

The Holy Books of the Devas the secret mythologies of the herbal world

Introduction to the Fourth Edition

When I was but a child it was required that I memorize questions and answers as part of the training in my parents' religion. "Where is God?" the teacher would ask and I, in my childlike innocence would respond, "God is everywhere."

I have lived more than half a century and my quest for religious wisdom has taken me in many wonderful explorations. I am a Wiccan Priest, the founder of a Wiccan Church and Tradition. Yet I continue to believe that simple question and answer from my catechism. For if 'god' is everywhere, is not our planet Earth filled with divinity, worthy of a status as great as the infinite stars overhead? And are we not divine, yet struggling to understand the meaning of our temporary, brief lives. Even the coastal redwood we planted last year, a species capable of surviving until the Age of Capricorn two thousand years into the future, could easily be snapped off by a glacier during the next ice age. My lifetime has been spent seeking the meaning of life, and this book contains those secrets.

It was late winter of 1980 when I was staying on Summit Avenue in Saint Paul, Minnesota, just a block down the street from where F. Scott Fitzgerald penned some of his more famous work. The setting provided me with a respite from my work in Minneapolis and a period of life changes had opened the portals of creativity, as so frequently happens throughout my life. The Tradition of Lothloriën was more clearly forming. It had not been my intention to create a Wiccan Tradition: it was happening through the design of the Universe. Wicca is a modern religious movement which seeks to reclaim roots from an earlier, more nature-based history. I found myself in the position of teaching what my teachers had given me but finding that it was not adequate with which to communicate what was in my heart.

The sections of the original *Holy Books of the Devas* began to flow, providing me with a medium through which to teach the Mysteries which had been unfolded to me. In my early years as a professional herbalist and professional astrologer, so much lore had been falling into place. There were few who occupied both paths of scholarship and I knew, instinctively, that what insight had been given me was very powerful information.

The original text was written in the first months of that year. During the spring the illustrations were provided by Prairie Jackson, a lovely woman who lived in Texas. I would provide her with a photocopy of the calligraphed page and she would fill in the appropriate space with pen and ink drawings. Over the years many hundreds of people purchased this simple paper booklet and I was able to observe how *The Holy Books* was changing people's lives. Minor changes led to a second edition in 1986. The Rowan Tree Church continues to keep the second edition with Prairie Jackson's art in print as a fund-raising tool with all monies going toward some future time when Lothloriën will hold sacred land near the Mothervalley, or upper regions of the Mississippi along the Wisconsin-Minnesota border.

In 1993 it was time to produce a new edition with a new artist. Dianne Lorden, a cherished member of our family of Lothloriën, was known to me not only as a professional healer (a Registered Nurse) but also as an artist of great skill with a proven reputation. Once again I was sending text across the country but now from Los Angeles, where I was completing my several years of teaching, to New Jersey. Dianne's sensitivity to the text and

her years within Lothloriën brought forth a dazzling array of art. My own maturity over the prior thirteen years enabled me to 'translate' new sections, expanding the text until more than twice as much of the mythos was available. There was great excitement over this collaboration, for we knew that we were creating a book of great importance. That book was in print in a limited manner through an obscure publisher.

Now it is January, 1998 and I live at The Hermit's Grove in Washington. Eight years ago I was sent on a quest by the Universe, believing I would return to Minneapolis, but miracles happened and my life is the embodiment of my dreams. How might you learn to manifest your Highest Ideals, to bring your dreams into reality? It is not easy. Such transformations are part of the more challenging of Magicks available. It is more than twenty years since I completed the training and was first formally Initiated into the realms of Magick.

As I work upon this text eighteen years later, I am humbled by the power of these pages. It is with joy that we are now publishing this work ourselves. Unable to finance large printings, the cover price of this edition is not inexpensive, but the quality and the love which permeate these pages should bring you untold blessings. There are no royalties for the artist nor the author. The cover price reflects the cost of production, and the cost of shipping discounted copies to the distributors in the hopes that you will some day discover this Magick on the shelf of your favorite bookstore. *The Holy Books of the Devas* is a work of love and we share it with you.

What are Devas?

The concept of the deva is originally derived from Hindu mythology. It translates loosely as a 'shining one' and there are a specific number of devas in their belief system. It was with a once popular book published in the late 1970's, *The Magic of Findhorn* by Paul Hawken, that the term 'deva' became popular. The chapter "Dorothy and the Devas" left me unable to find any more appropriate term to describe the spirit of a plant.

As a spiritual leader for the past twenty years, I've known many people who have great gifts. In some eras they would have been persecuted and killed for their talents. Earlier in this century they would have been subjected to electroshock therapy or treated as outcasts. In other times they would have been revered as Christian saints but our heritage (for I am among them) is that of the village wise person. Some actually see faeries and plant entities with their eyes. Some are able to hear the plants speak to them with a multitude of voices. There are others who can distinguish the aura of a plant or species. And there are many who talk to their plants and know they respond. Ask most skilled horticulturists or adept herbalists and they will talk about their prized species much as a parent talks about a child. Each species has its own energy, its own personality.

In this sense I might say that there is the hyssop Deva or the Deva of the *Sequoia sempervirens*. When I use the term Deva, I am describing the 'shining one' or the divinity of a plant. Whether that plant is hundreds of feet tall, living for thousands of years or whether its life is briefly tucked upon the few summer days in the arctic, that plant has divinity and in this book we will describe those divinities as the Devas.

How to use this book

The Holy Books is a collection of myths, each designed ideally to be read aloud. This is not a 'book' but is treated as a collection of books, each containing its own Mysteries. These books incorporate some of the greater Mysteries of the plant world, shaped into legends

which delight the spirit yet educate the mind. There are so many ways in which one might use this book. The simplest is to allow the text and the illustrations to move your soul, to let the pure emotion of these pages stir your spirit and open unto you a new meaning of life. The Holy Books are designed to be read aloud, able to transform you into a gifted story teller. As those dear to you hear the words of these books, they will grow in wisdom and in appreciation of life, itself.

But there is so much more to the text. It is overlaid with metaphor and symbol and can be read as a lovely creation myth or studied as a key to the energy of categories of herbs so that one might tap into their magick and bring transformation to one's own life.

The allegory of this work is that it is a translation of the most sacred books of the herbal kingdom and, in a sense it is, although I did not literally have the Devas' own books from which to write. For that reason, the books which describe the affinity between the divinity which permeates herbes and the divinity which permeates the planets and constellations requires your translation into modern astrological names. It should prove simple. After all, one would not expect the Devas to use modern English.

You may use The Holy Books as a source of inspirational reading but you may also use it to take you into the Mysteries. And you may also use it as a guide for the exploration of herbal energies from a planetary and zodiacal perspective, a study which was once part of western medicine and which is older than recorded history.

We offer this book to you. It is our gift to future generations.

Rev. Paul V. Beyerl
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