

Pagan Prayers

The word Pagan comes from the Latin meaning a country-dweller. One who lives close to the land, to the natural world. Pagan, as I understand it, is an over-arching term that encompasses those religious practices that come from ancient peoples whose lives were deeply affected by the land and the seasons. Something common to many of these religions is a “calling the directions”. In a traditional Pagan ceremony there would be a “call” for the forces of the four directions and the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) to “be present”.

I find personal meaning in standing quietly facing each direction in turn. Thinking to myself, I then name what are the qualities that I associate with each of the directions/elements. I usually begin in the east and bring my associations with air and the east; sunrise, beginnings, newness, breath, song, birds etc. Then I turn to the south/fire – then west/water and finally north/earth. The last turn is in to the center/spirit.

One could take one of these directions each week or each month and focus on their role in your life. You could create an altar with items from that element, journal about it, sit quietly facing the direction and listen.

I am leery of just dipping into the world’s religions and appropriating parts that speak to me. Some may find this practice to be too sacred to personalize in this way. I bow to that. I do not claim to be knowledgeable about the entirety of Pagan ritual and elements. This is what speaks to me from what I know of that tradition.

