



QUAREIA—THE INITIATE

Module IV—Birth, Death, and the Underworld, Part II

Lesson 8: Ritual Patterns

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WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding—everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

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So remember—in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.

Yours,

Josephine McCarthy



QUAREIA—THE INITIATE

Module IV—Birth, Death, and the Underworld, Part II

Lesson 8: Ritual Patterns

In this lesson we will bring together everything you have learned in this module and look step-by-step how these dynamics are used in the construction of a ritual.

To construct a ritual from scratch is not to create magic from scratch: these are very different things.

A ritual externalises a magical pattern into the manifest world and sets it off in the flow of time. Constructing a magical pattern from scratch is something very different. A newly constructed ritual engages a magical pattern into completion. If an adept was to create a magical pattern from scratch, it would then need a new ritual constructed to act as its vehicle and guidance system.

In cultures linked to the Abrahamic faiths, many of the rituals call on aspects of those religions which are embedded within the ritual pattern. This can take the form of god names, angelic names, and so forth. If you use these god names, the ritual is immediately bound into the pattern of that religious system, and will bring into the pattern any of that system's inherent benefits and imbalances.

We see this a lot in Western magic: all the embedded misogyny, collective dogma, and degeneration that has built up over time in Christianity and Judaism expresses and externalises itself when the ritual is

performed. It always expresses first through the magician, then into the actual magical pattern itself.

A lot of Western magical rituals have patterns that have been essentially copied from Christian or Jewish rituals and prayers. When a magician has been raised in a Christian society, the religion's habits, rituals, and belief system become deeply embedded within their psyche and they can unconsciously carry that embedded system across into their magic if they are not careful.

Their system of understanding the universe and themselves, and their relation to Divinity, can be coloured by this embedded pattern. This is fine if the magician is Christian and operates their magic within that religion's way of thinking, but if they do not then it starts to get messy.

As soon as a magician starts performing declarations to deities with unfamiliar words and enacting patterns without understanding where they came from, they stop doing pure magic and start doing dogmatic regurgitation. As well as weakening the magic it can shake up any imbalance within the magician—but not in a way that brings resolution; rather it *strengthens* the imbalance.

The powers of Divinity, and how they express as forces of creation, destruction, and so on, are very valid and indeed needed for many levels of magic; but how we perceive, interact with, and relate to those Divine forces, and in what context, has a strong bearing on how the magic will work and how it will affect the magician's development.

A lot of English magic shows a mixture of deep understanding of magical dynamics trapped within dogmatic Christian patterns. Some is heavily connected to mythic patterns, and while some of this has deep roots in the land of Britain, not all of it has. Some draws on Jewish Kabbala without fully understanding the deeper spiritual dynamics behind the religious structure, and all these unthinking approaches can have a direct bearing on how the magician matures and evolves.

As developing magicians, it is a major skill to be able to look at rituals and see what is at play, what powers are being brought in, why, and how. And by looking at ritual in such a way you develop your critical thinking. This in turn is important if you are to understand what magical patterns underlie a ritual's power and what drives it. From that understanding, the magician develops skills in constructing new magical patterns.

Too often magicians birth new magical patterns simply by copying bits of the previous generation's work without truly understanding with what they are working. When you create a new magical pattern, you must be able to understand fully, and from an *inner power* perspective, what is actually being woven into that pattern.

It is also important to understand magical evolution: we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us, and all shoulders have weaknesses! The magicians who went before us had failures as well as successes.

Critical thinking is of major importance to magical development: never take something at face value simply because it has been that way for a long time. As evolving magicians, we grow just as much from the mistakes of the past as its successes. I hope that future magical generations will do the same for Quareian magical work; that they will spot its weaknesses. That is the only way magic can evolve.

So you can start learning this process of analysis, we will look at two well-known and heavily used magical rituals in Western magic: the *Qabbalistic Cross* and the *Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram*. We are not looking at these rituals to tear them apart or criticise them; it is more a matter of learning to look and see what is behind something, where it comes from, what it is doing, and why. I will point out the origins of the rituals' aspects, and also what dynamics are being used; then in the practical work you will look at them deeply for yourself.

The major questions we need to ask are:

“What is it doing?”

“Why is it working?”

“Within what pattern does it function?”

“How does that blend with the magician?”

Extract from Liber O

This first extract is from the *Qabbalistic Cross*.

Touching the forehead, say Ateh (Unto Thee).

“Ateh” is *Atah* (ATH in Hebrew: אתה), which means “you.” It can also mean “coming” or “becoming” and in *Daniel 7:13* it is used as “Ateh” in the context of “was coming”:

כְּבֹר אֱנֹשׁ אֶתְּהָ הַיְהוָה וְעַד־.

We see the use of *Atah/Ateh* in the beginning of Hebrew prayers:

“Baruch atah Adonai elohaynu Melech ha’olam”

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.

So in this ritual the first words are: “You are.”

Touching the breast, say Malkuth (The Kingdom).

Malkuth is the Hebrew word for kingdom, rank, authority, and sovereignty. It is the last Sefirot on the Tree of Life: the expression of life as the kingdom of God.

Placing Malkuth in the heart (breast) is to say: your heart is a realm over which the sovereign exercises his authority.¹ This is interesting when you think in terms of the heart spirit² that you learned about in the apprentice section. However, it could also be about the Gnostic understanding of the Kingdom of God as being *within*, which is found in the New Testament synoptic gospels.

But in Kabbalistic terms, placing Malkuth in your breast is to potentially deny the path beneath your feet, that carries you through *olam*:

¹Or it could be taken as you are the sovereign of yourself.

²The king in the heart.

through the distance. It also cuts off the lower Sefirot powers that drive you along your path. Was this intentional for a good reason?

Touching the right shoulder, say ve-Geburah (and the Power).

This is where the ritual dips deeper into Kabbalah. *Geburah* (“Gevurah”) means “strength of judgement,” not muscular strength or “power.” In Hebrew texts it tends to refer to the power of God’s judgement and the strength of withholding/restriction. Magically this is correct, as the right arm is the arm of the scales and the right shoulder is the magical power of restriction.

However when given an English understanding it loses a lot in translation: it becomes the “powerful right arm,” but such power comes from judgement and restriction,³ not from being strong. It is often referred to in Hebrew as *middas hadin*, the expression of law, and there is a saying in Hebrew text:

“Who is a strong person? He who sublimates his own passions.”

—*Ethics of the Fathers* 4:1

So you can see straight away how magical misunderstandings can easily happen and why it is important to know the root of something, particularly where magic and Hebrew are concerned.

This part of the ritual shows a deep understanding of the magical Mysteries that can be drawn from Jewish Kabbalah; but I wonder how many people who copy the ritual from the net and then enact it without deeper training actually know what it means and what it does.

Touching the left shoulder, say ve-Gedulah (and the Glory).

Opposing *Gevurah* (Restriction) is *Chesed* (Mercy), which is sometimes replaced with *Gedulah* (“greatness”). The deeper mystical aspect of this power is the Light Bearer: one who shines a light into the darkness to show the way ahead. It is the merciful giving into life that is boundless, and thus must be restricted by *Gevurah* to keep it balanced. Judgement

³Withholding from life and returning to source.

and Mercy mean very different things to “power and glory,” and as we will see in a moment, the root of *Gevurah* and *Gedulah* used in this ritual come from a Jewish and Christian prayer to *describe God, not humankind*. These two Sefirot are higher dynamics of creation and restriction: they are Divine expressions. Which then takes us into the modern mess of understanding Divinity within humanity: Divinity is within us and everything around us. But when some coked-up magician declares they are a living god, something has gone badly wrong in the program: the *ego trap*. That trap is a strong one in this ritual, and I suspect that it was done deliberately to confront the magician with themselves. Clever. This aspect of the ritual declares the powers of Divinity and acknowledges those powers as being an inherent part of our existence.

Clasping the hands upon the breast, say le-Olahm, Amen (To the Ages, Amen).

Le-olam or *ad-olam* is often mistakenly translated into English as meaning forever or eternity, which it doesn't.

So where did the Golden Dawn get this from? Let's have a look:

... And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer is the oldest known Christian prayer of which we are aware, and it would have been spoken in Aramaic. By the time it had gone through translations into Greek, then Latin, and finally English, it had lost a lot of the subtleties of its wordplay, puns, and sense. Even so it is still a powerful declaration.

When I was writing this lesson I assumed, wrongly, that the GD ritual went back to the Lords prayer, as it is an obvious copy. But once the lesson was written, it niggled me that I was missing something—and I was. After digging deeper, I got back to the original source of this text, which can be found in the Tanakh (*1 Chronicles 29:11*). This was a good lesson for me to not take things at face value myself, and to listen to my

own advice: keep digging until you are sure you have reached a true source! Here it is:

1 Chronicles 29:11

*l'khä y'hwäh haG'duLäh w'haG'vûräh w'haTif'eret w'haNëtzach
w'hahôd Kiy-khol BaSHämayim ûvääretz l'khä y'hwäh haMam'läkhäh
w'haMit'naSë l'khol l'rosh.*

Thine, O Yahwe' יהוה, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O Yahwe' יהוה, and thou art exalted as head above all.

I noticed in this that two words used; 'aretz' (*erets*—the earth/land), and 'Mamlakhah' (*realm*) and not Malkuth (*rule/dominion as ruled over*)

If you continue reading *1 Chronicles 29:25*, the transliteration is:

*way'gaDël y'hwäh et-sh'lomoh l'ma'läh l'ëynëy Käl-yis'räel waYiTën
äläyw hôd mal'khût ásher lo-häyäh al-Käl-melekh' l'fänäyw al-
yis'räel*

29:25 And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

Note the use of Malkuth (mal'khut) in this context.

Now think back to the ritual and the use of Malkuth in the centre. I am not the best person to talk about the twists and turns of usage in the Hebrew language, but in magical terms, this brings up an interesting point to ponder. Think about it for yourselves and what it means magically, as opposed to religiously.

When we think back to the people who first structured the LBRP in the Golden Dawn, the group's members came from Christian families and had a Christian education. Though many of them had wide and varied interests, their roots were strong, as they were for everyone in Victorian England. You draw from what you know and what is deeply embedded within you. We all do, whether we are conscious of it or not. The early GD

members and founders would have read their bible in depth as children, and then as adults some of them learned Hebrew and Kabbalah.

This is a good example of the weave of religion and magic brought together, as opposed to non-religious spirituality and magic, i.e. a connection with Divinity that does not operate through a prescribed religion. Both are valid and the success of one or the other largely depends on the individual magician and how they operate their daily lives in balance to their Divine connection.

This ritual puts the magician within the Abrahamic pattern but does not compensate for the long historic changes that occurred within that pattern: it went from an understanding of male/female and creation/destruction, to having one male god i.e. Divinity. Divinity is not a deity, yet the Abrahamic pattern, particularly Christianity, treats Divinity like one, which can cause all sorts of complex inner magical and spiritual issues.

The magicians who developed this ritual did not lift themselves completely out of a religious pattern and into a spiritual/mystical one; rather they embedded a weave of Victorian Christianity with Jewish mysticism without stepping out of their more dogmatic mindset at a deep level.

This is not a criticism, as I think taking such a step at that time in history, in that group, would have been near on impossible: I think they did the best they could at the time, which is all any of us can do.

So what should this teach us about the construction of ritual and the powers of creation, destruction, and the Underworld? How does it balance within it the dynamics of the flows of power, and what does it do? Is it magic, or is it magical religion?

The dynamics in action

Using the Kabbalistic pattern, the *Qabbalistic Cross* part of the *Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram* ritual creates a V-shaped pattern on the Tree of Life. The two opposing forces of *Gevurah* (restriction) and *Gedalah* (expansion) are balanced in the centre by *Malkuth* (dominion). But the balance on the Tree of Life between these two powers is *Tiferet*: the Fulcrum between the two. *Malkuth* is the *end product* of the tree, not its

centre; it is the world that you live in, that you affect by your own actions, and the path that you walk.

However, placing Tiferet in the centre of such a magical pattern for beginners would be begging for trouble: the LBRP was initially designed as a training exercise for the early students. To place Tiferet in the dominion of the heart would pump up the ego to the extreme in a hapless beginner. There are powerful dynamics woven into this ritual to do with *waking up* at a deep level. It is a catalyst that can trigger the dawning of awareness, or it will shut someone down; one or the other.

When psychology is brought into the pattern, as many modern Golden Dawn groups do, the ritual becomes all about the self: all the Divine names and powers are seen simply as aspects of the self. This will limit and reduce the ritual's power right down to self-analysis and feel-good factors: that is not magic, that is using magical patterns in psychological self-therapy.

From a magical Kabbalistic perspective, replacing Tiferet with Malkuth bypasses three key powers of the Sefirot: *Netzach* (the Grindstone), *Hod* (the Unraveller) and *Yesod* (the threshold of creation into generation: the inner foundation of the outer world). These three *Lower Sefirot* are known as the *action powers* or the "drivers of man." The *Higher Sefirot* of *Gevurah* and *Gedalah* (Chesed) are the dynamics of creation/restriction itself. They are not rooted in man, but in the Divine impulse of creation and destruction that flows through everything.

If you plug a device into your computer but you do not have the drivers for it, it will not work. In this metaphor, man is the device, the lower action Sefirot are the drivers, and the higher Sefirot are the software and then the computer itself.

In Jewish Kabbalah, these lower three Sefirot are the actions/dynamics by which we achieve things: *Netzach* and *Hod* are the two 'feet' that carry you on your path through life, and are the 'action' balance between the two dynamics in your life: they are expressions of your free will. *Yesod* is the vehicle of the imagination/creativity/generation that keeps the two in balance.

Most people look at the map of the Tree of Life and see *Netzach* to the right: that would be to *mirror* the Tree. But you do not mirror the Tree, you *are* the Tree. *Netzach* is your left foot which carries you forward with the impulse of *Chesed*/the Light Bearer at your shoulder and behind you. Without having these two feet to carry you forward, then working within this system, and using the two opposing higher Sefirot without

feet to carry you on the path, would be cutting yourself off magically at the knees.

And if people then throw in the odd dolphin, cherub, and the occasional fish,⁴ then it can *really* get messy.

Prayer, declare, or ritual?

There is a major problem in Western ritual that people do not often see, as it is so engrained within our culture's psyche. The problem is differentiating between what is a magical ritual, what is religious ritual, what is a declaration, and what is a prayer.

Religious rituals often have magical aspects, but they are not magical rituals: there is a major difference. Religious rituals are there for the *deity's benefit*, and to *deepen the relationship between deity and human*.

Magical ritual is an active 'doing' pattern that is created, enacted, and empowered to *achieve something magically regardless of whether a deity is involved or not*.

A declaration is where a person either recites or declares their allegiance or devotion to a specific deity and belief system, and/or invites that deity's power into a space. This is used in both magic and religion, and places the magician/priest in a particular 'club'—the egregore of the religion.

A prayer is where the deity is asked for something, usually within a religious pattern, and is flattered in return.

A magical utterance is where the magician externalises a magical pattern using speech/sound in order to trigger its outer expression through the use of magical utterance. It is like pressing the 'go' button for a magical pattern.

As you can see, all these things are very different: they have different effects, different audiences, and different functions. Knowing which is

⁴I shit you not.

which, and why, is vital to successful magic: if you don't know what you are doing, how on earth do you expect it to work?

It is an important stage of magical development to be able to look at a ritual and identify what it is actually doing and what it *is*.⁵ From there you can ascertain whether it will work for the job in hand.

Always understand that often the lines between magic and religion are blurred in ritual: stronger magic flows through Divine channels of power, and religious ritual often has many elements of magic embedded within it. But each type will have an overall specific impulse that takes it one way or the other.

The *Qabbalistic Cross* is a religious ritual being used magically. It is not a magical ritual. Think about the dynamics and outcomes of such a usage. There is also another element in such a magical-religious ritual that has a distinct influence on its outcome and success: its emotive content.

Emotion versus impersonal

Because of the influence that religion has on a lot of Western magic, emotive content is often overused in Western magical work. This can seriously undermine its effectiveness. Think back to the three principles of Creation, Fulcrum and Restriction. None of those dynamics have any connection with emotion or emotive thought: you are working with power/energy, not human feelings.

In many religions there is a strong tendency to seek a parent substitute, which colours everything that happens in that religion. We want God to protect us, feed us, nurture us, smite our enemies, and love us unconditionally—like a parent. As a result we give God a human gender, usually male, sometimes female. This parent-seeking is reflected in the religion's prayers and rituals:

“...Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses...”

In magic this has no place: it is as absurd as entreating and praying to the electricity that flows into the your house to feed you and keep you

⁵Religious, magical, etc.

warm. The Divine powers of creation and destruction have no human emotions; as a magician you are working with Divine *power*, which is driven by necessity.

Understanding this can be very painful for some people, who will rebel against such a statement. The need for parental love is hardwired into us for survival. Yet it is important to overcome such hardwiring if you are to become an adept magician.

You can love God/Divinity with all your heart, but is wise also to accept that such an emotion flows from human to divine power. What flows from Divinity to humanity is *necessity*, not emotional love. It is powerful, it is beautiful in its manifest form, but it is not woven with human emotion: it is Divine expression in its pure form. We can interact emotionally with deity powers that are closer to us, but the deeper, underlying Divine powers flow through the *needs of the pattern*, not an emotional relationship.

This is better understood in polytheistic religions and mystical patterns than monotheistic ones. If you take out the beings, deities, and so forth that are closer to humanity and focus only on the One, then the human is left emotionally bereft. Then comes the cry: “why did God allow this plane crash/tsunami/death?” Humanising Divinity is folly in general, and in magic it can be dangerous.

The deeper powers of creation and destruction are beyond human structure, and they have no desire to make you feel better. Nor do the lesser powers closer to humanity⁶ have surface human emotion: that is a product of your hormone system. However they are receptive to deeper communion/union/relationships that engender a deeper level of emotive energy, and will connect with that and sometimes mirror it. But even then it is still tied in with necessity if you look closely enough and pay attention.

This can confuse many magicians who make contact with beings that will protect them, help them with resources, and so forth. The beings do this not because they emotively ‘care’ about you, but because you need those things to achieve some necessary end in the larger picture of your life path. It is a *means to an end*.

Just to make things more confusing, when a magician connects with deeper Divine powers, we often experience a deep inner emotion in response to that connection. When we experience union with that Divine

⁶Which express through beings that interact with us.

power, our bodies translate it as deep emotion. Yet it is more about ‘communion’ and ‘union’ than physical emotion. The emotion we feel is *our physical endocrine system reacting to that power*.

Learning to separate out hormonal emotion from deeper spiritual connection and response is an important step in your magical development. This starts with learning stillness, then learning to distinguish between energy/emotions driven by your body’s physical structure and the deeper response to Divine recognition from our spirit.

Learning that distinction comes from taking steps to move away from seeing the Divine as an attending parent⁷ and moving towards seeing the Divine as a creative and destructive power that is everything manifest. The beings that mediate between Divinity and humanity are ones we can communicate emotively with, but their impulse is driven by overarching necessity, not human emotion. When we receive that impulse of necessity, our minds/bodies translate it into an emotion so that we will bond, interact, and respond appropriately.

In magic it boils down to this: you do what you are supposed to be doing to grow and evolve, and the inner beings that mediate between Divinity and humanity will ensure that the necessities are dealt with. Respect and the necessary response from the magician to deity and Divinity goes a great deal further than flattery and entreaties. Divine love is ensuring the balance of creation.

This also takes out the ego trap. If you work from a place of “I am Divine” and do magic with a mix of command (control), entreaty (begging), and flattery, then you will trigger a whole bunch of your own emotive responses. This in turn colours how you see the magic and also how you emotionally processes your success or failure. The number of times I have heard comments from magicians like “it worked because I am the Divine commander of my own destiny,”⁸ or “it failed because God doesn’t love me.”⁹ The staggering lack of magical understanding in those two statements is depressing, and very telling about how the magician perceives the Divine and themselves.

What I am trying to take you to, which is deeply important in magic, and as an initiate it is something you would do well to ponder over, is the meaning of emotion and what it means to you. Separating out what is

⁷We have Christianity to thank for that conditioning—treating Divinity as a deity.

⁸Yawn.

⁹Blink...

driven by survival instinct, what is driven by hormones, what is driven by blood connections, and what is driven by the deeper self, is a difficult and lifelong task that magic will bring into sharp focus for you. There are no right or wrong answers, as this is deeply dependent on the individual. It is a matter of learning to listen to the deeper self and to be true to yourself and to the flow of Divinity of which you are part.

All this has a direct bearing on your magic: if you truly know and understand yourself, you are a major step closer to understanding the Divine in everything, and thus also in magic.

To this end, it is interesting to look at various magical rituals¹⁰ in terms of religious content, magical content, and also “it’s all about you” psychology. The removal of personal emotion from magic, and understanding the deeper, more enduring connection that can translate through emotion, is a key to magic.

Purpose: banish and invoke?

So now that we have gotten emotion, religion, and parents out of the picture, let’s go back to the Qabbalistic Cross and Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, whose purpose was a training exercise that could be used for banishing and invoking. Let us take a look at the second part of the ritual, and we will look in depth in terms of what we have just covered. We will ask, “why does it banish?”

This part of the ritual works with the four directions.

Turning to the East, make a pentagram with the proper weapon. Say “IHVH.” (Yahd Hey Vau Hey)

The first step, making a pentagram before you, expresses the manifest power of humanity away from the body. It is assumed that it represents earth and will act as a shield. Think about that for a moment.

The words are the *Tetragrammaton*, the four letters which together form completion of Divinity manifest in the world. It is not a word/name

¹⁰There are tons on the internet.

to be spoken or which even can be spoken; it is a deep mystery of breath/utterance, combined with inner knowledge of the power that flows through the letters both individually and when combined. It is the *HaShem*, the *Name* which draws upon the Gematria of the letters and an understanding of the powers of the 'four winds'; and it is a *declaration* of the Divine manifest. Uttered properly with deep knowledge, and within its own religious pattern, it is a powerful trigger.

Turning to the South, the same, but say "ADNI" (Adonai).

Again the pentacle is externalized. This word means 'Lord.'

Turning to the West, the same, but say "AHHH" (Eheieh).

The letters AHHH are אהיה which means "I will be." It comes from a name of God in Exodus that is אהיה אשר אהיה, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*: "I will be that which I will be." It is a *creative* name of power referring to that Divine impulse that seeks constant creation.

Turning to the North, the same, but say "AGLA" (Agla).

Agla is an acronym for Attar gibbor le'olam Adonai, which are the first four words of *Gevurot*, the second blessing from the *Ha Amidar*, the standing prayer said facing the *Aron Kodesh*, the ark that holds the Torah. These first four words mean: "You are mighty in the world, O Lord." The second four words of that blessing are: *Mechaiyeh metim attar*, which mean: "restorer of the dead you are."

The rest of the ritual is a version of a breastplate, calling upon angelic beings to be around the magician. It places the pentagram around the human (externalizing it) and the hexagram in the central axis.

Extending the arms in the form of a cross say:

"Before me Raphael;

Behind me Gabriel;

On my right hand Michael;

On my left hand Auriel;
 About me flames the Pentagram,
 And in the Column stands the six-rayed Star.

So what magical elements are at play in this ritual? There are declarations (*God is*), there are the creative aspects of the Divine in the form of names, and the protective element of Divine power (the use of AGLA). There is a fulcrum: the hexagram in the centre of the column.

So we have a creation/birth impulse and we have a fulcrum, but we have no corresponding restriction or destruction other than Gevurah at the right shoulder: there is a lot of creative impulse, not a lot of restriction, and no destruction at all. The flow of directional power is *into* the space and around the human, but there is no *outlet*.¹¹ And think about the angels called in that section of the ritual: you have looked into one or two of these angels in your training so far. How relevant or appropriate to the task in hand are these names?

The magical pattern of humanity (pentagram) is exteriorised outside the body and linked with fire (to protect). There is no magical verbal direction (asking) in the ritual to protect, to banish, or to invoke/draw in. This works on the presumption that the utterance of *HaShem* is enough to protect. If you are *living* within the stream of consciousness, flow, and substance of which this pattern is part,¹² then connecting with aspects of Divinity around the directions will work well: being immersed in the stream of Divine power is all that is needed. This does not mean having to be a devout Jew or Christian; that is something different again.

God is not Jewish: Kabbalah is the vocabulary and operating system that Jews use. As a magician, if you are operating at the same frequency as this particular flow, it will work; if you are not, it will not. It's that simple. If the blue wire is plugged into the blue inlet, power will flow. If you try to plug the blue wire into your nostrils, it will not.

If you are working mystically as a magician, with all that entails, then it will work. If you are Frater Gadoodo in a polyester robe and holding a very expensive wand, who hates all religion, hates concepts of Divinity, sees themselves as an all-powerful godhuman/superwitch/insert-stupid-ego-here, and wants protecting from all the nasty things in life they are

¹¹Though bear in mind this was a beginner ritual, and a full flow is not always appropriate for someone just starting out.

¹²Living a religious, spiritually aware, or mystical life; which system does not matter so long as it is compatible with the power.

trying to avoid by hiding in the basement of their lives, then it likely won't work.

To take another step forward in your critical thinking, we will look at the magical dynamics of what 'tips the on switch' of a magical ritual. Then you can go back and look this at this ritual again.

Editor's Note

Hello, it's the editor here. I have always assumed—I don't know how correctly—that the archangel breastplate section of the LBRP was a version of a Jewish prayer I knew as a child, with the archangels assigned to different quarters and the Shekinah replaced by the Hexagram.

The prayer is called the Bedtime Shema, or the B'sheim Hashem after the prayer's first two words.

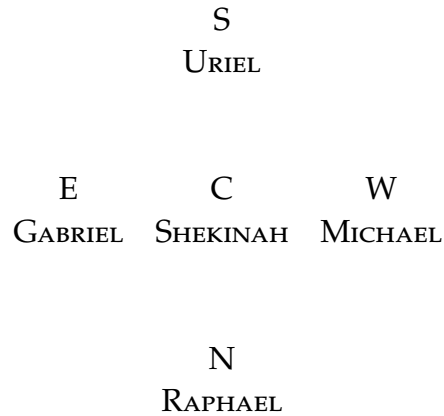
בְּשֵׁם הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מִיְמִינִי מִיְכָאֵל
 וּמִשְׂמֹאלֵי גַבְרִיאֵל
 וּמִלְפָּנַי אֱוִרִיאֵל
 וּמֵאַחֲרַי רַפָּאֵל
 וְעַל רֹאשִׁי שְׁכִינַת אֵל

*B'sheim Hashem elohei yisrael,
 Mimini Michael
 Umismoli Gavriel,
 Umilfanai Uriel
 Umeachorai Rafael,
 V'al roshi shechinat el.*

In the name of the Lord, the God of Israel,
 At my right hand Michael,
 At my left hand Gabriel,
 Before me Uriel,
 Behind me Raphael,
 And above my head the Shekinah.

It had never occurred to me to look at this prayer's directional attributes, but when I did after editing this lesson I was very pleasantly surprised.

Once you know that magical south is whatever direction your nose is pointing, it is easy to work out where this prayer stations each angel:



If you look up what these angels do in the Bible and in the Book of Enoch, and what their names mean in Hebrew, then you will discover that each of them has been given a very specific job here: guarding, communicating, showing, or healing/binding something.

When I showed this prayer to Josephine, she pointed out that the Shekinah, or Brigh as she's known round here, is in an unusual position: normally she would be underneath and around the speaker. As a result this venerable suit of armour has developed a hole in its bottom—though possibly Raphael is keeping an eye on it.

Elements of power

What is its purpose? Is it is direct action or indirect action?

A ritual or magical pattern or act has a reason for its existence. Achieving an end result in magic can be done directly or indirectly, and conditionally or unconditionally. Often magical patterns are multilayered and have both direct and indirect actions.

A direct action would be using magic for protection by asking for it, or using a protective tool, or changing something by mediating the power of change into it.

An indirect action would not be so obvious. The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram is an indirect action. By the use of Divine names, declarations, and sigils (pentagrams) it seeks to change a place's frequency. The ritual does not explicitly ask for protection, balance, or anything else: the ritual's protective aspect (banishing or invoking) comes from declaring Divine sovereignty and triggering aspects of the Divine through the use of the Sefirot.

It is a perfect ritual for a magical beginner: command and control are taken out of their hands and they surrender the space to Divine impulse. However the fact it was a beginner exercise seems to have gotten lost in the mists of time. Nowadays it is used a cure-all by every Tom, Soror, and Asmodeus.

When you do a ritual your first question should be:

“What is its true purpose, and does it achieve that directly or indirectly?”

What will power it?

What powers a ritual is an important thing to think about. What power levels does it need to achieve its purpose? The frequency of the magic dictates the power levels, and it does not matter if you call upon “Zork the giant crusher of planets” to do your bidding: if the frequency is not right, the power will not flow properly.

The LBRP, just like the early rituals you did in your apprentice work, draws on the Divine flow of power. The LBRP draws strongly on the Abrahamic interface of that Divine flow, which adds a layer to the filter. This could be good or not depending on who is doing the ritual and what opinion they have.

Other things that can power rituals are angelic beings,¹³ deities, land powers that have an interface with humans, underworld beings, ancestors, faery beings,¹⁴ or drawing on the Divine within the human as it reexpresses itself back out to the Divine.

¹³Mediators, thresholds, etc.

¹⁴Tricksy.

This last is known as the *adept mirror reflection*, which is badly misunderstood and the biggest bear trap for immature magicians. Essentially, the adept mirror reflection happens when the adept gets to a level where all tools, patterns, beings, and so forth are no longer used and the Divine within the human consciously looks back at the Divine in creation: the ultimate magic. This process begins at the very start of training by placing the human in the fulcrum. The Golden Dawn's version of that was the LBRP.

What are the creative and restrictive impulses in a ritual?

Often magicians mistake the *power* source for a ritual or magical pattern for its *creative* impulse. Power is just power: what sort of power is used and how/why is a different important ingredient for the ritual. As you know, a magical pattern needs a creative and a restrictive or destructive impulse for it to be balanced. Too much creative impulse in a ritual can unbalance the magician, just as too much restriction can bind the magician out of action.

The creative impulse can be the Divine creative impulse, such as the creative Sefirot (Chesed) in the LBRP. If the use of Divine names and Sefirot are used, they must either match up, or counterbalance one another.

If a deity is used, their creative aspect must be balanced with their destructive or restrictive aspect.¹⁵ If the natural elements are used, then again one must balance the another.¹⁶

Often when deities are used the religious mentality creeps in: then only one deity is used, and usually a subdivided one, which will cause imbalance in the power flow. If you use a creative deity, their restrictive or destructive counterpart must also be present, unless you are dealing with a complete, undivided deity that fully expresses both powers.

And this is where a lot of magicians also fall down: when a deity is described who is a divided deity, often the attributes of one are also explained in the other, and the magician becomes confused.

If a destructive/restrictive deity is given positive attributes, and those positive attributes have another deity expression then that other deity expression needs to be present as it is the other half of the subdivision. So for example if you look at Sekhmet, who is a destroying power, but

¹⁵I.e. the two sides of a divided deity.

¹⁶Fire and water, or fire and earth.

she also has a creative side, which is Hathor, then you are working with a subdivided deity and both versions, Sekhmet and Hathor, need to be equally present.

What composts the magic?

If the pattern or ritual is magical in its purpose and has an intention, then it needs to have a *composting element*, something that opens a path up into which the depleted magic can flow. This is where serious problems can occur, particularly if religious elements are used haphazardly and the purpose is magical, not religious.

If creative Divine power is called on in its guise as anything below Kether on the Tree of Life (if Kabbalah is used), then you are in fact working with a *subdivision* of pure Divine power. And whenever you work with subdivision, you must balance it out. The same is true of deities, angelic beings, and so forth.

The magic has to have somewhere to drain off to when it is finished, and usually this is the Underworld.

If there is no path to composting, the remnants and straggles of the depleted magic have nowhere to go, so they will stay around the magician and the magical temple/space. This slowly builds up like plaque. As it is power that is breaking down it attracts parasites and low-level beings that will try to break it down. It is a similar process to not putting out the trash: flies gather, smells happen, and bacteria starts to proliferate.

This is very apparent in some magical lodges and groups where the leaders or higher-ranking members become degenerate, parasited, and trapped in dead end ego trips. The grot slowly infects the whole group and eventually the picture becomes very messy.

Ensuring magic is composted is basic magical hygiene. It can be spotted in healthy magical systems where there are Underworld connections or restrictive or destructive powers working in balance with the creative ones: the deities and powers are reflected in the ritual.

When there is a religious element that only seeks to ascend, that only seeks the light, and the only Underworld element is one of redemption or resurrection, then that does not count as a composting element: it is seeking to reexpress itself, which makes it a creative and not a composting process.

As redemption and ‘reaching up’ are such strong elements of the Abrahamic faiths, and particularly in Christianity and Islam, the use of those religions in the magical pattern are particularly vulnerable to this mistake. Death, decay, and withdrawal are shunned in favour of rising up again, and once more the ego trap comes into play with the idea of *eternal life within life*.

Eternal life within life *is* a mystical element of magic, but it is so badly misunderstood that it serves to damage the magician rather than slowly reveal to them its Mysteries.

So now that we have looked at all these aspects of ritual and magical construction, it is time for you to move on to your practical work. Here you will apply these dynamics with critical thinking, so that you can begin to look closely at religious and magical acts to see what is actually going on, what the construction was like, what was it trying to achieve, and what, if anything, is missing or out of balance.

Because you will be looking at rituals that are close to people’s hearts, look with discretion and common sense, and without emotive judgement. Everything is fallible in magic as it is constructed by humans, and looking closely at rituals can reveal hidden gems or gaping holes, both of which will teach you a great deal.

Task: Analysing some rituals

“An unquestioning life is no life.” —Socrates

The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram

Look at the LBRP again in real depth, and answer for yourself the questions posed in this lesson. Think about the ritual in terms of its use by beginners in the Golden Dawn system, then adepts, and then also by someone not working directly in that system but picking and mixing for their own practice. Look at what types of groups use this ritual and why, and then think about how it would work within those contexts.

The Catholic Tridentine Mass

If you are interested in looking at ritual and magical acts embedded in religion, take a close look at the Catholic Tridentine Mass in English and Latin. Whenever you come across something that catches your eye in English, look up the meaning of the Latin words—and use a secular Latin dictionary, don't rely on a religious one. This is a bit of a job as it is a long ritual, but see if you can identify the various aspects of declaration, prayer, ritual, and magical acts.

Magical rituals available online

Look up magical rituals you can find on the internet—it's swamped with everything you can think of. Also look back at some of the ritual work you have done.

Questions to ask yourself

When you look at these different ritual forms, ask the same questions of all of them. Regardless of how they are presented today, if they are older rituals, ask yourself what could have been their original purpose, and how their use today compares to it. Sometimes you will find that they have evolved forwards, and other times that they have degenerated. Both of these are normal over time: it is part of the magical evolutionary process.

Thinking

Though the concept of Divinity within you and everything is a very powerful one, think about how it can (and does) go wrong. What would the consequences of that be for a magician, both magically and for their mental health if this concept was poorly understood and yet used in magic? What elements could cause those consequences? How does the use of psychology affect magic for better and worse, and why? Many people who first step into magic see the world in terms of black and white, and have no understanding of the millions of shades in between.

Remember that these days most people have access to magic, which is a relatively new phenomenon in our history. What are the consequences of that for magic in general? What filters are in place in modern magic

to protect the magic and to protect the person from themselves? Which filters work well and which do not? How does 'stupid' operate in magic?

This is all very relevant in ritual magic construction, as you have to assume with many rituals that lots of different people will use and access them.

None of this practical work requires you to write any essays: I want you to simply think your own thoughts without having to justify them in writing. I want you to come to your own conclusions, and not worry about being 'right or wrong': you can take notes for yourself so you can see, later on, how your opinion may have changed, but in general this research is purely for yourself and your own learning. Just don't skip it: it is an important process.

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