane jobs. However, that doesn't mean that we should give up on our dreams. *By Deborah Blake ... 32*

Pagan Business 101

Creating a viable living as a Witch can be done, if one proceeds with wisdom and forethought. Those who are best suited to follow their witchy bliss are folks who have been receiving nudges from the gods for a while: you know who you are. *By Kristin Barton ... 35*

Plus: Metaphysical Marketing for Beginners. *By Elizabeth Genco. ... 35*

Earthly Treasure: In Defense of Money Magick

It's time we gave Pagan Poverty Consciousness the boot and embraced abundance. Money magic is just like any other kind: it helps us align ourselves with the flow of the Universe, and there's nothing wrong with that. *By Thuri Calafia ... 38*

Voodoo Money Magic For When It Really Counts

If we want to improve our financial condition – and who doesn't? – we can learn a lot from magicians who work in one of the Western Hemisphere's harshest environments. *By Kenaz Filan ... 41*



MONEY MAGIC (cont.) Why the Goddess Loves Piggy Banks

It's a good thing that I like coins, since when I've tried to manifest money with magick it hasn't gotten me much folding cash. It was the Goddess who taught me that She can't give me money – because She doesn't have any. *By Terry Warnock ... 45*

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WINNER OF THE 2008 PAGAN FICTION AWARD

A Valkyrie Among Jews

So pious was Ruth Katz, with the white circle of Sabbath lace on her head. "No doubt," Laura reflected, "she would despise me if she knew what I really am." *By April ... 48*

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Can't Buy Me Love

"My experience is what I agree to tend to; only those items I notice shape my mind."

— William James

As the editor of three magazines, I see a *lot* of spam. Entirely too much of it consists of a veritable sandstorm of press releases for bizarre, superfluous, and downright stupid products. Among the most egregious I've seen recently are the following notable examples:

- At *ShopLaTiDa.com* (real name!) you can pick up fashion faux-pas fixers that erase unsightly bumps, lumps and imperfections. Products include Commandos no-undie undies, Hollywood Fashion Tape and Miss Oops Deodorant Sponges. At the advanced age of forty-eight, I'll admit to plenty of "unsightly bumps," but whatever "Hollywood Fashion Tape" is (I have visions of sparkly duct tape being deployed in, let us say, *delicate* locations) I am certain that I can spend the rest of my life happily ignorant of the finer points of acquiring and (gasp!) applying it.

- Or how about an electronic press release promoting ... electronic press releases. *SoundClick, Inc.*, today announced the signing of *MyPRGenie*, the world's first on-demand Internet provider of public relations services. We are especially looking forward to using *MyPRGenie's* proprietary publicity engine to generate some real excitement for our platform. Oh, I just can't wait to be the target of a "proprietary publicity engine." Sounds like the unholy union between a diesel locomotive and a neon sign: you'll have the sponsor's name indelibly imprinted on your face as it rolls right over you and crushes you into a smear of paste on the sidewalk.

- Or how about this winsome accessory for your next Solstice soirée: if you are about to have sex with someone you don't know well

and want to make sure you're not infected as a result with something that will require you to contact every intimate partner you've ever encountered, why not play "I'll show you mine if you show me yours" with your Safe Sex Passport.™ *Gonzalo Paternoster* (also real name!) founder and CEO of *SSP BioAnalytics, Inc.*, has taken on the fight of preventing the spread of STDs through his 'outside the box' creation of the *Safe Sex Passport*, and the world is starting to listen. Listen, maybe; giggle uncontrollably, certainly; pony up a subscription for (ohmigoddes) seventy-five bucks every six months; I think not.

- I have also been notified that: one can get "five free music downloads" courtesy of the U.S. Navy (sorry, "Anchors Aweigh" wasn't among them); I can get my "brand" imprinted on those ubiquitous little sticky notes (what am I supposed to do, leave them on subway trains all over town?); and, to top it all off, I was recently introduced to a line of "fashionable golf clothing" that has Vitamin C embedded right in the fabric. Pitched as part of a new "Green" collection, the clothes (which I like to imagine turn your skin a vivid shade of apricot) also offer a "soft, drapey hand." (Doesn't that sound vaguely ghoulish somehow?)

I could regard all of this ridiculousness as simply an opportunity to exercise my "delete" key if I didn't have the sneaking suspicion that all these bizarre goods were actually being manufactured somewhere, hauled across the oceans in humongous container vessels, and dumped into an enormous landfill somewhere. All this nonsense contrasts uneasily with the growing reports of food shortages I'm hearing from around the world. Just this morning an NPR story about a Kenyan woman who had been forced to begin

taking her morning cup of tea black because she can no longer afford the milk and sugar necessary to drink it properly almost had me in tears. (We all have our soft spots!)

But such sentiments appear to be utterly out-of-step with the dominant paradigm. Take, for instance, the soporific words of Ben Bernake, who holds the keys to the (virtual) vault of the Federal Reserve, and who asserts that we must all keep buying, buying, buying or the world will come to an end. Often misquoted as saying he is willing to "throw money out of helicopters" if it will help keep the consumer — well, *consuming* — Mr. Bernake never actually said he would drop greenbacks from Hueys, but what he did say is almost as disturbing:

"U.S. dollars have value only to the extent that they are strictly limited in supply. But the U.S. government ... [can] produce as many dollars as it wishes at essentially no cost. We conclude that, under a paper-money system, a determined government can always generate higher spending."

Mr. Bernake (as well as the Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson) understands his job to be that of creating constantly rising consumer spending. But this paradigm — consumerism as sole measure of a society's health — is fundamentally flawed. By only valuing those goods and services that are exchanged for currency in the open market, this paradigm creates a mindset in which money is *all* that matters.

A definition: economic activity is measured by (among other things) the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is the total value of all goods and services produced for consumption during a particular time period. The data used to assemble the GDP include the manufacture of tangible goods such as cars, furniture, and bread, and the provision of services such as education, health care, and auto repair. GDP (and other such measurements) are important tools for understanding the economy, but our current dependence on them is a dangerous oversimplification.

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It is a well-known magical principle that we tend to attract that to which we pay attention. In our current society, what we pay attention to is commerce: every monetary impulse is encouraged, applauded, and attended to, but non-commercial activities are largely devalued and ignored.

For example, imagine that I jump in my car, drive to the supermarket, and buy a loaf of bread. Let's say that I spend \$4 for the bread, and \$1 on the gas to get to the store. As a result of my purchase, I've contributed \$5 to the GDP. I've supported the farmer (who only gets a measly twenty cents for the wheat, by the way)², the processor, which transports the wheat and makes it into flour; the bakery, which bakes the bread; the distributor, which sells it to the market; and the grocery store, which sells it to me. At each step in the process, the original cost of the wheat gets marked up (marketing costs, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for 80 percent of food costs)³ and all that markup and profit is counted in the GDP. Officials like Mr. Bernake are absolutely delighted that I have just given the wheel of commerce another spin.

But what if I decide to skip the trip to the market and bake the bread myself? I only spend a buck on the ingredients and the electricity to heat my oven; my time, expertise, and labor are "officially" free. Thus, if I buy a loaf of bread, the government reckons that I added \$5 to the economy, but if I make it myself, I only contributed \$1. Baking my own brand has resulted in a whopping 80% reduction in the GDP assigned to this activity; according to the statisticians, I've just created my very own micro-recession.

You may not bake your own bread, but you are undoubtedly part of this "invisible" economy, too. Do you help your children with their schoolwork, care for your aging parents, volunteer at the local foodbank, pick up litter at the beach, grow your own tomatoes? All invisible to the economic bean counters. But if you hire a tutor for your kids, engage a professional caregiver for your parents, find a dog-walker for your pooch — then *that* activity is toted up. See where (in magical terms) all the *intention* is focused?

GDP also fails miserably on the level of environmental sustainability; as economist Gernot Wagner points out:

Time and again, GDP ignores our environment. Even worse, GDP often includes the environment on the wrong side of the balance sheet. If we first pollute and then pay to clean up the pollution, both activities add to GDP. Environmental degradation frequently looks good for the economy.⁴

There is nothing inherently wrong with commercial activity, but it is high time we discard our overwhelming obsession with measuring monetary trends. For several decades, attempts to reform the GDP have been percolating in sustainability circles; recently, the government of Bhutan decided to measure that nation's Gross National Happiness.⁵ Perhaps we should consider adding such concepts to our fiscal policies as well.

Regardless of governmental decisions, each of us can choose to direct our attention away from the lure of the consumerist will-o-the-wisp. In a world focused almost exclusively on money, perhaps one of the most magical acts we can perform is to concentrate our intent on *abundance* — the health, security, and joy in our lives — instead. I find that visiting my neighbors, working in my garden, cooking food for my family, riding my bike, or reading a book are far more satisfying than acquiring bling in any case.

(By the way, it is my husband who bakes our family's bread — and it rocks!) ▲

Endnotes

¹Remarks by Governor Ben S. Bernanke before the National Economists Club, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2002, www.federalreserve.gov/BOARDDOCS/SPEECHES/2002/20021121/default.htm

²<http://www.nfu.org/documents/0201FarmersShare.pdf>

³<http://www.ndfu.org/data/upfiles/resources/FarmersShareInfo.pdf>

⁴<http://www.gwagner.com/writing/2005/07/from-answer-desk-green-gdp.html>

⁵<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bhutan/gnh.html>

— Anne Newkirk Niven is the Editor of *SageWoman*, *PanGaia* and *newWitch* magazines. She lives with her family in Forest Grove, Oregon.