

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 2 - Patterns and Maps in Magic

Lesson 3: The Full Pentagram Ritual

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QVAREIA

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.

*For more information and all course modules please visit
www.quareia.com*

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

STUDY GUIDE FOR MODULE TWO

A lot of the lessons in this module are about learning to execute certain ritual patterns (and you have two easy lessons with not much action). It is important that you learn each ritual in turn, learning the recitations by heart, and learning the coordinated movements.

Once you have learned a ritual and are able to do it properly, and have absorbed the lesson, you will have been instructed to repeat that ritual for a certain period of time. As you practice, you are also ready to continue on to the next lesson.

So your rhythm of study should be: read the lesson – practice the ritual movements and learn the recitations – do the ritual ‘proper’- set up a timetable to repeat it –start the next lesson.

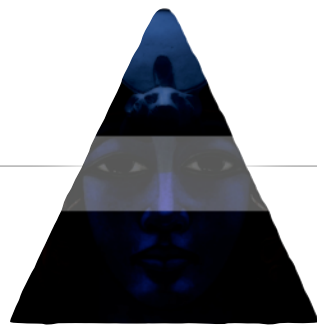


So by now your magical training schedule should look something like the inverted pyramid on the previous page.

Each week you should be doing meditations, tarot reading practice, practicing rituals from previous lessons, learning new ritual/lessons, doing research or writing.

If you have a heavy work schedule and cannot commit to that type of a time frame, work at your own pace: the main thing is that there are things you do regularly, and that you are practicing the previous lesson while learning the new one, so that they overlap a little.

Above all, make sure that you stay in the sequence of lessons and do not hop forward a few lessons.



QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 2 - Patterns and Maps in Magic

Lesson 3: The Full Pentagram Ritual

As a magician, you cannot work a ritual in isolation: you must work it in harmony with your life in order for it to be fully successful. A ritual is a final externalisation of inner patterns and powers, and the human is its fulcrum, its enactor, and also its vessel. If that vessel is cracked or badly formed, then the ritual's power will trickle through its cracks, and this will ultimately destroy the vessel. Heavy words indeed.

It is crucial to understand this dynamic at the very earliest stages of your magical practice. If the apprentice grasps this notion and works with it, then slowly the vessel (the magician) will strengthen and come into balance. No magician starts out in their training as a harmonious vessel. Becoming one can take many years, and the process has many different layers to it. But step by step the apprentice can stabilise, tune and eventually strengthen the vessel. This does not result in a perfect human being; rather it results in a human being who is functional enough to work as a magician.

The first step towards this stabilisation can be approached through the Pentagram Ritual. The ritual itself does not do the stabilising; it highlights what potentially needs adjusting and brings it to your awareness, so that you step into a process of constant evolution. By now you will have worked with the Pentagram a few times in different forms, so you will understand that it

is about ‘Man,’ not about projecting an external shield. It is the first step of ‘Man, know thyself.’

Just as a body can successfully fight infection if it is balanced and healthy, so too can the magician fight attack or intrusion if they are magically balanced and healthy.

Working with the Dynamics

Before we get to the ritual itself, we first need to understand and implement the dynamics that flow through the pattern of the ritual in order for it to work. We have looked at the Pentagram in terms of directional elements, tools, time and Divine power. Now we need to look at it in terms of human action.

The following text may come across as spiritual idealism, but it is not—though the processes it describes is where such idealism, however misunderstood, comes from. Some spiritual or ethical ideals are formed by culture or religion. But others are actually the remnants of forgotten knowledge about power dynamics which have transformed, over time, into religious ideals. It is important for a magician to be able to recognise which ideals spring from an active power dynamic, and which do not. So throughout what follows, bear in mind that we are looking at how a particular power dynamic works in relation to the human body and spirit, not at idealism. Do not fall into the trap of taking on board ideals: learn about power dynamics, how we interact with those dynamics, and act accordingly.

Because this particular dynamic is so important to ritual magic and can be very complex, I am addressing it here in detail. And yet I am still only skimming its surface. In later lessons we will address deeper and deeper layers of this dynamic to ensure that you fully understand it for what it is—and for what it is not.

Get out your paperwork from your previous lessons about the Pentagram. Look at the left hand of the pentagram in the diagram you drew. It holds a sword, and has the declaration: “I give.” This is the first dynamic that you need to recognise and work with: that you cannot receive unless you have first given. For a human, a magician, this ‘give’ action is an exter-

nalisation of a creative force. The receiving dynamic is already the first stage of destruction. You cannot destroy until you have first created: the magician is the last mediator in the chain of creation and the first mediator in the chain of destruction. Just as the first act of Divine Power is to utter into the void, to breathe the breath of life into everything, so too the first act of a human must be an outflow of power. For the magician there is also an interesting power dynamic: by mirroring Divinity's first creative act, you align yourself with the Divine Stream. This gives you access to a much greater stream of energy to power the work than any human could create for themselves.

This can seem all very mystical and highbrow, but when it is applied to our physical world and our external actions in that world, it becomes very simple. We give and take in a constant dance of moving energy. Before we can learn how to give at a deep spiritual and energetic level, first we need to be able to give at an outer level. This immediately brings in a sense of defensiveness, as giving is more often than not an issue of resources. When we humans are well resourced, most of us are generous. When we are not well resourced, we pull up the drawbridge and the archers come out, ready to defend. And yet the magical act of outer giving can take many forms, from breathing out, to shitting, to dropping a dime in a hat, to feeding birds, to donating blood: it is about letting go.

Giving can happen in many ways and does not necessarily have to be about resources, but that does not let us off the hook. When an apprentice steps into magic, they step into a pattern that will shape and form them. Sometimes that shaping is painful. I remember when I was very young and had my very first lesson on this dynamic. It horrified me and intrigued me at the same time. The lesson went a bit like this: each of us in the group of students wrote our name down on a piece of paper. Those names went into a hat. We were instructed that, whichever name we pulled out of the hat, we were to be that person's guardian angel for a year. We were to give them gifts, keep an eye out for them, protect them when necessary, ensure they had what they needed, etc. And then we were to choose something that was very dear to us, an object or a belonging, and give it away. Throughout this we were to remain anonymous, so that the recipient would have no idea who their 'angel' was.

The lessons I learned from this exercise have stayed with me to this day. Some of those lessons were obvious, some were misunderstood, and some took many years to dawn on me.

At first I dived into the process with a great zealous muster. I picked my favourite bauble and dropped it in the bag of the person whose name I'd drawn. I gave them goodies every week, left them food, drink, money, watched their back, averted various fights and conflicts, and so on. I was very self-satisfied. I felt particularly smug because I did not actually much like the person I had found myself landed with. (Ah, those good childhood Catholic morals.) Slowly this turned into a control issue. I gave, they received, and as I controlled their moods I got a feedback of self-congratulation. Eventually they got 'receiving fatigue' and started to grumble about what they were getting and whether it was on time. (While all this was going on, I was still waiting for my guardian angel to kick in... it never happened.) This was not what I expected, and it robbed me of my feel-good factor.

When the year came to an end I was mightily relieved. Not because I could stop giving—I have always loved giving, but because the exercise had become a confusing and deflating experience for me. I had not understood it, which in hindsight was no surprise, as I was too young.

The key to triggering the dynamic of giving, in a magical sense, is to give without seeing where it goes, who gets it, what they use it for, etc. The outer phrase is 'I Give,' but in fact its hidden magical dynamic is 'I Let Go' or 'I Release.' This is really, really important in terms of this magical dynamic and magical development in general. If you cannot 'let go,' truly let go, then you will not make it to become a true adept.

So what has this to do with the Pentagram Ritual? Hang with me, we will get there... this truly is important if you want to work real magic with the Pentagram.

Before you can mediate real power without the potential for real corruption, first you must be able to release, from your depths, and unconditionally. That does not come from deep meditation, or from saying 'I have no attachments'—yes you do, we all do. Having attachments is part of human nature. The job of a magician is not to suppress human nature, but to focus it and train it. Remember the engram? True power comes from being able to

react at speed, from your very depths, and often subconsciously. That speed and power comes from repeated, slow, deliberate, outer physical actions.

So your first job is to learn how to release power through the action of 'I Give.' And that means giving and letting go without reward. That is hard. Giving with acknowledgement and congratulations is actually receiving, not giving. There is nothing wrong with that, and it should be a part of your everyday life. But recognise that acknowledged gifting is more receiving than giving.

But this is an important lesson, and it is not a one-off lesson either: it is a throughout life lesson, and that lesson is about releasing, giving, letting go. And that can be anything, not just resources. It can be an identity, a grown child, your youth—do you get the picture? Many people will try to dodge this lesson, and will try to justify or convince themselves that they are releasing when they are not. Do not fall into that trap. You fool no one but yourself, and this is about you and your own magical development.

The deep inner process cannot be engaged consciously until you first begin with baby steps in the physical world. It starts from the outside and works inwards into your depths.

Find something that is precious to you, something of real value, something that you would rather not lose. Put it in a bag. Do not choose something that you like but would not really miss. This is about you, about your ability to truly let go of things that are precious to you.

Now go through your clothing. If you have more coats than are functional (i.e. you need one warm winter coat, one summer coat and maybe a coat for interviews, funerals etc.), choose a good coat or something similar from your surplus and put it in the bag. Take that bag with the coat and the precious item to the local thrift or charity store and hand it over. Do not get a receipt for it, do not take a tax break on it. Just let it go. Walk out before they can see what is in the bag.

When you get your next paycheck, draw out 25% of your food/entertainment/eating out budget for that month. Whatever that amount is, get it in cash and go for a walk in your nearest city. When you see a homeless person, give it to them. Do not question whether they would use it for drugs, do not question whether it would be too much to give, and do not cherry pick which homeless person you give it to. Just give it to them and

walk away. Do not give them chance to say thank you. And make sure it truly is 25% of your food/eating out budget, so that you have to miss a meal or two or cut back on what you buy that month.

Besides the ethics, emotions and psychology of these actions, there is a deep and lasting magical dynamic that is triggered by them. You learn to let go in a way that is uncomfortable, that does not benefit you in any way, and that does not give you status or positive feedback. This is true giving/release. This in turn prepares you, and at a very deep subconscious level, for those occasions in the future when you will need to mediate a vast amount of power and release it without question. This sort of giving should not be a one-off event in your life. Learn to do this every so often, particularly with letting go of things that are very precious to you and that have value. Do not hoard, do not cling. Learn to keep things moving.

As you continue to do this in your life, it will loosen you up at a deep level. It will also teach you about what is really precious and what is not. You will also see a deep magical dynamic kick into action, which is that you cannot actually give anything away: it always comes back somewhere, sometime in the future when you need it—but only when it is given unconditionally and without thought for receiving.

It may take you until you are in your adept studies to really, truly understand what is happening here. But when you do come to understand it, truly, in its magical depths, it will blow you away. Giving is a deep magical dynamic that you will learn more about in the coming modules: the releasing of a belonging is just the most surface presentation of a deeply profound energetic dynamic.

The right-handed dynamic is ‘I receive.’ On the surface this can manifest as being able to receive without the need to give something back in return. Some people (myself included) find the ‘receiving’ dynamic rather difficult, because although it is naturally balanced by the left-handed ‘releasing’ dynamic, the action of receiving without giving in return can bring about a deep sense of failure or weakness: none of us like to be in a position where we are in need of receiving without having the power to give back in return. And this ability to receive unconditionally once more takes away our

power of control.

The ability to receive without giving back is also a deep magical dynamic. The action of the left hand power releasing unconditionally and the right hand action of receiving unconditionally are two interlinked dynamics that are separated out consciously. This keeps their energies in a balanced tension. When we mix them unconsciously (which is how it tends to work in normal life), we cannot isolate the power of the left or right hand and work with it specifically.

And this gets down to the most basic dynamic of magic: stepping away from the unconscious acceptance of a dynamic, and learning instead to engage consciously with that dynamic's individual, polarised powers in a balanced but unique way.

So we can passively accept a dynamic, or we can consciously engage with it in a balanced way. In between those two approaches lie unbalanced forms of engagement, ones which favour one of the two poles of the dynamic over the other. This is the result of attempting to engage with a dynamic without truly understanding how it works, and it is what we generally find in religions (and in some magical systems). Some religions lean towards, say, a vow of poverty and non-ownership ('I let go'); others lean towards taking everything to which one feels entitled ('I receive').

Both of these stances are unbalanced and flawed. The most glaring modern example of this is the Western Buddhist's mantra of 'I have no attachments,' when in fact they are attached to all manner of things and continually wrestling for control. Again, this is something we will examine in more depth and in magical terms later in the course. First it must be learned in a practical, exteriorised way.

The receiving element of this power dynamic is not just about receiving 'stuff.' It is about receiving stuff unconditionally, whether it is something nice or something bad. When the vessel is filled magically, it can be filled with resources and energy, or it can be filled with illness, suffering, and defeat: actually, it will be filled with whatever is necessary to move you forward out of inertia. But when this receiving quality is taken out of balance, away from the left hand power of giving/releasing—i.e. the magician works only with the receiving arm of the Pentagram—you get either greed or glamorised suffering (an example of which is the consciousness of the Catholic


Church).As you hopefully can begin to see, receiving and giving is a fine balancing act.

The release/give must be of itself and not connected to receiving. And the receiving must be of itself and not connected to release/giving. But they both must be contained in a balance of action: the magician must do both, but each action must be a complete action of itself and not connected to its polar opposite. The human is the fulcrum in the middle. If you consistently engage one arm of the Pentagram without the other, you get imbalanced. If you meld both dynamics together and make them dependant on each other, you also get imbalanced.

The task of the magician is first to be conscious of these dynamics (by physical doing), then to understand the dynamics (by personal reflection and magical work), and finally to engage the dynamics as separate energies that are harmonious of each other yet not dependant on each other. This in turn allows the magician to stand in the centre of power and act as fulcrum and conductor to the vast powers of creation and destruction as they flow in and out of our world. When you engage all of this, first through outer physical action and then through magical work, you will directly engage with the maxim ‘as above so below.’

Magically, this is better expressed as ‘as is outward, so is inward.’ By the outermost surface ‘doing,’ the deepest inner impulse is awakened and begins to grow ready to work with energy and power. You can practice receiving in a manner that is specific to your situation. If you are resourceless, poor or in need, and you are given the resources you need, accept them. Accept them without the feeling that you need to give something back or that you need to justify the gift, or that you now ‘owe.’ Accept them without feeling shame or guilt. Accept them as energies that are filling a deficit in the vessel in order for the vessel to function properly. This can be tougher than it sounds. If you are used to being self-reliant, it can seriously knock your sense of self to find yourself in a position of need.

It is important to step away from the cultural and emotional baggage that comes with such a situation, which cuts to the core of our sense of self. This is dangerous in magic and it creates a vulnerability that can seriously threaten you when you are working in the presence and midst of great power. I know, I have been there more than once, and still have the occasional struggle with it.



Another way the receiving dynamic can manifest is in the unconditional receiving of something unpleasant, difficult or painful. This is also a really important aspect of the dynamic from a magical sense, and it is easily twisted if you are not careful. Sometimes, particularly in the lives of true magicians, the vessel is given energies that are extremely difficult to hold. The magician must be able to hold that energy for however long is necessary in order for a job to be done.

That is a deep octave of a natural dynamic that comes into sharp focus in the life of a magician. Many times you will be called upon to hold power that is painful or uncomfortable. Sometimes it lasts a few days or weeks, other times it can last for years—or a lifetime. Then it really is ‘man up’ time: that is when the magician is truly tested in terms of their ability to hold and release power, their ability to face a dangerous job or being, and their ability to do what is necessary in order for something to be achieved.

When we experience this in everyday life, it can manifest as a long-term illness or a continuous conveyor belt of bad events. We get swept with the tide and feel helpless in the face of it. When you step onto the path of the magician, you begin to fully and consciously engage with these powers, and that in itself changes the dynamics dramatically. Corrupt and fragmented magic encourages people to dodge these events through ‘results magic.’ Corrupt and fragmented magic can also (particularly when it manifests in religion) encourage people to passively accept everything ‘as the will of God,’ and then have a massive martyr ego about it. Both ends of this spectrum are unbalanced and unhealthy. In all things that are unbalanced, there is often a grain of truth lurking somewhere in there, but it is a truth that has become massively distorted and is being viewed in black and white.

A magician who engages with a difficult situation correctly will immediately recognize what particular magical or energetic dynamic is in action, and carry out the appropriate work. Sometimes that can indeed mean accepting the situation. But instead of sitting in the shit and feeling sorry for yourself, the way forward is to recognise what is happening at a deeper level, engage it, work with it, and learn from it. Sometimes it means not ‘accepting’ the situation but actively engaging

with it to bring change. The skill is knowing what to do and when.

In magic, and for the magician who is on a magical path, there are no accidents, no coincidences, and no meaningless events. Everything has a purpose: the skill of the magician is to find the purpose, work with it, or learn to work around it. If something difficult is poured into your vessel, there is a reason for it. (And I do not mean that in the New Age sense of ‘oh, there is a reason for your suffering.’ That is just ignorance.) For example... Let’s get personal. I will expose my underbelly. In my forties I succumbed to a quite vicious autoimmune disease. It runs in my family on both sides, and in reality I had been really lucky (and had worked hard with magic and with looking after my body) not to have had it hit me full blast in my twenties. It has limited a great many things for me.

The reason for the disease being there is that it is inherited. That’s it. I had two choices: collapse in a disabled heap and become a victim, or move sideways. So I moved sideways. Nowadays it generally has a minor impact on my life apart from the occasional bump in the road, as I have adjusted my life around it. I cannot do many of things I used to, but that is life. I have also learned a great deal about myself, my body, human nature and society through this process. It has been a bitter-sweet gift indeed.

Magically it is like having an inbuilt early warning system: my immune system kicks off at the slightest magical attack or imbalance. Some would consider that bad, but it is not: it is an annoying but very useful tool, a tool that has come to be extremely useful in my magical work. I have no emotion to it either way; it is what it is.

Do not engage in emotional or energetic attachment, either positive or negative, to whatever difficulty you face: do not get angry, sad, defensive, etc. Looking at the situation without being emotional about it enables the magician to slowly convert their difficulty, whatever it is, into a tool as opposed to a burden, or at least to learn to step around it, absorb it, whatever. The key is not to fight what is poured into your vessel, be it good or bad, nor to blindly accept it. It is vital to learn how to carry on working on your path without being distracted or sidelined by what is poured into your vessel. If you win the lottery, do not change your path or your life: such a win in real magical terms is the worst curse that could happen to any magician. The key is to continue with your work and trust that the vessel will process whatever power is there in its own time.

This is important. When you come to work as an adept (although this can also happen to initiates) there will be times when your vessel, through magical work, will have to hold a very difficult or alluring power, and one that can manifest in your life or body in the weirdest ways. It is not for you to try and process that power in any way; you simply hold it until it is ready to release (this is where the skill of the sword is then aligned with the skill of the vessel...hold/guard, release). The ability to hold energy in your vessel without trying to process it will come once you learn how not to attach emotionally or react to power as it comes and goes within you.

Releasing/giving and receiving/containing are the two major power dynamics that flow in and out of the human sphere, so now we have dealt with them the rest is much easier and less wordy. Sorry that was such a long piece, but it is a key dynamic and it is vital that you understand it if you want to do competent and advanced magic.

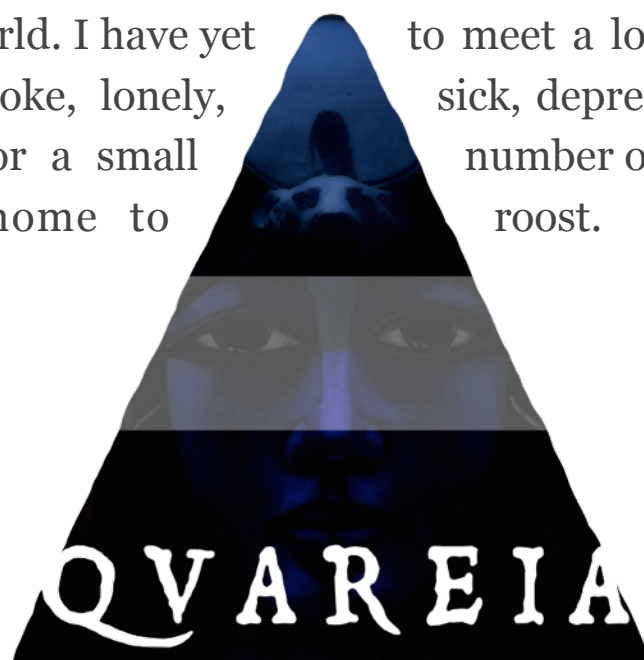
In the Pentagram pattern, remember the two directions that engage with the power of the future, and the two directions that engage with the power of the past. Also remember the Divinity above which is air, no substance, a breath; and the Divinity below which, as a vessel, receives the breath which enlivens the substance. These directions also work with the two dynamics we have just looked at in depth. Rather than go over how that works here, this is something you can ponder for yourself and take notes on.

Hopefully now you will also be starting to understand why the centre of the magician, and the centre of the directions, is the power of stillness, of the void, of potential ready but not yet formed. With all of time, power in and power out swirling around the magician, the true centre and fulcrum of all magic and all creation/destruction is this stillness: that is the present. It is the only place in existence and magic where there is a constant 'now.' Everything else is either moving away or moving towards, going into the future or passing into the past. Physical existence, be it the planet or the human, is a constant dance of movement, vibration and action. Only the very centre of spirit is still and unchanging: that is where the maxim 'God is within you' comes from. It is the breath contained within the flame of life.

So now let's start moving towards the ritual itself (pew). When this ritual is used, it solidifies, roots, and anchors us within ourselves, our existence, and our place within that existence. In that act of anchoring, if there is any serious imbalance within you, it will rise up to the surface so that you can address it. It is a simple ritual that slowly builds in power over the years, as we engage with the opposing left hand and right hand powers of the pentagram. (Notice that this has absolutely nothing to do with the 'left hand/right hand path' identities in magic, which are essentially ignorant bullshit.)

The more you work with and engage the left and right hand dynamics in your life and magical work, the more power will begin to flow into your ritual actions: you become a totally rooted solid gateway for power that stands at the crossroads of power in, power out, future and past, creation and destruction. This builds and focuses over the years and decades until the magician 'becomes' the pentagram rather than 'does' the pentagram. It becomes a 'sense' or 'feeling' that you recover on nearly a daily basis as opposed to a ritual that you blindly repeat year after year. When you get to that stage, there is very little indeed that can knock you. That does not mean bad things do not happen; it means that everything is kept in balance and nothing can knock you off that balance. All physical existence has to have good times and bad times; that is how nature works. But you move from 'I am suffering', to 'I endure', to 'I flourish despite it.'

If you try to dodge that growth process through results magic, you will not only end up magically weak and ineffective, but you will also start to slide down the long slope of degeneracy as a magician. For example, I have been in magic for nearly forty years, and I have connections with magicians all over the world. I have yet to meet a long-term results magician who is not broke, lonely, sick, depressed and screwed up. They all do well for a small number of years... and then the backlash comes home to roost.



The Full Pentagram Ritual

Note: Eventually as an adept you will do this as a fully contacted ritual with the contacts in the room with you, interlinking with you. But first you must learn to work the ritual pattern, invite the powers in, and then observe how they manifest in your life and work.

Get out your notes from your astrology lesson and your work with the chart and the pentagram. Look up your planets again in relation to you standing in the centre of the chart/pentagram. Focus on the positions of Saturn and Pluto: make sure you know where they are in your natal chart, and where that puts them in relation to you standing in the room (remember that ritual action?).

Set up your work space with the four directional altars and one in the centre. Go around the directions, starting in the east and using the methods you have already learned, light the lights and see the gates opening. With each direction, after you acknowledge it and as you see its gates open, become aware of a figure coming through those gates and standing on the other side of the altar.

Now walk to the east altar. Place your hands upon the altar and close your eyes. In your mind's eye, see the figure on the other side of the altar hold out their hand. Imagine yourself reaching into your pocket and pulling something out. Using your mind's eye, look at it. It does not matter if you cannot tell what it is.

Recite:

I, (your name), relinquish this that has been demanded by the inner contact.

In your mind, see yourself hand over whatever it is to the outstretched hand. Instead of receiving what you have given, the hand closes over your hand and joins hands with you.

Step back from the altar and as you do, see in your mind's eye the inner contact holding onto your hand and move with you, passing through the altar and into the room. You may now see them with your inner vision more clearly. Do not try to put an identity upon them or communicate with them. Turn and walk around the directions, aware that the inner contact is walking with you, still holding onto your hand. Finish in front of the north altar. In your mind, see the inner contact standing beside you. They place their other hand upon your shoulder to support you.

Using your mind's eye, see the inner contact from the north step forward so that they are clearly on the other side of the altar. Stretch out your hand with the gift in it, being aware that the hand of the inner contact from the east is also there. They are supporting you in this act. The inner contact from the north reaches out and takes what is in your hand.

Recite:

I release this gift in an act of giving. I give it back to my past, back to my ancestors. I relinquish all connection with this gift.

Take a deep breath, and blow out a slow sustained breath, while being aware that you are releasing 'power out.' (This is connected to the 'breathing down the blade' magical action that you did in a past lesson).

Step back. The inner contact of the east still has a hand on your shoulder. Turn and go to the east. Place your hands upon the altar and wait until the inner contact crosses through the altar and stands on the threshold of the gates.

Now turn, walk around the directions, and stop in front of the west altar. Step forward and place your hands upon the west altar. See the inner contact emerge from the gates and stand on the other side of the altar. See in your mind's eye the inner contact holding something out in their hand to you. Imagine that you reach out your hand so that they can pour it into your hand. As they do, they then hold their hand over yours to contain it. Step back, turn and walk around the directions (north, east, and then to the south) and stop in front of the south altar. The inner contact of the west is

with you, a hand upon your shoulder and their other hand upon your hand that contains the gift. You cannot see what it is.

Step forward to the south altar and see the inner contact of the south come up and stand on the other side of the altar. Working with the inner contact of the west, hold out your hand and expose the gift to the inner contact of the south so that they and you can see it. You may or may not understand what it is.

Recite:

I accept this gift from the west, witnessed by the powers of the south, the powers of the future. I will retain this gift for however long is necessary and I will willingly let it go when the time comes.

The inner contact of the south steps to one side and holds out an arm towards the gate as if to show you something. You may see past the gate into a landscape, a scene, an image, a person: it does not really matter. You will gain a certain feeling, a deep instinct into the role that the gift will play in your future, however small or great.

Regardless of whether the instinct you gained about the gift was good or bad, now you must absorb it. Take in a slow sustained breath: be aware you are filling your lungs with 'power in.' The inner contact of the south reaches over their hand and cups it under your hand. Together, you place the gift within you. See the gift, with your hand and the contacts hand push the gift into your abdomen or chest: the power or energy of the gift is taken into your being. You may feel a heaviness from the energy of the gift as it is placed within you. The inner contact of the south withdraws back through the gates and stands upon the threshold.

Turn and walk a full circle around the directions, and then walk to the west altar. Place your hands upon the altar and see the inner contact of the west pass back through the altar and stand on the threshold of the gates. Step back, walk a full circle around the directions and finish in the north, facing the central altar with your back to the north altar.

This is the second part of the ritual, and the part that can be used on a daily basis to embed the pentagram within you.

Hold out your arms to the sides. Throughout this section, keep your arms outstretched, even as you turn. They will start to hurt. Get over it. Keep your shoulders down and your elbows held and that will help. When you stand, stand with your legs apart so that you make the pentagram shape with your body.

See in your mind's eye the sword in your left hand, handle up, blade down. See in your right hand the cup. See above you the hexagram and below you the earth sign. See before you in the south a road going off into the distance with full sun. See people behind you: the ancestors. Remember where Saturn is positioned in this pattern in relation to your natal chart, and also the position of Pluto.

Recite:

In my left hand, the sword of Justice and balance; with my left hand I give to bring balance; with my left hand I release to bring balance.

My left foot stands upon the stone of restriction, the grindstone which forges my future.

Saturn is my grindstone.

Now briefly visualise where Saturn would be in your pattern. See a connection, a thread going from your left foot to wherever in the pentagram pattern Saturn is—take note of whether Saturn falls near an arm, leg, head, shoulder, etc.

Recite:

In my right hand, the vessel of regeneration; with my right hand I receive to bring balance; with my right hand I accept in order to bring balance.

My right foot stands upon the threshing floor which receives the gifts and blessings of my harvest.

Pluto is my threshing floor.

Now briefly visualise where Pluto would be in your pattern. See a connection, a thread going from your right foot to wherever in the pentagram pattern Pluto is—take note of whether Pluto falls near an arm, leg, head, shoulder, etc.

Recite:

Behind me is time past, the ancestors who walked before me. I release whatever is necessary to them.

Before me is the future, the path I will forge. I accept whatever is necessary for that path.

Turn around and face the north altar while still keeping your arms outstretched.

Recite:

In my left hand is the sword of balance that is given to the vessel in the west.

*In my right hand is the vessel which receives the sword from the east.
With me is my past, the blood of my past, and those who birthed me.
Before you and in honour of you, I hold the power of the sword and the vessel in your name.*

Beyond me is the future.

My path is forged by the grindstone of the future, and my past is measured by my harvest upon the threshing floor.

Now turn and face the central altar in the pentagram stance (with your arms still outstretched... stop whining).

Recite:

Above me is Divine Power, the father that gives breath.

To the east is the power of the sword.

Below me is Divine Substance, the mother that receives the breath.

To the west is the power of the vessel.

*Before me is the future, lined with the noble ones.
Behind me is the past, and the angel who guards me.
Within me is stillness.
I Am (your first name).
I Will Be.*

Now you can drop your arms. Sit down on the floor and close your eyes. Meditate for a few minutes and then, still sitting, see yourself standing in the pentagram pattern facing south. Think about the dynamics and powers of the pattern, and think about where the two planets fit within it. What are they near? Ponder on what that means for your life and pattern. Think about the dynamics of these two planets, what powers flow through them, how they affect life etc., and then think about them in connection with their position close to your head, or limb, which limb it is, and what magical tool and power runs through that limb. Write your observations in your journal.

Experiment

1. By now you have worked with the pentagram in a number of different but basic ways. The pentagram ritual itself is not a dogma, rather it is an expression of the flows of power through and around a human. In terms of the ritual itself, if you wish to work daily with it, you can either use it directly as it is above using only the recitations, or using the altar work and the recitations. If you stay with that exact pattern, write down your observations, whether it got easier or more difficult—it is one of those rituals where there is elbow room for contacts to join in and put you to work with minor jobs (here, take this, go put it over there). So keep a close note of interactions, what you have to give and take, and write it all down in your journal.

If you wish to be more adventurous and do some experimentation, the first experiment would be to adjust the ritual. This is the first step of creat-

ing your own magical patterns. You can include elements from the other pentagram work if you wish, the key when doing that is to think carefully about what you are including, why you are including it, if it is harmonic to the ritual, and at what point it should be put in. Once you have adjusted it, then stay with it as a set format. The key to building the power of this particular type of ritual is its engram action, its repeated action, which requires doing it in exactly the same way without deviating from the pattern. As you continue to work with the ritual, and once you can do it calmly, without faltering and from memory, the first thing you will notice (besides getting stronger arms—you want biceps, here is how) is that power will start to flow around you. You will begin to engage very gently with the flows of power that are constantly moving in and out of the directions.

Your placement within that flow of power, in the stance and recitation of the pentagram of humanity, slowly brings you strength and grounding. It also begins the process of awakening the realisation of certain deeper and more powerful magical powers. When you get to adept level and look back at this ritual, you will understand the ritual in a totally different light and see the power hidden within such a seemingly innocuous ritual.

Note: when you release/give something back to the past, if you see it and know what it is, then let it go, no matter what it is. That means in life, give it away, throw it in a river, etc. If it is something like your house keys (yup, that has happened to me), be willing to let go of the house and move if that is what is needful. Just that willingness to let go sets the action in motion. And trust me, even though it can seem at the time to be a terrible ‘oh shit’ moment, it tends to be for the better: it is clearing ground for the future.

If what you let go of is a person, again, be willing in your heart to let them go, no matter how much you love them. Sometimes that can indeed mean a break with someone, but sometimes it can be about a deeper dynamic of not clinging to a person. This happens particularly to people with children who have reached adulthood. You have to learn to let go for their good as well as yours. That doesn’t mean you will never see them, it means that you cease to hang on to them.

This also stands for whatever you receive. Whatever it is, be willing to accept it and work with it.

2. In the second part of the ritual, you will have noticed that a new element has been introduced: the Grindstone and the Threshing Floor. Throughout the course, new elements will be slowly introduced for you to work with and understand. The Grindstone is the stone that sharpens the blade (the magician), and the Threshing Floor is the stone that receives the harvest of a magician's life, a harvest that is weighed on the scales of Ma'at as the magician enters into death.

Rather than outline here the deep magical connotations and mysteries woven within this, you can research, discover and ponder it for yourself. Look up threshing floor, altar and the First Temple of Solomon. If you research further, you will discover just how deep the magical action is of setting your right foot upon the threshing floor.

When to use this ritual

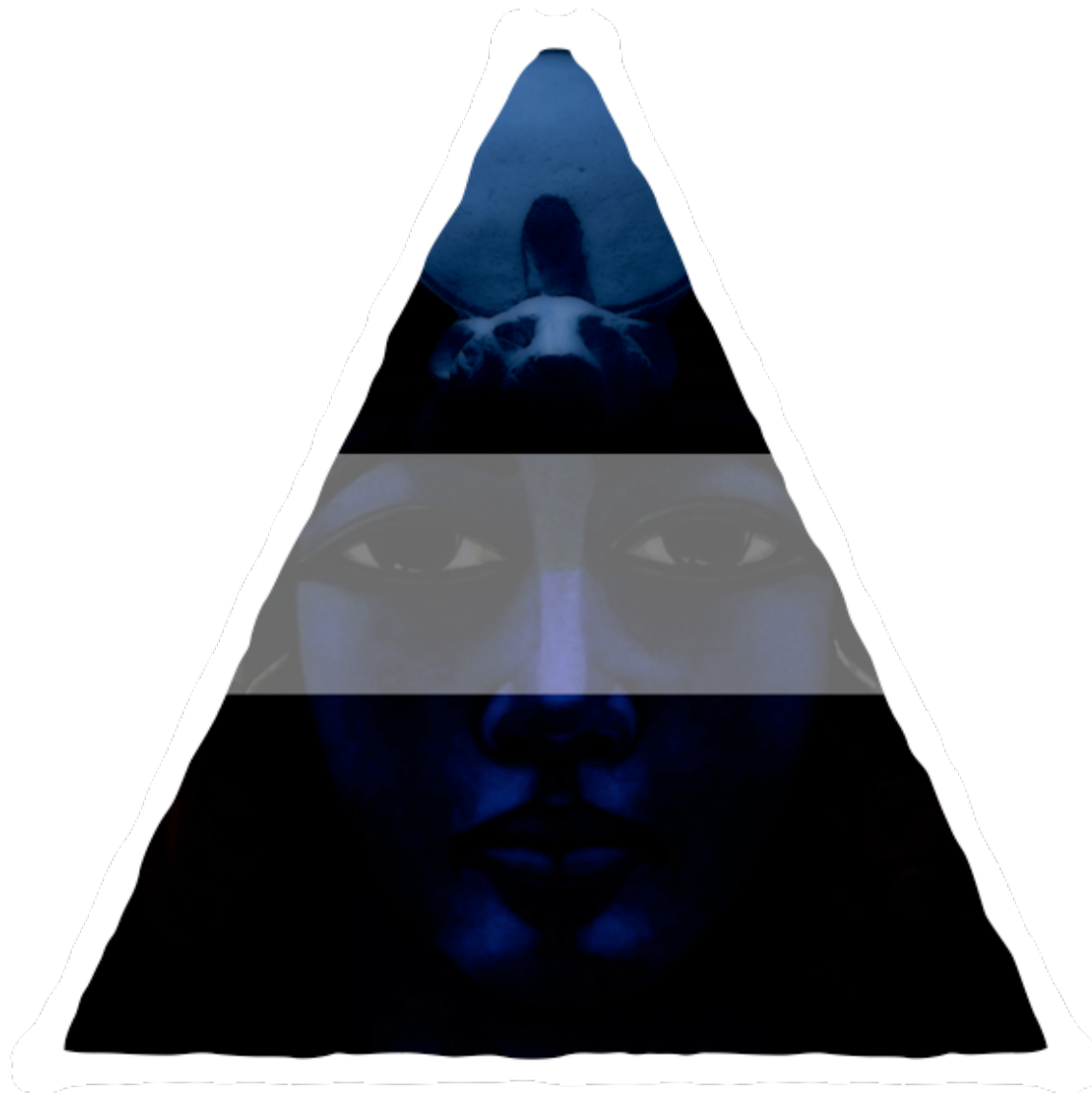
Use your abridged or adjusted version of the ritual a few times a week for a few weeks so that it becomes second nature. But do the whole ritual at least once or twice in that time. The whole ritual is excellent to use when you become blocked, stuck, in a rut or cannot see a way forward from a very difficult or stagnant position. Completing the whole ritual in such an instance, and then doing the abridged version on a daily basis, will begin to shift stuck energies. It gets the power moving, the future opening up, the past falling away, and it stands you firmly on the ground. That makes you very hard to knock over.

Don't be tempted once the power gets moving and your life starts changing to do the ritual more and more in the hope of getting better/stronger/faster—that is not the right reason to do continuous work. Do the full ritual to get things moving. Do the daily or at least frequent abridged version to keep things moving, and then once that action begins to materialise in your life, switch ritual focus.

You don't need to *keep* revving the engine once it is going; you need to get it in gear, put your foot down, and go somewhere, which means learning new useful skills, and then putting those skills into action and service.

QVAREIA

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