

The Dianic Tradition

From earliest times, across cultures, women have created, facilitated, and participated in ceremonies and rituals that are sex-based and separate from those of men. The practice of female-only ritual was not born from a rejection of males but rather from an understanding and honoring of women's unique biological rites of passage and the ways in which our women's bodies inform our diverse life experiences. There are physical and psychological experiences and rites of passage common to all women's lives, crossing the boundaries of age, class, culture, race, sexual orientation, and religion. The Dianic tradition was revived to empower women by asserting that we, as the physical embodiment of the Goddess (she who is the life force present in all things), are sacred, and our sacred rites of passage are our birthright.

The heart of the Dianic Wiccan tradition is Women's Mysteries: the five blood mysteries of our birth, menarche, giving birth/lactation, menopause, and death. Contemporary Dianic rites of women's mysteries also include other essential physical, emotional, and psychic passages that only women can experience by being born female in a patriarchal culture and becoming conscious about how growing up in that culture affects our daily lives and female identity. Dianic rituals celebrate the mythic cycle of the Goddess in the earth's seasonal cycles of birth, death, and regeneration. Those cycles correspond and overlap with women's own life-cycle transitions, and Dianics honor the Goddess in every woman through seasonal rituals. Our rites mark life passages and celebrate women's ability to create life, sustain life, and return to the Goddess in death. Dianic seasonal themes are not based on an exclusively heterosexual fertility cycle, as other Wiccan traditions are, and therefore are inclusive of all women. From the beginning of its contemporary practice, the Dianic Wiccan tradition has also inspired rituals that are intended to help women heal from, and counter the effects of, misogynistic, patriarchal social institutions and religions.

We women embody the Goddess as Creatrix. Physically, we embody the power of the Goddess in Her capacity to create and sustain life. Our wombs are the living metaphor of Her creative potential and thus are the very source of our creative power. Even if a woman has had a hysterectomy, the power of her womb will continue to carry within her the energetic potential of its creativity. Inspired by the ancient mythic cosmology of the Goddess, wherein She draws Herself out of Herself in the original act of creation, many women embrace the metaphor of spiritually giving birth to themselves and each other. Within Dianic Wiccan rites, the focus is on each woman's own experience, opinions, ideas, and feelings, and not those of her spouse, lover, family, or friends. Within Dianic circles, women have the opportunity to discover their true selves, apart from the constraints of males and patriarchal culture.

By prioritizing female-only space, whether in ritual or daily life, many women are able to find their center and explore their own truths. Baby girls are born through and into the unfolding mysteries of womanhood. The circle of womanhood is the very circle of life itself, for it is upon our sacred womb blood, the generative gift that is passed from mother to daughter, that human life depends. While all human beings celebrate this mystery, standing humbled by the enormity of it, only women can fully embody the experience.

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