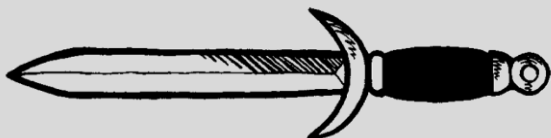


Ritual Blades

The Black Handled Knife

Athame

(ATH-a-may or a-THAY-mee)



The White Handled Knife

Boline

(BOL-eeen)



How to Support PAN Inc.

Why not consider becoming a member of PAN?

An annual membership, concession membership, or family membership, brings many benefits, including discounts at participating Pagan Friendly Businesses, our quarterly member magazine 'The Small Tapestry', support and advertising for Pagan events and gatherings across Australia, and reports on any legal and media work happening within the Pagan community.

Your membership dollar also helps PAN sponsor local groups & events and further its educational aims.

For more information, please contact PAN Inc.



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PAN Inc.

Paganism and Sacred Knives

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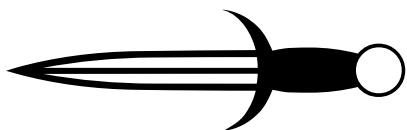
An educational pamphlet provided by

Pagan Awareness Network Inc
Australia



In their rituals and celebrations, many modern Pagans call upon and refer to four elements: fire, air, earth and water. These four elements are invoked by the use of special prayers, the use of coloured banners or cloths; decorations symbolising those elements; and by the use of tools or objects to signify those elements.

The Athame



The Athame, or black handled knife, is one of these items. It corresponds with either the element of fire or the element of air and as such symbolises energy, intent, the intellect and the will. For this reason, it is considered by many Pagans to be the most important, and most personal, of their tools.

It must be understood that due to the diversity of belief not all Pagans use an Athame, or sacred knife, at all, nor refer to four elements. Acquiring a sacred knife is not a requirement to become a Pagan. Regardless, most Pagans understand the usage of ritual or sacred knives.

For those Pagans who use an Athame, it is a piece of equipment of supreme significance and importance, representing the will or energy of its owner.

It is kept carefully, and people are encouraged not to handle the Athame of another person.

Most Pagans would find little need to carry their Athame away from their residence or ritual site but, if the two places are separate, the Athame may be transported between them, carefully packed.

The blade has no commonplace use and is not used to cut objects, being purely a symbolic and ritual item. The Athame typically does not bear an edge and is usually forged in such a way that it will not take an edge. As the

Athame does not need to be sharp, it can be made of almost any material, including metals, wood, bone, semi-precious stones and ceramic or glass.

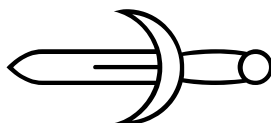
The Athame is used to:

- Direct energy
- Symbolise its owner
- Symbolise intent or will
- Delineate sacred space (cast the circle)
- Bless food and drink

It is never used to:

- Hurt or threaten another person
- Harm or butcher animals
- Cut any object at all

The Boline



Some Pagans use a second ritual knife called the Boline, or white handled knife. This knife is used to cut items for ritual or ceremonial use, like herbs or candles, and so it bears an edge. The Boline is thus made of hard metals, and may or may not have a curved, sickle like blade.

If for some reason it must be transported, great care is taken to prevent it damaging any other items.

The Boline is used to:

- Prepare items used in ceremony
- Cut ribbons or threads
- Cut herbs

It is never used to:

- Hurt or threaten another person
- Harm or butcher animals
- Cut everyday items

What does Australian Law say about Transporting Blades?

Knife laws are different in every State and Territory, ranging from being allowed with a permit along with strict storage requirements to being total and completely illegal even for religious purposes.

Please contact the association via email to the committee at info@paganawareness.net.au with specific questions and we will endeavour to look at the latest legislation for you in your state.

