

The Meaning of the Altar Coin of the Sacred Well Congregation

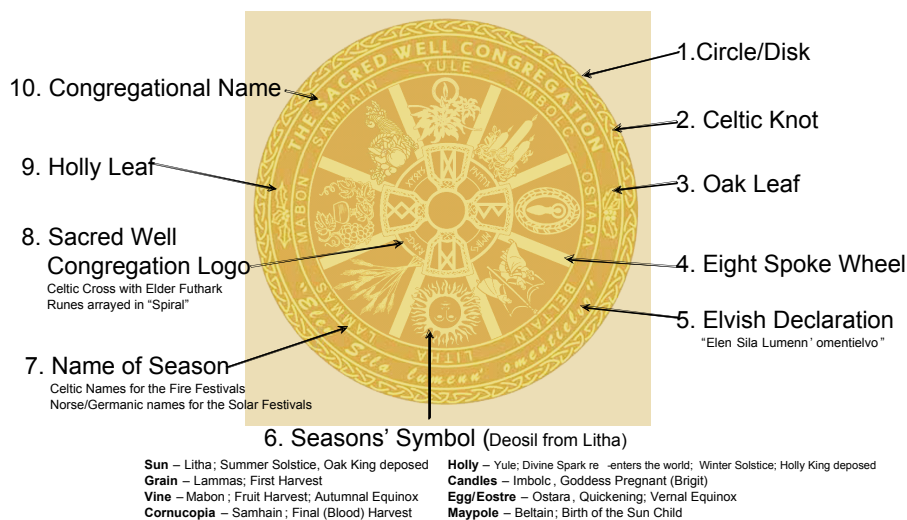
Introduction:

In many religions, symbolism and allegory are extremely important to accessing and understanding deity. This is especially true in the practice of Wicca, a faith built on personal practice and personal experience of Deity. We use symbols to speak to our subconscious or inner self, our “younger self,” and through that conduit we are able to reach our super or collective unconscious — The Divine. We access this Deity to work magic, perform divination and to commune with Deity. The purpose of the Sacred Well portable Altar coin then, is to be a focal point for personal working and contains many of the symbols considered most sacred to practitioners of Traditional Craft Wicca. There is not a single mark on the coin that has no meaning in our religion or exists solely for aesthetic purpose. By studying and understanding the meaning of the symbols on the coin, it can become a powerful tool for magical practice, divination, communion and protection. In time, you will of course attribute your own meaning to the symbols and make them uniquely your own.

There are two sides to the coin. The front side is intended to capture more of the seasonal meaning of the year and has more focus on the Divine Masculine, while the back is more tailored to introspection, the tides of the psyche and Communion with the Divine Feminine. What follows below is a description of the artist’s intent when fashioning the coin and is a good jumping off point for your personal study.

Getting to Know the Coin:

Front of SWC Coin



1. The shape of the coin itself is significant — it is both a Circle and a Disc. The circle is the penultimate symbol of the Wiccan faith symbolizing the never ending “Great Dance” of all creation both ancient and immanent. Every cycle manifest in nature can be seen as circular. The coin is also a disc, symbolic of the astral spheres and in the case of the Wheel of the Year displayed on the front side, the Sun.

2. The coin is bordered by a Celtic or Gordic knot. The knot, like the circle has no clearly defined beginning or ending. The knot goes on infinitely and binds all things to one another.

3. The Oak leaf is the symbol of the rule of the Oak King. Looking at the right side of the coin bisected by a line drawn from Yule to Litha, we say is the period of increase and waxing light occurring during a solar year on our Earth but can also represent any process of increase. In ancient times the Oak was the symbol of contracts and commitment and the Celtic root word for Oak, the “King of Trees” is the root word for Druid.

4. The Eight Spoke Wheel of the Year. In Wicca the year is divided into seasons marked either by agrarian practice or by solar activity. The result is a cycle of celebrations that occur in cycles between 40 days and 51 days from one another. Beginning with Yule (the winter solstice) we see a promise of the Goddess to become pregnant with the God. The Divine spark enters the World and the Oak King begins his reign, sovereign of the waxing light. This promise is fulfilled at Imbolc when she is in fact with Divine Child. The promise at Ostara (the vernal equinox) is to give birth to the God (the Young Sun Child) at Beltain. Light and darkness stand in balance, but soon the days will grow longer at an increasing rate. At Beltain the promise is fulfilled with the birth of The God and the explosion of life in the beginning of summer. At Litha (the summer solstice) the God in his highest power, promises (from love of the Goddess and her Children) to sacrifice himself so the cycle of life may continue. At this point the Holly king, lord of waning light and receding cycles deposes the Oak King who goes into exile (or is transformed into the Holly king, vice versa at Yule). At Lammass (loaf Mass — the harvest of the grain) or Lughnassadh (the festival of Lugh) this sacrifice is carried out. At Mabon (the autumnal equinox) the spirit of the recently deceased God has traveled to the vine ripening and strengthening the fruits. Light, once again in balance now begins to recede at an increasing rate. The God spirit promises to journey to the Otherworld at Samhain to rule the land of summer and so the Goddess may once again become pregnant with his divine spark at Yule. At Samhain while the veils between the worlds are the thinnest, he leads the wild hunt, all those who crossed over in the past year on one final wild celebration before journeying to the otherworld, where the cycle of the year is complete. Thus Samhain is the Wiccan New year. During this time — between Samhain and Yule, it is said that no masculine God energy lives in the material world, rather the Lord of Misrule is present. Of course we continue to be nurtured by energy of the Divine Feminine, The Goddess during this time. At Yule the cycle repeats. The combination of all these solar seasons, three births and three deaths; promises made and promises kept is known as the Wheel of the Year.

5. The Elvish Declaration — This is a translation of the mythological Tolkein Elvish language meaning, “A star shines on the hour of our meeting.” It is an elegant and

enduring way we have in Sacred Well of saying...Merry Meet! Some view the meeting at a loftier level, not between individuals but in “coming home” to the Wiccan experience.

6. Seasonal Symbols – Between the spokes of the Wheel discussed above are located archetypal symbols signifying the sacred seasons. The Holly for Yule, Candles for Imbolc (return of the light), The Egg and Goddess’s Womb/fertility Symbol of quickening for Ostara, The Maypole for the joyous and lusty experience of Beltain, the Sun for Litha--Festival of Light, Grain for Lammas — the first harvest, Vines for Mabon, the second harvest--the harvest of fruits, and the Cornucopia for final harvest at Samhain, (actually this could have been an animal sacrifice for the blood harvest as well).

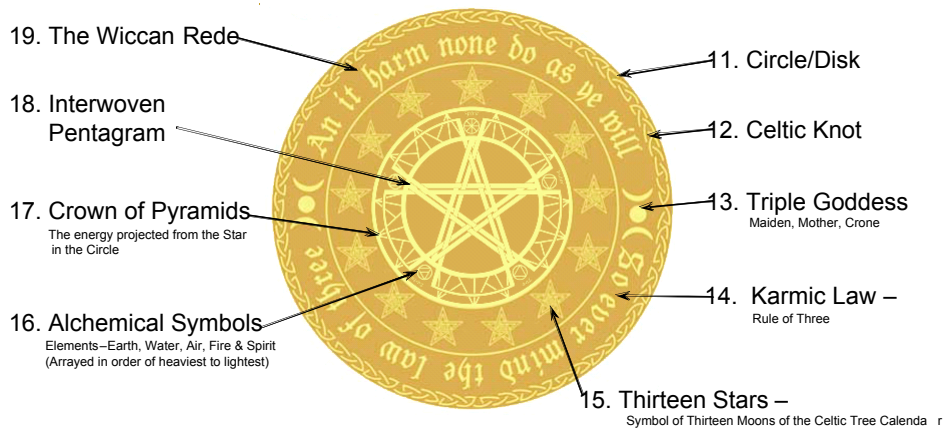
7. The names of the respective seasons ring the pictures of the season between the spokes of The Wheel.

8. The logo of the Sacred Well Congregation is a Celtic cross, again a divine symbol of creation, metamorphosis and destruction. Unique to this cross is the unusual array of the Elder Futhark runes around the circle itself. The runes are arrayed in a “spiral” pattern vice the normal display of rows of runes under the Aettirs to which they belong. This spiral array makes use of the links between each rune across the Aettirs, linking aspects of the worldly, the intellect and the divine as they surely are for each and every endeavor. The Spiral of Life embodied by this array of runes describes the method in which circular cycles drive the linear evolution of the universe and its various dimensions.

9. The Holly Leaf appears on the left of the coin opposite the Oak, symbolic of the rule of the Holly King, sovereign of waning light and receding processes. He is also the lord of introspection, lessons learned during the active time and through trials and challenges. It is linked to the festivals of the year associated with harvest and the waning light leading up to winter and the return of the waxing cycle.

10. The Sacred Well Congregation — the name of our church and our extended spiritual family.

Back of SWC Coin



11. The Circle/Disk is once again symbolic of cycles; in this aspect it symbolizes The Goddess, The Moon and cycles of ebb and flow, continuation and transformation without physical death and rebirth.

12. The Celtic knot is in this case symbolic of Ariadne's Silver Web...the interconnectivity of all things and our ability to communicate through access to the Quantum Sea or the collective unconscious.

13. Triple Moon Goddess Symbol. The sliver facing left is the symbol of waxing Moon, the young virgin Goddess of Nimue. This represents all new beginnings, childish abandon and wonderment. The full circle is the full Moon Mother, Rhiannon symbolic of maturity, growth and responsibility — nurturing others and giving back. Finally the sliver facing right is the waning Moon, grandmother Goddess Heckate or Kerridwen. This is symbolic of introspection, wisdom born of experience and repose.

14. The Law of Threes – is interpreted in the Greencraft Wiccan tradition as a responsibility to repair unintended harm. It is an advisement to choose carefully your thoughts words and deeds, since as we are all interminably connected in the silver web of the universe, through the great quantum sea, we will surely be a recipient of energies we send forth and realities we manifest.

15. The Thirteen Stars symbolize the 13 months of 28 days each and the day that is not a day in the Wicca calendar. Every month, represented in Celtic lore by a Sacred Tree is unique in the type of energy it contains, typified by the mythology surrounding the Tree of the corresponding month. We are physically affected by the changing energies throughout the year as we wing through the cosmos. By experiencing those energies during each month, communing with the respective Tree during its designated month, we

learn to feel those energies and store them in our subconscious. We can then call on those specific energies at anytime in the year (or life stages) when needed to help us with our specific needs and desires.

16. The Alchemical Symbols of the Elements. The elementals are psychological manifestations of the several archetypal processes we experience in our lives and across the several dimensions. We call on those elements to be present in different measure at different times to aid us in our growth, magic, and communion with Deity. The symbols appear matched to the points on the Pentagram in alchemical order, heaviest to lightest, or said another way the lowest vibrational frequency to highest if one is drawing the invoking Pentagram of Earth. The first symbol being the heaviest element, Earth is matched to lower left (if one draws a line from the top point to the lower left) and continuing on as one would draw a star without lifting their pencil, to upper right (Water — next heaviest), then across right to left (Air — next heaviest), then upper left to lower right, (Fire — Plasma, next heaviest) ending finally in Akasha or Spirit (lightest of the elementals — the Fifth Element).

17. The Pyramid is a powerful symbol of energy and healing in many Pagan traditions. It can stand for Father, Mother and Holy Child of the Mother (Mabon ap Modron), or the Triple Goddess. In this case the Pyramids ring the Circle containing the Pentagram as a corona or energy emanating from the Sun.

18. The interwoven Pentagram is the quintessential symbol of the Wiccan Faith. Pythagoras called it the most perfect geometric design and formed an entire cult of religious and secular discovery based on its secret meaning. Symbolic of the five elements this design can be seen throughout nature in flowers, leaves, rock formations, chemical structures and appears often in architecture. Drawing the Pentagram on a disc we create for ourselves a powerful magical tool of divination, blessing and protection. One can use the Pentagram to imagine repelling or sending energy by holding the point away from you, or being receptive to energies by holding the point toward you, that is the “legs” of the Pentagram are splayed as to form a cup or funnel to collect incoming energy. It is a symbol of infinity as the inside of the star forms a pentagon upon which the points are built and connecting the points of the star form a larger pentagon that can form the basis of another larger star — on and on. The Pentagram can also represent the various stages of growth for mankind (male and female) and typify the various aspects of the Goddess and the God in their cycles when alchemical correspondences (to know, to will, to dare, to remain silent and to teach) are matched to the points along with the elemental energies themselves. You can overlay every archetype that we can discuss in Wicca to the points of the Star forming a roadmap for better understanding and connection with the Divine.

19. The Wiccan Rede... ”An it harm none do as thou will”... is at once the simplest guidance one could receive concerning living life yet one of the most challenging to achieve. It does not mean “if it feels good do it!” Quite the contrary, it means to do what you have to do to survive. In every case our actions cause a reaction. Something must cease to exist in order for us to live. In some cases will refers to what you must do, not what merely want to do, in order to flourish. This will refers to your true and inner most

desires. In some cases you must do something you dread to do, or something initially, overtly harmful to leverage the greater good. To live within the confines of the Wiccan Rede and repairing harm as we must in accordance with the Law of Threes, one learns to become the master of ones true self and personal destiny. That self mastery is the quintessential purpose of practicing The Craft of the Wise.

Summary

By now I hope you as the reader (and proud owner of our Sacred Altar Coin) know and appreciate the fact that you have not merely purchased an aesthetically pleasing trinket with some neat symbols on it. In fact you are getting an almanac, a rule of ethics, a rule of conduct, a lesson in alchemy, a snapshot of Wiccan cosmology, a meditation guide, a sacred token and so much more. With continued study, the coin will become increasingly personal and its true meaning will be known only to you.

Blessed Be and enjoy your coin!

Aman Nai
Astralaya