

# WITCHES AS WARRIORS

**Harm no one, do what thou will  
Shall be the whole of the law**

attributed to anarchists and witches

by Jeniva

The idea that power and responsibility reside in the individual is a central concept to both feminist spirituality and anarchism. Some of us have combined feminist spiritual and anarchist ideas to strengthen our analysis of individual power and responsibility and to increase our energy for political work.

We've found that our spiritual and political beliefs start from the same place. In view of this, to deny the spiritual while doing political work, or to cultivate the spiritual at expense of another's political and economic well-being seems a contradiction.

It is always difficult to intellectualize something which is most meaningful on a gut level. Spiritual truths are known with the intuition.

To see how our work is rooted in the spiritual, we need to discuss the beliefs that we, as political activists, hold intuitively. These are the convictions which motivate our work, which show us power imbalances between individuals, within society, and within the ecosystem.

At the root of radical feminism, antiracism, environmentalism, and anti-authoritarianism is a wholistic view of the world as made up of elements which are interdependent, equally valuable, and ultimately harmonious in a state of freedom.

This is in opposition to the right-wing spiritual perspective which sees both nature and human emotion or passion as being essentially chaotic, evil, and in need of control by a structure imposed by authoritarian gods through men, their agents.

There is a spiritual element to our activities as well as our beliefs. As a political community we have myths, rites, and symbols which remind us of who we are, where we are going, and the values we share.

For example, we often gather together to study a common heritage of ideas and to hear stories about past struggles, defeats and victories. At other gatherings we demonstrate, sing, chanting, and marching together. This lets us sense our collective strength, build networks of solidarity, and raise our energy.

When we see an anarchy or women's symbol or a fist painted on a wall anywhere in the world, we draw strength from a sense of community.

Once we acknowledge this dimension of politics, we can consciously use spirituality to become stronger personally and to direct our efforts so that we become more effective politically.

Spiritual work has both tangible and

the medieval executioners tortured and murdered twelve million women. The witch hunters still torture and murder women: through rape, the enforcement of heterosexuality and tyranny over lesbians, sexual surgery, psychiatry, imprisonment in the family, and wife-beating. They destroy the witch in all women: those parts that refuse to submit to their emotional and legal regimes. The witch hunters cripple and kill because they are terrified of women. They fear all that is different from themselves, all that they are not, all the kinds of power they do not have.

intangible effects on political struggle. As we visualize living autonomously and responsibly in the world, we practise this new way of being. This helps to keep us based in reality by reminding us of what we're struggling for, not just what we're struggling against. Our

spiritual/political commitment demands that we move from envisioned goals to possible strategies and tactics to be enacted here and now.

The process of envisioning a better world gives us a deeper understanding of our potential and so increases the possibility of realizing that potential.

Anarchist mistrust of overt spirituality sometimes seems an attempt to protect our credibility as a movement. The accusation anarchists most often get is that we're 'unrealistic' or 'too idealistic.' And it's true that our theory requires a strong belief that people can be nonoppressive. This idealism is sometimes hard to admit. So we go to great lengths to show how rational and realistic we are.

In the name of being realistic we fall back on the Western scientific establishment to provide criteria for truth and knowledge. At the same time, we claim to recognize this scientific establishment as a tool the elite uses to carve up our Mother Earth and divide her people. In the name of being rational we suppress hope and become obsessively cynical. This cynicism is not only unwarranted but frequently leads to political arrogance.

Spiritual practitioners are also responsible for separating spirituality from politics. Having the time and opportunity to raise power and not acting to re-empower others is irresponsible.

Segments of the women's spiritual movement ignore crucial struggles against oppression. While providing us with inspiration and important ideas, they stop short of the political activism their spiritual philosophy implies.

For instance, white women must look at the racism inherent in taking from native and black spirituality only what feels comfortable while ignoring the rage of people whose survival is based in linking spiritual and political action.

Taking responsibility for our privilege means even more than providing tangible support for oppressed people's struggles. It means that our spirituality is never taken out of its political context. As spiritual/political activists we must talk about war, strategies, and direct action.

We need to find a way of living as spiritual warriors. We hope this article has contributed to this process. We welcome responses.

*So I fight with one hand and  
love with the other. In some of  
my dreams, tho, I love with both  
hands and the fighting  
is over. - M.B.*

Graphic by Cheryl Hanson