

## Magic 2

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**Question 1: Describe the difference between a "magical" ritual and a "religious" ritual, including if there is a difference and why there is or is not. (min. 300 words)**

Rev. Isaac Bonewits, in his book *Rites of Worship*, discusses what magic and religion are. According to him, magic is the art or science of a) using changes in consciousness to allow one to access one's own psychic talents, or b) techniques to effect the emotions of the practitioner in order to focus the energies of the body, and modifying those energies broadcast by the body, in order to effect change in animate or inanimate objects (including human ones) or c) techniques to get one's psychic talents to do what one wants, when one wants it, as often of possible.<sup>1</sup>

A magical ritual would be one where techniques would be employed by the practitioner to effect changes in the environment through psychic means. This could be either solely through the efforts of the magician's own psychic powers and through sympathetic magic techniques (harnessing the natural connections of the cosmos)<sup>2</sup>, or this could be accomplished through the magician's psychic powers bringing about the intervention of a God or other spirit.

Religion is different, though, depending on the type of religion one follows. Many monotheists insist that there is no magic in their religions.<sup>3</sup> Polytheists, on the other hand, usually insist on practicing magic of some kind. Many define their religion as the combination of a magical system with philosophical and ethical systems that are all aimed towards supernatural beings of some kind.<sup>4</sup>

In a sacrificial religion such as ADF, I believe that anyone, through regular sacrifice and ritual, can create and maintain relationships with the world of Spirit even if the person has little or no psychic ability. The laws of reciprocity are strong, and the Gods are part of the system just as much as we are. But sacrifice, by its very nature, is a magical act, I believe, and the development of magical/psychic skill can only enhance these relationships and make them more effective.

What all this means is that a magical ritual is involved with a magical technique system, and may or may not involve interaction with the world of Spirit and religion, while a religious ritual, at least for polytheists, requires the use of magic.

**Question 2: Describe magic as it exists in one non-Indo-European culture, describe how it has influenced or could influence the magical system of an Indo-European culture, and describe what lessons you could take from the non-IE culture into your own personal practice. (min. 600 words)**

In ancient Mesopotamia, from Babylonia to Assyria, there was long a tradition of magical workings. There was probably a long scholarly transmission of these texts over the centuries there that continued all the way up to the time of the Seleucids, and maybe later. Many texts were found in the ruins of the library of Assurbanipal in Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians, and they point to many magical practices, particularly spell binding. One such spell binding practice included the idea

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<sup>1</sup> Bonewits, Isaac, *Rites of Worship: A Neopagan Approach* (Earth Religions Press, 2003), 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Luck, Georg, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Bonewits, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 25.

of putting magical objects in walls.<sup>5</sup> Much later, during Roman times, Germanicus (father of the future Emperor Caligula) died in Antiochus, presumably due to a curse using binding magic. A search of the victim's house revealed that magical paraphernalia was found in the walls.<sup>6</sup> Mesopotamian exorcism rituals also commonly involved the melting down or burning of figurines made of wax or other materials, and this practice later shows up in an Ephesian (Ionic Greece) oracle that counseled that wax figurines that were responsible for a plague should be melted down.<sup>7</sup> While the use of figurines to represent the victim in magical attacks was fairly common among many cultures, the Assyrian texts also say that in binding rituals using figurines, the victim's name should be inscribed on the thigh or that they should be deposited in graves. This is a very uncommon practice, but it does show up later in Greece. Other magical uses of binding show up first in the Assyrian texts only to appear later in Greece and Rome, such as assistance in affairs of the heart (to either gain the affections of a loved one or to get them back after losing them) and commercial activities. Another type of Assyrian binding spell, used to calm the anger of superiors, shows up much later in the magical papyri of Roman Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

The Assyrian idea mentioned above about carving the victim's name into the thigh of the wax doll and the deposition of the dolls in graves may have been the precursor to the common binding spells used in Greece and Rome called *defixiones*. These show up in there as the curse tablets (*tabellae defixionum*). Here the spells are inscribed on various materials, such as lead, and deposited somewhere, such as in a well or at a site of execution.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly enough, these harmful spells are only known in Mesopotamia through *accusations* of magic made in the tablets, rather than through any archeological evidence. In Greece, however, there is ample physical evidence of the practice. It's almost as though no one in Assyria dared to do it, while in Greece it was apparently commonly practiced.

For me, the practice of spell-binding feels to be a morally neutral practice at best and an unethical, even evil practice at worst. In the ancient world, spell binding seemed to be used to affect the will of others, or to cause harm. Love spells are designed to get someone to love the magician, and this would actually seem to be fairly harmless. This could happen naturally in the course of events anyway, which would be fine. But to actively attempt to influence someone's will through psychic means strikes me as problematic.

The inscribing of lead tablets to make curse tablets out of them is simply wrong, in my mind. Many of these spells were used to harm others, to cripple economic competitors, for instance, or to harm one's adversaries in a court trial.<sup>10</sup>

Some *defixiones*, however, were more overtly defensive in nature, and may have functioned like a talisman. These would be aimed at slanderers and thieves, to punish any who would commit these crimes, which also could have a deterrent effect.<sup>11</sup> These might also be inscribed on something, such as lead, copper, wood or stone, but the intent would be different. Here, the *defixiones* (talismans) are designed for protection, and as such, would be more acceptable to me.

**Question 3: (Crossover Requirement) Keep a journal for five months detailing the trance work you have done. Write an essay based off those journals that examines your practice over the time you journaled. The essay should describe how you use trance for your magic, whether trance has helped your magic, and particularly how trance and magic have played off each other in your personal work. Entries occurring less than weekly will not**

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<sup>5</sup> Graf, Fritz, translated by Franklin Philip, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), 170.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>9</sup> Luck, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 120-121.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 121.

**count toward completion of this requirement. Your journal must include work from the exercises found in the support material for this course. [This requirement's journal matches up with requirement 10 in Trance 1: See required and recommended reading for that course for further information] (min. 1000 words)**

My journal covers weekly entries (at least) from October 31, 2006 through April 3, 2007.

Without trance, I'm not sure I could do any magic at all. Visualizations, which seem so crucial for magic, are so much clearer and brighter when in trance, I find. This makes the visualizations more like physical reality. And the more like reality they are, the more likely they will be to manifest in this world.

Starting with my Dedicant work in 2002, I learned how to meditate and, when in the 'silence', how to walk in nature without losing the trance. This gave me a valuable skill in ritual, where I would go into a light trance in order to have clear visualizations of the magical acts I was performing (like opening the Gates, etc.). This skill I also brought to my work for this course.

So when I began this journal, I already had some experience with trance, through my ritual work as well as through my experiments with ecstatic trance, done outside of an ADF setting. But the process of trying new trance methods on a weekly basis to support my magic workings showed me what worked, and what didn't. They also showed me new ways of doing magic that had never occurred to me before.

One of the first magical exercises I tried was the Druid Fortress.<sup>12</sup> In preparation for this exercise I went into trance in the same way I had for most of my ritual work, through the breath. I sat quietly and counted my breaths up to nine full breaths, and then just let myself sink into trance while continuing the breathing. Once I had gotten fairly deep, I started the work. This exercise is all about bringing the powers of the heavens and the underworld into the three cauldrons of loins, heart and mind (as in the Two Powers meditation), but then using those powers for magical means. And it's all about visualization. Once the cauldrons were filled with the powers, I expanded the 'bubbles' or spheres of power in each of them until they merged, forming a large bubble completely surrounding me. I held this for a moment, and then let the powers flow into my hands, where I formed them into a ball of energy, concentrating the powers. I breathed three times, letting each breath bring more energy into the ball, and then I held my hands out, palms towards the pool I could see through the window. While maintaining my Druid Fortress, I then breathed a fourth time and projected the ball of power out over the pool, where it hovered for a while. I waved my hands, releasing the ball of power, which then fell harmlessly into the pool. I got this idea from Ian's book as well.<sup>13</sup> As it turns out, this particular technique would come in very handy for a couple of healing workings I'd end up doing over the course of this journal. But this technique also required a very strong visualization, and this worked well for me because of the trance I had put myself into through the breath.

I also gave Chaos Magic a try. In this form of magic, one of the key ingredients needed is *gnosis*, or the ability to enter into an altered state of consciousness. These states can be described as being inhibitory (passive ones, such as meditation, contemplation, and sensory deprivation) or excitatory (such as chanting, drumming, dance, and emotional and sexual arousal).<sup>14</sup> This naturally led me to think about how I would be finding these states for my magical experiments.

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<sup>12</sup> Corrigan, Ian, *Celtic Sorcery: A Druid's Grimoire* <<http://www.cafepress.com/tredara.42501284>>, 2005, pp. 96-97.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> Hine, Phil, *Oven-Ready Chaos, version 1.3*, <<http://www.chaosmatrix.org/library/chaos/texts/orchaos.html>>, p. 16.

Over the next few months, I tried almost everything to achieve gnosis while working chaos magic. I tried sonic driving, chanting, dance, ascetic practices, auditory confusion, music, and even masturbation, all having varying degrees of success (or lack of success).

In the making of sigils for chaos magic, there is a need to 'launch' or 'fire' the spell. This is the "projection of the sigil into the void or multiverse at the 'peak' of Gnosis/Vacuity."<sup>15</sup> This required me to do more than simply go into a trance. And a sigil can be a drawing, or a chant, made out of the letters of the intent when written down, leaving out any redundant letters. So how would one 'fire' such a thing? This is where I had to get inventive.

I decided that I would need to build up the energy to a peak while in a trance state, and I tried various methods to do so. I tried listening to my drumming CD. I tried dancing. I tried masturbation, 'firing', as it were, upon orgasm. I tried chanting, letting my chant go faster and faster until I could go no more, at which point I would fire the sigil. This seemed to work fairly well. But then I hit on the idea of combining a few of these elements into one working. And this seemed to be the best method of all.

Once the sigil had been decided upon, and the chant written (I switched from drawings to chants fairly early on – I found I could hold on to chants better), I then started my drumming CD. This has the drum being played quite fast. Then I would begin chanting my sigil, and also start spinning in place, much like the Whirling Dervishes do. But instead of spinning in a leisurely fashion, I would spin at a fast pace, keeping my eyes looking straight out to minimize dizziness. The combination of the drumming, chanting (which uses a sustained breath – another route to trance) and spinning dance really sent me deep into trance, and I could also feel the energy build higher and higher, until the time felt right to release. I would then collapse into a heap on the floor and 'see' the spell rise up and out of my body, off into the cosmos. After recovering from the launch of the sigil, I would then do my best to forget what I had just done and 'change the subject'.

The introduction of trance into my magic has made it all more of a 'process' rather than just an activity.

**Question 4: Discuss the role of the Three Kindreds in magic, particularly in your personal practice but also in ADF's cosmology. (min 600 words)**

In normal ADF practice, the Three Kindreds (our Ancestors, the Spirits of the Land, and our Gods and Goddesses) are crucial in our rites, both magically and as objects of worship and adoration. In ADF cosmology, the concept of *\*ghosti*, or the obligations of the reciprocal guest-host relationship, is central in what we do. *\*Ghosti* could be thought of as "I give so that You may give." In our rites, we give (make sacrifice) to the Kindreds and then, since a gift calls for a gift, we then have the right to ask for blessings in return. The Kindreds, and especially the Gods, are more powerful than we are. And in most Patron-client relationships in the ancient Indo-European world, the patron (the person in the relationship with the most power) would be obligated to give more to the client (the person with the less power), since the patron had more to give.<sup>16</sup> It's all about relationships, just as our mundane lives are all about relationships as well.

Once we have made our sacrifices, we ask for the Kindreds to give us their blessings and wisdom, to give to us as we have given to Them. The greatest magic in the rite is when we elevate the Waters of Life and ask the Kindreds to fill them with their blessings. In a sense we are mediating the blessings of the Kindreds<sup>17</sup>, filling our cup with those blessings, with Their aid.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, Kirk, Workshop: The Nature of Sacrifice, <<http://archives.adf.org/festivals/desert-magic/2007/Kirk%20Thomas%20-%20Nature%20of%20Sacrifice.mp3>>

<sup>17</sup> Corrigan, Ian, Magical Skills in Druidic Ritual, <<http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/magskills.html>>

We also call on the Kindreds for Their help in doing all sorts of other magical acts in ritual, from granting us inspiration to opening and closing the Gates to the Otherworlds.

In my personal practice I, of course, do all these things in my home rites, but I also do other things as well. I can, and do, work magic without the specific aid of any of the Kindreds, particularly when I work sigil magic. But I have found that asking those Kindreds with whom I have a relationship for their help in a working is far more effective.

At ADF festivals I am probably becoming known as that crazy person who's always doing weather magic by propitiating the God Taranis, Lord of Thunder. This comes from my Grove's practice of offering to Him at the Summer Solstice, the usual time for the beginning of the monsoon season in Tucson. There we offer to the God to bring on a wet monsoon season, with many storms bringing much needed rain to fill our washes and soak deeply into the ground. The bulk of Tucson's precipitation comes during the time of the monsoon.

Recently, at Starwood Festival, I got quite a lesson about magic and relationships with the Kindreds. At festivals, I am often seen offering whole bottles of whiskey to Taranis through the Fire, asking the God to keep the rain away and send it instead to Tucson. I have seen the effectiveness of weather magic done by others, and by myself, and I have been deepening my relationship with Taranis over the years with many a bottle of whiskey. But recently I had begun wondering if making sacrifice with something I did not value was a good idea. I do not like whiskey at all, and I thought that giving something that has little value to me might demean the gift. So I gave Him an entire bottle of good champagne, which I adore. The next day was to be my workshop on sacrifice down in the Nemeton, and ten minutes before the class was due to start, a huge thunderstorm blew in, bringing rain and lightning and, of course much thunder. It poured all during the workshop (two people showed up for it), with lightning striking directly overhead. When the workshop was over, the storm disappeared. I can take a hint. Taranis likes whiskey, not champagne. I won't make that mistake again.

Magically, when doing healings, I have also called upon ancestors I call the Three *Matrae* (Three Mothers) who consist of my own mother and two female ancestors of the person being healed. After sacrificing to them, I ask them to aid me in channeling the powers of the earth into the person being healed. For more information, see question #8 below. I have yet to call on Nature Spirits in my magical work, but I have been deepening my relationships with them in any case, and when the appropriate type of working comes along, I shall certainly ask for their help.

***Question #5: Discuss three different instances of magic done in every ADF ritual, how the magic is accomplished, and what makes that particular work magic. (min. 300 words each instance)***

The three instances of magic in ADF rites that I will be discussing are the re-creation of the Cosmos, the opening and closing of the Gates, and receiving the Blessings.

### **Re-creation of the Cosmos**

In ADF, most of us do not have access to permanent spaces for our rites, and the areas in which we work have usually been used for other purposes. In these cases, it is necessary to go through the magical process of re-creating the cosmos, so that we can establish the place where all the Worlds touch, which we call the Sacred Center. While it has been argued that this process may not be necessary for spaces which have been permanently set aside for ritual use, I suspect that it may always be necessary whenever there are folks attending the rite who are either not familiar with our rites, or who are not well practiced in them. The three Worlds of the Heavens (Upper World), the Midworld (where we live) and the Underworld (or Lower World) where the Ancestors reside can be thought of as a vertical axis while the Three Realms of the Midworld (the Land, Sea and Sky) may be

thought of as the horizontal axis. The place where these two axes touch is the Sacred Center.<sup>18</sup> Another way of looking at this could be to think of the Three Worlds as three circles which all overlap at one place, with that place being the Sacred Center. Be that as it may, it might be argued that this cosmological structure *always exists*, and that when we say we are re-creating the cosmos, we are actually performing the magic necessary to enable ourselves to remove the mundane veil from over our faces, to re-experience, or *see-feel-hear*, as it were, this structure once again. If this is indeed the case, this part of the magic of our rites may need to continue being worked as long as there are people present who cannot sense this structure even when we are in a consecrated space reserved for our rites. We perform this magic through the use of the Two Powers meditation, connecting the participants to the powers of Earth and Sky, and through the connection of our three Hallows of Well, Fire and Tree with their corresponding Worlds (Underworld, Heavens and Midworld, respectively).<sup>19</sup>

## **Opening and Closing the Gates**

Once the Sacred Center has been re-established in our ritual space, it is time to perform the second great magical act of the rite. Ancient lore speaks of the veils that exist between the Worlds, hiding them from our sight. The Gods are not omni-present in our world, constantly listening to our words, as They must have important business of Their own to attend to. Even those Powers that we, as individuals, have close relationships with are hardly at our beck and call. We must somehow get Their attention if we are to have close interactions with Them.

In ADF, we see our three Hallows of Well, Fire and Tree as portals, or gates that can be opened between this world and the others. The act of opening these gates must sound like a thunderclap in the other Worlds, announcing our desire to commune with the Powers. Most of the Spirits would probably ignore us, but some, those that we have created relationships with, might just pay attention. Once the Gates are opened, it may be far easier to use our magical powers of invocation to draw closer to the Spirits we wish to align to.

But the act of opening the Gates is a magical operation performed with the aid of a God or Spirit we call a Gatekeeper. Often times this deity is a psychopomp, one that has the ability to pass between the Worlds carrying the souls of the dead. He is often a God associated with travel, commerce, roads and magic.<sup>20</sup>

A strong relationship is needed with the Gatekeeper, made strong through sacrifice, for this magic to work. In some Groves, the Gatekeeper is seen as a guardian of the ways between, while in others He is asked to open the Gates for us. For myself, I prefer to ask the Gatekeeper to "join Your magic with mine" so that we can open and close the Gates together. During this magical act, I can usually see Him quite clearly, standing behind me, with me mimicking His movements, our magic flowing seamlessly together to make a flawless whole, so that as I see the whirlwind shapes of energy flow from the three Hallows, they merge with a great 'breaking' of the cosmos (as I 'see' in my perception), opening up the ways below and above, so that I am standing in the center of all Worlds.

## **Sacrifice and Receiving the Blessings** (aka the Return Flow)

While these are separate acts, they are intertwined and constitute the greatest magic of an ADF rite. These acts could be called a *du et des* relationship (I give that You may give). In ancient Indo-European societies, these exchange relationships were extremely important, and since it was

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas, Kirk, [A Cosmological Pre-Ritual Briefing](http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/prerite-briefing-cosmos.html), <<http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/prerite-briefing-cosmos.html>>

<sup>19</sup> Corrigan, Ian, [Magical Skills in Druidic Ritual](http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/magskills.html), <<http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/magskills.html>>

<sup>20</sup> Corrigan, Ian, [The Core Cult in Druidic Rites](http://www.adf.org/articles/cosmology/core-cult.html), <<http://www.adf.org/articles/cosmology/core-cult.html>>

customary for the 'king' to give more than the 'commoner' in these relationships, we can expect to receive magnificent blessings from the Kindreds in return for our more humble sacrifices.<sup>21</sup>

First we make sacrifice to all the Kindreds, and to any special deities of the occasion that we may wish to honor. These are made after the Gates have been opened, and invocations have been made, asking the Powers to become closer to us. This deepens our \*ghosti relationships with Them, and shows our willingness to continue working to this end. And the act of sacrifice is also a magical act, as the offerings we give to the Kindreds transmute and transform into something that They can partake of.

Once the sacrifices are done, and the Omen is taken to determine the nature of the blessings or wisdom being granted us by the Kindreds (in itself a magical act), we proceed on to what used to be called the Return Flow in ADF.

Here is where the magic really flows. First, we call on the Kindreds, asking Them to grant us these blessings in return for our sacrifices. The priest or ritual leader then elevates the cup or horn filled with a liquid (water or alcoholic drinks are common), and calls on the Kindreds to fill the cup with the blessing. This is the great magical act, when all present may experience the filling of the cup, though their inner sight, as the blessing flows down into the cup from the assembled Powers. When I perform this act, I see the blessings of the Powers as a mist in the air around the elevated cup, and then this mist descends into the cup, filling it. This is the nature of the drink we then take. And when we drink of this cup, the blessings of the Kindreds are transferred into us.

**Question #6: Discuss the use of song and poetry in magic within your hearth culture, and explain how you have used music and poetry in your own work. (min. 300 words)**

In my personal hearth culture, that of Wales, there is an incantation attributed to the great poet Taliesin in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD that echoes a similar one in Ireland attributed to Amairgen. While we can not be sure that Taliesin's incantation is by him or of that period, it shows how the poet subsumes everything into his own being – it might even be a poem of magical shape shifting:

*I have been a blue salmon  
I have been a wild dog,  
I have been a cautious stag,  
I have been a deer on the mountain  
and a stump of a tree on a shovel  
I have been an axe in the hand  
A pin in a pair of tongs  
A stallion in stud  
A bull in anger  
A grain in the growing  
I have been dead, I have been alive  
I am a composer of songs  
for I am Taliesin.*<sup>22</sup>

In the Fourth Branch of *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (popularly called just *The Mabinogi*), there is a passage where Gwydion, after a long search, has finally found his nephew Lleu Llaw Gyffes, who had transformed into an eagle after having been mortally wounded by his wife's lover, Gronw Pebr. The eagle is high in an oak tree on a tall hill, and Gwydion must get him down so that he can transform him back into human form and heal him. To get the eagle to come down, Gwydion sang a three-part spell in the form of three *englynion* (a Welsh poetic form):

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<sup>21</sup> Serith, Ceisiwr, [Sacrifice, the Indo-Europeans, and ADF](http://www.adf.org/articles/cosmology/sacrifice-ie-adf.html),  
<<http://www.adf.org/articles/cosmology/sacrifice-ie-adf.html>>

<sup>22</sup> Ellis, Peter Berresford, *The Druids*, (London, Constable and Co., Ltd., 1996), p. 71.

*There's an oak that grows between two lakes,  
Gloomy is the air and the glen;  
If I speak no lie,  
This comes from Lleu's flowers.*

*There's an oak that grows on a high plain;  
Rain wets it not, nor does it melt;  
It nourished a score of torments.  
In its top is Lleu Llaw Gyffes.*

*There's an oak that grows along a slope;  
Stately prince in his temple.  
If I speak no lie,  
Lleu will come to my lap.<sup>23</sup>*

At the conclusion of each *englyn*, the eagle Lleu comes lower and lower, until he ends up in Gwydion's lap.

In my personal magic, I use chant made from poetry all the time. In the magic of an ADF ritual, there are short poems I have written that I use for invocations and for consecrating the Three Hallows. Here is the one for the Well:

*Sacred Waters 'neath our feet,  
Unformed Powers of the deep,  
Fountain upwards now to fill us!  
Sacred Well, flow within us!*

In my sigil magic (Chaos Magic), after some experimentation, I began making chants, instead of drawings, out of the letters from my intent. These started out as nonsense chants, such as "Teng Wil Jo" repeated over and over again, taken from the letters of the intent, "I will Jenni to get well," where I only used each letter once, though scrambled. Later, I made rhyming chants for the sigil working that clearly expressed the intent in English. None of these later magic workings were successful, by the way.

I have yet to use music or song in my workings, unless chanting counts as song, though I can see how they might be effective. More experimentation is needed, I guess.

**Question # 7: Detail your understanding of why self-understanding and introspection are critical for the magus at any stage and how you intend to pursue a course of self-understanding. (min. 500 words)**

Self-understanding and introspection are the basis of rational and objective decisions. Any action, like performing magic, that can affect the people around us requires a strong sense of responsibility. This can only be trusted when there is good self awareness.

Magic isn't all that difficult to do once some of the techniques are mastered, which means that magic can be performed by almost anyone. But success, especially in such esoteric pursuits as this, can, like cocaine, emphasize any personality flaws a person might have. Imagine someone insecure, who has spent their teen years outside of the 'elite' groups, probably as a loner. And then this person suddenly discovers that he can now affect the universe in magical ways. The swelling of his ego could make him insufferable, and therefore less able to cope in social situations, possibly causing extreme isolation. Or take another person, a young woman, say, suffering from mild paranoia. Magical success would make it clear to her that others would be able to perform magic as well. And

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<sup>23</sup> Ford, Patrick K., The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977), p. 107.



if others can do magic, then that would mean that magic could also be directed at her! Her paranoia could increase exponentially.

Also, the ethics of any magical operation require the magus to know his own true motives. It is easy to fool oneself into believing that some base need is really an elevated moral good when one has no idea of who one actually is. For example, a lonely young man meets a vulnerable young lady, down on her luck, who isn't attracted to him. He convinces himself that she is in need and only he can help her, so he performs love magic to gain her trust. Of course, he thinks that he's doing this for her own good, when in reality he's just horny. We cannot take full responsibility for our actions if we don't know what it is we are really doing.

A third need for self-understanding is the idea that if we do not truly know ourselves, we cannot accurately form our intents and choose our targets. Let's say that I am having problems at work. I perform magic to make my boss like me, or to get rid of an irritating co-worker. What I don't realize, however, is that it is my own shortcomings, my lack of ability to refrain from drama or to mind my own business that are causing the problems. Had I known myself better, I might have realized that my magic would have been better aimed at myself, and not at others.

I'm a middle-aged man now, and have spent the last few years of my life actively seeking self-understanding, a process that is continuing to the present day. As a young man I felt unconnected with society around me. Realizing that I was gay, I wrestled with the why's and wherefore's of who and what I was. I don't wish to sound patronizing here, but I sometimes wonder if young gay folks end up spending a lot of time and energy in their early years trying to figure themselves out. I know I did. To help me find clarity and self-acceptance, I went to group therapy for a year. This forced me to look even deeper into myself.

But seven years ago, when I formed a relationship with my current partner, I discovered that I had also entered into an intense mentoring relationship. Through the use of SM and meditation (the latter required for my DP anyway), I discovered all about living in the moment, and finding the silence that allows me to actually listen to the small voices within me. This silence, brought on through meditation, also allows me to recognize the drama in my life, and usually, to stand aloof from it. I have become acutely aware of my faults and weaknesses, and also, happily, of my strengths. I think I finally know who I am now.

***Question #8: Describe three workings you have done that had demonstrable, intended results. Explain what those results were, how the working was conducted, and how the result appeared to manifest. (min. 600 words per working)***

The three workings I'm going to write up here are a healing for my friend Bryan, another healing for my Grove-mate Leilani, and some weather magic I did for last year's Desert Magic Festival.

### **Bryan's Healing**

Soon after I began my journal for this course, I received a call from my old friend Bryan who had been diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. The cancer had spread too far for an operation to be successful and it had spread to other parts of his body. Bryan's doctor had told him that this kind of cancer usually did not respond well to chemo-therapy and that he had about four months to live. Bryan decided to try the chemo-therapy anyway, and go down fighting.

As we spoke on the phone, it suddenly occurred to me that this would be a good opportunity to try some magic to aid him in his fight. Bryan's not a Pagan, but as an arborist he has always felt a connection to nature. So with some trepidation I offered to do a working for him. He had never come out to visit me in Tucson and seen the property, so I suggested that he come visit so that we could do the working in the stone circle. Somewhat to my surprise, he agreed.

I had an idea of what I wanted to try based on some pages in Rev. Ian Corrigan's book, *Celtic Sorcery*, which described the projection of energy<sup>24</sup>, and which I had already practiced doing. I contacted Ian and his wife, Rev. Sue Parker, to ask their opinions of what I planned, and they gave me good advice, particularly about being careful not to accidentally strengthen the cancer with the energies.

I also wanted to take advantage of the phases of the moon for this work. Bryan would be able to visit two weekends in a row. The first weekend would be during the last days of the waning moon, and the second weekend would be during the early days of the waxing moon. From Ian's book, it was clear that the waning moon would be good for works of 'pruning', and the waxing moon for works of growth, increase and maintenance of life.<sup>25</sup>

So for the first weekend I determined to perform a shamanic soul retrieval as well as some extraction work and then to do a rite to use the Two Powers to 'burn away' the cancer. For the second weekend I decided to do another special rite to strengthen Bryan so that he could fight off the disease.

I also knew that I wanted to involve the Kindreds in this working. For the rite of burning away, I called on Brigit, as a Goddess of Healing and also on Math as a God of Magic and the Morrigan, asking her to turn away and not take Bryan. I also offered to Cernunnos, thanking Him for His help with the soul retrieval. For the second rite, I offered to Brigit as a Goddess of Fire (and by extension of the Heavens) and on her father the Dagda, as the God who owned the cauldron of blessing (and by extension, represented the waters of the earth). I intended to fill myself with the Two Powers of heaven and earth, and I thought they might be able to help me.

When the day arrived, I lay Brian down in my darkened bedroom and first did the extractions, seeing things like bugs crawling around inside of him which I removed. I then went on a trance journey to the Underworld where, with the help of my totem, I found bits of Brian's soul which I brought back to this world and then 'blew' back into him. At this point, Brian and I did a full ADF rite, making sacrifice to, and calling on, Brigit, Math, Morrigan and Cernunnos. After the sacrifices, I took the omen. I was given Willow, Heather and the Sea. These emphasized lunar aspects, links to the inner self and healing, and maternal links and spiritual passages. These omens couldn't have been any better! The maternal links mentioned under the 'future' position gave me the idea I used the next weekend.

In the working I visualized the Powers of the Heavens, mediated by Brigit, and the Underworld, mediated by Cernunnos, flowing through me. Ian and Sue had warned me to be sure to only be a conduit for the powers, and not use my own energy, to prevent exhaustion. Once the powers were flowing smoothly, I stanchied the earth power and let the fire of the sky power shoot out of my finger tips, aiming it at the cancers which I could see in my mind's eye as white splotches in his body. I used the power to blast and burn them away, even catching little metastases running around his body. I started at his neck, which was where the cancer was concentrated, and then moved down his entire body, getting everything I could see. Then I stanchied the sky power's fire, and let the waters of the underworld flow through me again, and let it shoot out of my fingers to wash away the burned out cancer cells.

The next weekend we did the full rite, with sacrifices to Brigit and the Dagda, and also to three ancestors I call the *Matrae* (the Mothers), who consisted of my mother and two female relatives of Bryan's. This time, I let both of the powers of heaven and underworld flow through me, with Brigit aiding me with the powers of the sky, and Dagda aiding me with the powers of the earth, and with the *Matrae* helping me direct the powers where they needed to go. The visual at that moment was absolutely incredible. I could see all five of them, Gods and Ancestors alike, intently focusing on these powers which I was aiming into Bryan's body, to strengthen him for the ordeal ahead. It was

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<sup>24</sup> Corrigan, p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.

then that I suddenly realized that I needed to touch him, and so I laid my hands on him. It felt like electricity flowed through my hands and into Bryan. I know now that the laying on of hands is essential to any healing.

To support this healing, I then ritually made a candle, blessed by Brigit, in which I had buried a Brigit's Cross. I sent this to him to burn daily, and when it burned down too low, I sent him another one.

A month or so later Bryan called to tell me that the cancer had disappeared in much of his body, and had shrunk way down in his throat, so that now it would be possible to have the operation to remove his esophagus and the cancer. His doctor was ecstatic, and Bryan has now had the operation and is back at work, in full remission.

### **Leilani's Healing**

Leilani is a member of my Grove who has been struggling with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) for some years now. MS is an auto-immune disease that affects the central nervous system. The body attacks itself, causing damage to the nerves, spinal column and brain.

She hates taking medications, and will go off of them for months at a time. She says that the side effects simply are not worth the little good that they do for her. I'm not a doctor and have no idea if this is good or not. All I know is that this is what she does.

Leilani also doesn't complain much. She is quite stoic and keeps her pain to herself, except when it's so severe that she can't hide it. There's nothing, really, that any of us can do, so we just give her support whenever possible.

On March 3, 2007, the day of the full moon, I was celebrant at the weekly blessing rite of the Sonoran Sunrise Grove, ADF. As is often our custom when we reached the part of the rite where workings would normally go, I asked the assembled folks if anyone needed a working of any kind. Leilani raised her hand and informed us that her MS had gotten very bad, that her doctor had told her that she had massive lesions in her brain and that he was surprised she could still walk or even breathe on her own. This information came from a CT (Computed Axial Tomography) scan performed on February 20, 2007.

I was immediately struck with the dilemma that as it was the Full Moon, I couldn't do a healing exactly in the same way that I had done earlier for Bryan. So I decided to do a strengthening only.

I made sacrifice of whiskey to both Brigit and the Dagda, asking for Them to join us and join Their magic with mine to give strength and healing to Leilani. Since I also wanted to call on the *Matrae*, as I had with Bryan, I called on my mother and Leilani's great aunt and grandmother to aid us as well.

I asked Leilani to lie down on the floor in the middle of the room, and I made up a short chant on the spot for the members of the Grove to quietly say while I did my work. I think it was something like, "Heal Leilani here this day. Give her strength to heal, we pray." While the Grove chanted, I filled myself with the powers of Heaven and Earth, until they were flowing through me easily. I saw Brigit channeling the sky power into me, and Dagda channeling the earth power into me, with the *Matrae* focusing it all in me so that it boiled and leapt about inside me.

I breathed the power flowing in me and directed it out of my hands, running them back and forth six inches above her body, projecting the power into her. Then I decided it was time to lay on my hands. While I knew that the problem was in her brain, I also understood that it could be more wide ranging, so I first laid one hand on her forehead and one on her tummy for a few moments, breathing the power into her, and then laid one hand on her tummy and the other on her legs, breathing the power into her, and then again with one hand on her forehead and the other on her

solar plexus. She told me later that when I laid my hands upon her, she felt the power surge through her, which I took to be a good sign.

When this was done, I wanted something magical to go home with her, so while Nora held Leilani, I took her stag horn pendant around the circle to each Grove member present, and had them hold it for a moment and fill it with good healing wishes.

Two days later, on March 9, Leilani had another CT scan. This time, the majority of the lesions had disappeared, with only the few still there that she has had for years. Her doctor was amazed. To support this good news, I later made a Brigit's candle for her (like I had done for Bryan) that she has been burning regularly.

### **Weather Working for Desert Magic Festival**

I'm going to include this working here because I used a different technique from the one I normally use for weather magic, and it worked and was well supported by the omens. Normally for weather magic, I would call on Taranis, bringer of thunder, and give Him lots of whiskey as sacrifice, asking him to affect the weather for me. This tends to work most of the time, and I think I have a pretty strong relationship with Him.

But for this working, I tried Chaos Magic instead. This mode of magical working is one I've been trying a lot with this course.

I wanted good, warm weather for the 2007 Desert Magic Festival!

Due to tardiness on my part, earlier in the year, the only date available at the Girl Scout camp on the top of Mt. Lemmon for our festival was the first weekend in April. This is the Tucson area, and normally quite warm by April, but the top of a mountain, at 8000 feet elevation, could be much, much different. I had been unable to find any historical weather data on the camp area and had to rely on the memories of the folks working for the Girl Scouts. According to them, this weekend could be fairly warm, or it could be snowy. Great! We had no choice, so we took the date and I decided to use my magical will as much as possible to get us good weather.

About two weeks before the event, on March 23, 2007, I did a full ADF rite as is my practice, calling upon Taranis, the thunder God, for my Key Offering (and gave some whiskey to Him). Even when I do magic using my own powers, I like to call on my Gods for Their support in my workings. I pulled an omen for the rite and another one for the working, and received *Otter* (from the Druid Animal Oracle deck), which means joy, fun, play and good times. I took this to mean that my working would be successful, since fun and good times could not occur at DMF if we were up to our knees in snow.

So for this working, I created a sigil.

To do this, I needed an intent, a target, and a path for the working to go.

My intent would be, "Desert Magic weather will be hot and dry."

My target would be a high pressure area over the top of us. This should give Tucson warm, dry weather.

My path would be sacrifices to Taranis. I was still unwilling to let go of the theurgic aspect of magic completely.

I had tried drawing sigils for Chaos Magic workings with little success (artistically as well as magically), so instead I used the technique of turning the intent into a chant. I went through all the

letters of the intent, removing any repeating letters and ended up with, "desrtmagicwhlbonny". This I would chant as "desrt magich blonwy".

I reached gnosis by spinning in place while chanting my sigil. I can spin quite quickly as long as I keep my gaze level and not look down at the floor. I spun and spun and spun while chanting until I felt incredibly high and expansive. Then I ended the chant with a shout and dropped to the floor, sensing the magic spin up into the cosmos, expanding as it went. Once launched, I sat quietly until the dizziness ended.

The weather for the event was marvelous. It was sunny and warm during the day, if a bit chilly at night, and the event came off well. It is interesting to note, however, that the following weekend the Girl Scout camp saw snow and freezing temperatures, which happily waited until after our event.

**Question #9: What three modes of magical work do you find most appealing, and why do you find them so interesting? How have you used these modes? (min. 600 words for each mode)**

The three modes that I will be writing about are Talismans and Amulets, Energy Manipulation and Chaos Magic.

### **Talismans and Amulets**

While I have been aware of talismans (magical objects inscribed with writing or symbols) and amulets (objects filled with magical power and usually worn on the body) all my life, in such popular forms as a rabbit's foot, or a horseshoe nailed over a door, or as magical items found in ancient burials, I had never really considered them as useful, or as having any power, really, until I attended a workshop by Michael Dangler at Desert Magic Festival a few years ago.

In this class, he demonstrated how to make a talisman out of thin sheets of copper, using a wooden stylus to incise symbols or letters on it, with a small piece of leather under the copper to allow the incising to take. There is a long history to this sort of magic – the *defixiones* of ancient Greece immediately come to mind.<sup>26</sup> These rites of binding were usually curses written on lead tablets, which were then hidden in the earth, in the sea, buried in a grave or thrown into a spring or well.<sup>27</sup> But this technique need not be used only for cursing. Why not use it for blessings as well?

A blessing, a prayer or even a God symbol can be incised into the copper, and then the sheet can be rolled up and hidden away somewhere, or placed on (or in) an altar, or even carried around by the person (making it an amulet). While I haven't tried this yet for healing, I have used them for general health and well-being, and to make a place more sacred to a God.

Another form of talisman that I have found very useful is the healing candle. I first heard about them from Rev. Sue Parker and Rev. Ian Corrigan when I was doing the healing rituals for my friend Bryan (see above – question #8). Candle magic is something one sees in lots of generic Pagan books, and I always thought it had a sort of "fluffy-bunny" feel to it, but I have since discovered that it can be quite effective, particularly as a way of keeping the magic going for constant strengthening.

After performing a healing by the use of energy manipulation (see below), it was pointed out to me that the process needed to be continued and for some magic to be used to reinforce the original working. For this purpose, I have developed a short working involving the creation and charging of healing candles.

In my experience, the Goddess Brigit has been very helpful in my healing work. I have a good relationship with Her, and make sacrifice regularly. So I call on her when I make my candles. First I

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<sup>26</sup> Graf, 118.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 127.

find a silver Brigit's Cross (usually jewelry of some sort), and purify it in ritual. Then I dig a hole in the side of a large candle, near the bottom, and put the cross in the hole. During the rite, where I have called on Brigit and made sacrifice to Her, I melt some wax from my Brigit Candle (a candle lit from a candle which was lit from a candle which was lit from the Brigit's Fire Altar in Kildare, Ireland) and fill the hole with it. Then, while chanting, "I fill this candle with Brigit's healing power," I dip it into the Waters of Life and pass it over the sacred Fire, while 'seeing' Her fill the candle with sparkling power. When the rite is over, I send the candle to the person needing the continued healing.

When I did this in a Norse context, I asked Thor to aid me and buried a silver Thor's Hammer in the base of the candle.

Not only has this type of magic been effective for me, but it also has had a wonderful cheering and morale boosting effect on the recipient. Folks want to participate in their healing, I believe, and a daily candle lighting gives them the feeling that they are actively doing something to help themselves.

### **Energy Manipulation**

Energy manipulation is the name I have given to the process I use in my healing work, and is something I do in ritual all the time. This is the process of using the powers of the Heavens and the Earth to good effect, from re-creating the cosmos to opening the Gates to hallowing the waters of life. This energy movement is best visualized in the Two Powers meditation.

Here, it is standard ADF practice to visualize one's connection to the powers of the earth, and the drawing up of these powers (often described as cool, dark waters and the power of potential) into the body through the feet. Once the body and the three inner cauldrons of Loins, Heart and Mind have been filled to overflowing, the power exits the body through the palms of the hands and falls back into the earth, creating a continuous loop of earth energy through the body. Then a connection with the powers of the sky (or Heavens) is visualized, with a column of light descending from a star or other point in the sky into the top of the head (often described as the power of order, and a warming light), with this light filling the body and the same three cauldrons, mixing with the waters of potential and exiting the body through the palms of the hands as well, going back up into the sky and once again creating a continuous loop of sky energy through the body. Once both of these powers are in place and surging through the body, we are connected to the Three Worlds and to the powers inherent in the cosmos.

It is this power that I have been attempting to use in my ritual work, and in my healings. I'm sure that others have been doing this all along, and I understand that Reiki healing uses similar methods, but I only know it in an ADF setting. And I like it because it *works*.

In healing work, I am also prone to use these powers in a theurgic manner, by calling on a God or Gods to aid me, to help me bring the powers into and through me, and to magnify them and make them as potent as possible. I also like to call on a set of ancestors I call the *Matrae* (the Mothers), for the purposes of connecting myself to the subject of the healing and both of us to the Kindreds.

The sky power is the power of fire and of the Heavens, and I usually invoke Brigit to aid me in bringing them in and using them. I know that I can call up the sky power on my own (I've been doing the Two Powers meditation for years now), but when She is involved, it seems all the more powerful and potent. When used on its own, during a waning moon, I have found that it can be quite effective at 'burning away' bad things in the body. I call forth the earth power, being the waters of the earth and the powers of potential, usually by invoking Brigit's father, the Dagda, asking him to use his magical cauldron to aid me in finding the strongest earth power I can. This power is something I've used during a waning moon to wash away all the detritus remaining from the 'burning away' use of the sky power.

However, when used together during a waxing moon, these powers, again strengthened by Brigit and the Dagda, can strengthen and actually heal the subject (or at least get the healing process moving). This is the time when the *Matrae* are the most helpful.

For the *Matrae*, I call on two female relatives of the person being healed, assuming s/he has any. They often turn out to be his/her mother, grandmother, or aunt. I also call upon my own mother to give me a connection to the process. What I ask of these ladies is to help direct the earth and sky powers into me (after the Gods and I have called them up) and make my aim true when I focus these powers back into the subject.

I know that many folks believe that aid from the Kindreds is not always necessary for manipulating these powers, and they may be right, but at this stage in my development I'm not so sure. It just seems so difficult and unnecessary to me. I may experiment with this idea, but only time will tell if I adopt it.

## **Chaos Magic**

There seems to be an entire paradigm surrounding Chaos Magic, involving the ideas of creating deities, or using the mythos of TV shows and fictional books to work magic, or the worship of a Greek Goddess, Eris (though I'm not sure the Greeks would recognize her) but I've not really accepted all that. One of their rules is that there are no rules (or all rules are meant to be broken), so I have no problem with ignoring all that stuff, staying in an ADF paradigm. I'm happy to use what works for me.

What I do like about Chaos Magic are the techniques and the theory surrounding them. Phil Hine's e-book, *Oven-Ready Chaos*, was very instructive in the theory and techniques behind it all. The main thrust of what Chaos Magic is about is the actual *doing* of it. As he says, like sex, no amount of intellectual theorizing can substitute for just doing it.

One thing I don't like is that he says that the symbol sets one uses (like the Gods of ADF or the demon Gods of H.P. Lovecraft or the characters in *Star Wars*, or whatever is wanted) are only a means to an end, and not all that important in the long run.<sup>28</sup> This runs counter to my personal experience.

Mr. Hine maps out some essential principles of Chaos Magic (which he spells with a 'k' – 'Magick'). First, he advises us to avoid dogmatism, so that folks can change their minds when needed. He next advises that only personal experience counts, so don't take anyone's word for anything. He next insists on technical excellence, applying rigorous self-assessment. He also talks about deconditioning oneself, to enable one to be free of the beliefs and fictions about the self, society and the world. This will enable the chaos magician to become less attached to these beliefs, which in turn will enable him to adapt more easily. Another thing Mr. Hine emphasizes is the need to use diverse approaches to magic, and not limit themselves to only one system of magic or one paradigm. But one of the most important principles that he elaborates is that of *gnosis*. This is the magical ability to will oneself into an altered state of consciousness, and these willed states can be divided into two types, inhibitory states (passive techniques, like meditation, yoga, scrying, contemplation and sensory deprivation) and excitatory states (like chanting, drumming, dance, and emotional or sexual arousal).<sup>29</sup>

Much of the above actually makes good sense. Essentially, what he is saying is that we have to be flexible, be able to critically examine our selves and our practices (failures as well as successes), and be able to enter into altered states of consciousness. I can get onboard with all of these.

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<sup>28</sup> Hine, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-16.

The easiest method of magic (according to Mr. Hine) is Sigil Magick. He breaks these techniques down into six steps, using the acronym S.P.L.I.F.F.<sup>30</sup>

**S = Specify Intent.** This makes sense. The clearer the magician's intent is, the more likely he'll get good results. **P = Pathways Available?** It's best to make sure that there is a pathway available for the magic to work through. If one were to do a money working, say, it might be best to buy a lottery ticket instead of doing nothing. One may discover that relatives are dying and leaving you money. **L = Link Intent.** Here is where the 'sigil' part comes in. In this kind of magic, it's necessary to come up with something symbolic to focus your intent on. This can be a monogram (like a glyph) or a mantra (where the intent is scrambled into a meaningless phrase or word which can be chanted). **I = Intense Gnosis/Indifferent Vacuity.** Here the sigil is projected out into the universe through an act of gnosis, such as spinning (my favorite), chanting, dancing, sexual arousal, etc. The other way it can be projected is through the indifferent vacuity method, where one is in a "not particularly bothered" state, and can be performed by doodling the sigil while listening to something particularly boring, like a bad university lecture. **F = Fire.** This is the projection of the sigil at the peak of gnosis. This can be at the point of orgasm, the point where spinning makes you so dizzy you fall down, or being asked a question during that boring lecture. The final **F = Forget**, and this is very important. This can be the hardest part of the process, but if one doesn't forget about the spell, it can prey on the mind and cause one to dilute the spell with other desires, thoughts or fantasies.

Chaos Magic is actually quite easy to do (other than the 'forget' part) and I've found it to be mildly effective so far. I'm going to have to stick with it for a while longer before I know if this is something that I can be good at.

***Question #10: Explain how you determine if a magical working is the proper action in the situation you wish to apply it to. Describe your method of determining the proper magical course of action, from start to finish, as well as any particular exercises (such as divination) you go through to ensure that your actions are correct. (min. 600 words)***

The performing of magic is fundamentally tied to ethics. Questions that I must ask myself are, "Is this working only intended to help myself? And if so, could there be any consequences for anyone else?" or "When doing magic to help others, can this working cause unintended consequences for the person I'm working for?" or any combination of the above.

Unintended consequences can be enormous. When I do weather workings to bring rain to Tucson, I have to accept the fact that rain falling here means less (or no) rain falling somewhere else. Also, a really big storm could mean excess flooding with loss of property or (Heavens forbid) even loss of life. So any working that I do needs to be set out and performed as clearly and cleanly as possible.

Money workings often involve the lottery. But is a big win actually a good thing? We might think so initially, but big money can also bring big problems, and end friendships, destroy groups and cause enormous jealousy. These things must be taken into consideration.

Once I've decided that a magical working is a good idea, and that the ethical issues have been thought out and dealt with, I then need to decide what to do and how to do it. This usually means deciding on a goal and then on the target that I will be aiming at (in Chaos Magic, these would be the Intent and the Pathway Available). Examples of this could be seen in my weather workings. Here in Tucson, the moisture in the atmosphere comes up from the Gulf of California or directly from the Pacific, usually through Mexico. The goal is to make it rain here. But how can this be accomplished? Usually, when we do get rain, there is a high pressure area over the Four Corners area, where Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah meet. This brings winds here from the Gulf of California. A careful watch on the weather patterns, as seen on weather maps such as those on weather.com, can indicate when there is a possibility of a high pressure somewhere near the area.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp. 31-34.



So the target would be that high pressure, making it move to where we want it, or to keep it there for a while.

Also, an appropriate moon phase can be helpful. Waxing moons are good for workings of increase (like bringing more rain) and waning moons are good for workings of decrease (like burning away cancers in the body).

Next, though, after these things have been determined, it's necessary to use divination to find out if the Gods are with me in this working, and if there are any special conditions or criteria I need to take into account. For this I usually do a full Awen Spread<sup>31</sup> using my Druid Animal Oracle cards, paying particular attention to the present intents and future outcomes (but I try to heed all the cards). If things look good, then it's time to do the working.

For my healing work, I handle things in a similar manner. Normally, I don't see many ethical issues involved with trying to help someone's health (at least as long as they are of age and give full consent). Here, though, thought must be given to the best way to proceed. For a cancer, I really like to 'burn' away the rampant cells under a waning moon using the powers of the sky, followed by a flushing out of the now burned cells using the powers of the earth. Then, under a waxing moon, I like to fill the person with strengthening power, using both the powers of earth and sky. This two-part method seems to work well.

But this is not always possible. In Michigan recently, at the Midnight Flame Festival, I was asked to do a healing for an adult son of one of the organizers. This person has crohns disease, which is essentially an inflammatory bowel disease which often has abdominal pain, diarrhea and constipation as symptoms. The moon was waning, so I hoped that I could use the fires of the heavens to somehow burn away the problem. For this working, though, I did two different types of divination. In addition to my Awen Spread (which was very positive), I also did a divinatory trance posture, called the Bear.<sup>32</sup> This healing would be done during an ADF Unity Rite at the festival. The man's hearth culture was Norse, and the rite would be Norse, so I wanted to find Norse Gods to help out, if at all possible. But during the trance posture, I had a clear vision of a starry night sky, with the stars approaching me quickly. I also knew that this vision was from the Vedic Goddess, Ratri, and that She wanted me to call on Her for the sky power. As it turned out, the ritual took place at night, and the shining, starry sky was clear over our heads. When I called, She came to me clearly and with great power. As of this writing, the healing is still holding.

**Question #11: How can the magician serve modern society? (minimum 300 words)**

If we take a look at the role of the Shinto priest in modern Japan, we see a priesthood which is dedicated to serving the magical as well as religious needs of the people. Every time someone buys a new car or house, a Shinto priest is brought in to bless it. The magical rites of the Shinto priests can be found everywhere in Japan.

This is something that can happen in the Neopagan world as well. In my Grove, I have performed a healing, and created two talismans for members about to be posted to Iraq. Other magical services in our Groves can be divinatory in nature, helping our members with their problems. I can see the day when our magicians and priests are out there doing house cleansings, house blessings, car blessings, indeed any sort of work needed by our members.

In ADF we are also establishing an initiatory order, where folks will have the opportunity to learn the magico-religious skills of priests without having to go all the way into the ADF Priesthood. These folks, certainly, can hang out their shingles and use their magical skills to help folks.

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<sup>31</sup> Carr-Gomm, Philip and Stephanie, *The Druid Animal Oracle: Working with the Sacred Animals of the Druid Tradition* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 156.

<sup>32</sup> Goodman, Felicitas D. and Nana Nauwald, *Ecstatic Trance: New Ritual Postures: A Workbook* (Havelte, Holland, Binkey Kok Publications, 2003), p. 137.

And in the larger world, outside of the ADF paradigm, magic can be used to affect the weather, to influence politicians, and to heal family and friends. Some day, when we are a religion that is accepted and recognized by the world at large, the scope of what magicians may be able to do for the community enlarges dramatically.

Of course, with such acceptance, even if only within ADF and the Neopagan community, also comes great responsibility. Service to the community brings respect and, perhaps, lucre. Magic used only for selfish ends, with no regard to the consequences imposed on others, may lead to severe restrictions on what we do. We must not forget that in much of the ancient IE world, magicians were outcasts and magic outside of religion proscribed. Only by adhering to the 9 Virtues and through true service can this be avoided by our own magicians.

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