

April 1, 2017 - Merry Springtime Greetings!

I realize that I am making my announcements very out-of-order (I announced the new website last month) but I want to let everyone know Talisman's name will be changing from "Talisman: A Unique New-Age Shop" to "Talisman and Cauldron ... A Mystical Shoppe" effective next month. Please bear with us, our logo is still in development. And yes, MORE news pending!

The name change was partly due to legal requirements (businesses switching from a sole proprietorship to an LLC must alter the original name) and as long as a change was mandated, I really wanted it to reflect a new direction for the shop. It all started last year when my sister-in-law, Kim, was attending a metaphysical college in Tempe AZ. After a wonderful tour of the campus she inquired about "cauldron magick" and the reply was "oh you mean Witchcraft? No, we don't offer that here". Hmmm, no cauldron magick at the metaphysical college, go figure. Now, the day BEFORE I had approached China about a new name, and asked that she choose something with great numerological energy (China is a numerology pro) but also "Old English-y" the kind of name that would look good on an old-fashioned wood sign hanging off a very old stone building. Now I never shared either conversation between the three of us, so imagine my surprise (not really I have grown to expect these things) when China came in the next day with the PERFECT name (resonates to an 11) Talisman and Cauldron!

And yes, the focus is changing from new-age to mystical. Talisman will always celebrate the concept of Universal Spirituality, because I truly believe all paths lead to the One, and so we will never be a Saemesque witch shop - nor do we plan to try. And please know that this was not an easy decision for me. Having been raised in Southern California, I don't know anyone in Connecticut who embraced New Ageism as much as me. The inclusivity, channeling of new energetic healing modalities, careful study and respectful integration of

religious paths to build a unique spiritual footprint all one's own - I love all of that. But you know what I DON'T love? Cultural and spiritual misappropriation - it's one thing to pluck a thread, it's another to steal the whole damn cloth and re-name it as suits you with no regard to history and appropriateness. While having faith that your needs will always be met makes perfect sense to me; the thought that abundance means "whatever I want I am entitled to" which segueways far too often into "my gifts are worth any price tag I care to put on them because the Universe wants me to have abundance". Add to that the fact that I had two less than stellar experiences over the past year with a couple of greedy self-proclaimed "Lightworkers" has left a rather bitter taste in this Witch's mouth.

So ... let's talk about "The Universe" and what it wants for us, shall we?

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: The Universe and Karma have EVERYTHING to do with universal balance - and nothing to do with emotion. The way I hear Karma explained by many in the new-age context, you would think it was a little old lady standing in a corner rubbing her hands together gleefully as she lays her careful plans to "get" people for their wrongdoings. How delightfully vindicating! How absolutely INCORRECT! The balance I am referencing is divine and eternal - the effects of endless lifetimes spent collecting karma and offsetting dharma.

I'll share another frustration to illustrate. At least three times a week (usually more) an individual will come to the shop and request a "spell" or candle to help find a job, increase business, bring in or fix a relationship, etc. I always ask the question "What is your spiritual base? To whom do you direct your prayers or draw energy from?" and I am not asking that question because it matters to ME but depending on what you need or want, it may matter very much in terms of how you direct energy or how you ask for intervention. For example, if a man looking to increase his business was raised Roman

Catholic and is in fact a practicing Catholic, I would recommend he petition St. Joseph, as he is the patron saint of fathers/working men AND this is the energy (Catholic) the man is familiar with. You align your needs with the energies that not only YOU bring to the table of whatever faith path you practice, but of the practitioners past, present and future as well. This is why prayers and Holy words are so powerful - they hold all this energy, millions and millions of voices filled with hope and faith. So powerful.

I hope this makes sense?

So you can imagine my confusion when the answer is "Oh, I don't really have a spiritual path really, I just put it out to the Universe to answer me however it sees fit". Oh really? This is like me asking "So you are going fishing? Where do you go?" and you answer "Oh, you know, where ever the ocean wants me to ...".

Bill Nye aka television's "Bill Nye the Science Guy" explains it in a comical but honest manner (Warning: adult language): https://youtu.be/6eqCaiwMr_M

Spiritual misappropriation is a real thing, and it really pisses practitioners off in a big way. Their anger is justified. Take, for example, the Lakota tradition of Sweat Lodge. This is a very powerful and culturally sacred practice. You wouldn't see a group of Native people pretending to be able to read Hebrew or making up fake Hebrew sounding songs in a building they called a synagogue. It's absurd. Also, Native tradition dictates a monetary fee is never charged for a spiritual gift, yet new-age gurus sometimes charge hundreds of dollars for their version of "Sweat Ceremony".

I have reverence and love for Jesus, Mary, Angels ... but I am not a Christian and this is not my spiritual path. I worship a Hindu Goddess and I would not attempt to alter her energy or strength by associating her with, say, aspects of Aphrodite or Mary or Kwan Yin. And my saying that does not in any way

diminish the energies of Aphrodite, Mary or Kwan Yin! And because I am not Hindu, yet was called to Kali-Ma in a definite and undeniable way, before I even set up her shrine at the shop I contacted a priest in India and the Ashram in New York where her image came from, to ensure every aspect was spiritually correct. I did not attempt to "Americanize" her, instead I studied and asked questions to ensure my acts of worship were appropriate to Kali's Hindu tradition. But in the 1970's Kali was absconded as an American feminist icon, with claims that she "had no use for men, and stepped all over them ... " much to the horror of Her priests and followers as that is an absolute untruth.

The Dala Lama has stated that many people should not leave their childhood religion and become Buddhist. Why? Because when you are born into a faith that is practiced by your parents you grow up in it - it becomes part of who you are, how you live, your spiritual core. It is not easy to "study" your way in to the Thai culture! However, he adds that one need NOT be Buddhist to live a Zen lifestyle or practice meditation.

So what I am getting at is I don't think it is at all wrong to study and then respectfully practice aspects of a spiritual path you understand to your fullest capability. Embrace it utterly if you are called to it, or go on to explore another path. Nor do I think it is wrong to be in a sort of "spiritual void" where one path ends and before the next begins. This can all be part of our spiritual evolution. BUT this idea of "if I believe it, it must be true" has led to the creation (and exposing of) the many false gurus that we have seen during this transit of Saturn through Sagittarius which began December 14, 2015 and ends December 20, 2017. As noted on the Cafe Astrology website, "*Saturn in Sagittarius is looking for practical applications of our personal philosophies. We may be firming up our belief systems, but should avoid rigid thinking. There can be a sense that our freedom is curtailed or limited in some manner until we realize that freedom is not about escaping responsibility – it's what we*

can enjoy after tending to our responsibilities. Saturn in Sagittarius will test our moral sense. If we've become too moralistic, we may be challenged to walk the talk and practice what we preach."

Hard to walk your walk and talk your talk unless you have a firm sense of your own personal philosophies, eh? Just don't ask "the Universe" to tell you what those are! You have to dig deep and if you don't have a spiritual foundation to work with - well, that's where you begin. Roots are found at the foundation ... so, what are your roots, your ancestry? What is your core belief? Perhaps a good beginning might be to ask, instead of where to find God/Divinity -- is where would God/Divinity find YOU? As above, so below.

Blessings all around,

Laura