



QUAREIA—THE INITIATE

Module V—Deities and the Magician

Lesson 3: Sekhmet and Hathor

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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 V—Deities and the Magician

Lesson 3: Sekhmet and Hathor



Sekhmet¹ and Hathor² are two sides of the same power, which is an ancient and well-established power in Egypt.

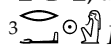
Sekhmet is war, disease, and also the protectoress from inner magical and outer threats. She is the destroyer who brings balance through her destruction and who uses her powers to protect the land, the people, and the monarch. She is the protector of Ma'at, the slayer of injustice, and the vengeance of the gods. Her power is also that of the noonday sun and the blast of heat in the desert. She was called upon by Ra³ to destroy the humans who had angered him.


Magically Sekhmet is in a tight orbit with Mut,⁴ Hathor, Bast,⁵ and Tefnut. At several points in Egyptian history, and variously in Upper and Lower Egypt, these different goddesses were either twinned or absorbed into each other.

Hathor is the flip side of Sekhmet. She was one of the Egyptian deities who spread out beyond the borders of Egypt and was worshipped a great

¹  *Syht* [5, p.204]

² , also  *Hwt-hrw* [5, p.166.] [1, p.463.]

³  *Rc* [5, p.147.]

⁴  *Mwt* [5, p.106]

⁵  *Bstt* [5, p.78.], Gardiner has *Bšt*. [6, p.527.]

deal in many neighbouring areas. People feared Sekhmet, and rightly so, but they adored Hathor who was far more amenable to humans. Her power is that of a sky goddess, as is plain from her titles: “Mistress of Heaven” and “Lady of the Stars.”⁶ She is closely connected to the star Sirius,⁷ to Aset,⁸ (Isis) and also to the Semitic goddess Asherah.

Where Sekhmet destroys, Hathor creates: she is the goddess of beauty, healing, motherhood, music, containment and consolidation: she is the Vessel, hence her name, *Hwt-ḥrw*, “the enclosure of Horus.”

She is also the goddess who protects and guides miners who are looking for turquoise, and many of the ancient turquoise mines had shrines to her: she is the guardian of the quarry. As “Mistress of the West”⁹ she greets the newly dead and guides them; and as the goddess of the marshes she connects into water, along with being deeply connected with sycamore trees.

These aspects appear throughout the ancient world in connection with mother goddesses, along with the dual nature of the mother: nurture and rage. When angered Hathor becomes Sekhmet: look up the myth of Ra, and how Hathor became Sekhmet. You will also start to see the similarities between Hathor/Sekhmet/Ma’at and the Hindu goddesses Durga and Kali.


There are plenty of papers written about the Egyptian deities, so you can look up all the details and aspects for yourself.


Magical applications

Working with these two subdivided deities can be very powerful. They have a long reach, far beyond Egypt, and their powers are deep, primal, and ancient. They balance each other out, and with magicians they will appear and switch on and off according to what is happening in the long-term fate patterns of the magician’s life.

⁶*nbt pt* “Mistress of Heaven” and *nbt sbꜣw* “Mistress of the Stars.” [5, p.129.] The titles are both to be found in *The Story of Sinuhe*. *sꜣ nht* “Sinuhe” means “Son of the sycamore.” [7]

⁷ *Spdt*, also the goddess Sopdet/Sothis. [5, p.224.]

⁸ *st* [5, p.5.]

⁹ *nbt jmntt* “Mistress of the West.” Found in Chapter 186 of the *Papyrus of Ani*. [3, p.652.]

As was stated in the previous lesson, it is folly for a magician (as opposed to priest) to dedicate themselves solely to one goddess, particularly when they are subdivided as Sekhmet and Hathor are. They will flow back and forth in the magician's life as is necessary, if the magician is tapped into the Egyptian orbit of deities.

The same goes for the subdivided deities of any culture: focusing on one subdivided deity indefinitely is a recipe for long-term magical disaster.

Sekhmet

By now you should have at least a rough idea of what Sekhmet does, and that she is a deep, primal power that works through humans and creatures: whereas Tefnut affects nature, Sekhmet affects people. Magically she is destruction, and also protection of that which is balanced or 'true': she is the protector of Ma'at.

She will not protect you if you have to face some destruction as part of your fate pattern, but she will guide you. If unbalanced destruction or magical attack is launched at you, or destructive beings are around you that you have not triggered yourself, she will offer a level of protection.

Sometimes, particularly for magicians, destructive forces and magical attacks are great learning tools.¹⁰ A lot of magic is learned on the hoof, through making mistakes, or just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The other dynamic of learning for an adept magician is learning how to survive and flourish in the face of severe and skilled magical attack: the world is full of nasty assholes and the magical world is no different. Sekhmet will lift a layer of that until you are capable of dealing with it.

The way she works for magicians is to have an active presence in the living space and work space of the magician, usually via an enlivened statue or image. But it has to be a 'true' image, i.e. a direct temple copy, and not a sexed-up, digitally enhanced fantasy image that makes her look like a Barbie doll. Correct images are a key to accessing deities: the vessel must be correct.

¹⁰Though you will not appreciate this when you are in the midst of it.

Once a connection is made her presence is worked with by giving her energies in the form of fire (candle flame), food, metals, and whatever else she asks for. The gifts are not given with the same regularity all the time; rather they are switches which turn the presence of her powers on and off. What is given dictates what power she releases into your space and around you.

Sometimes Sekhmet can trigger in the wider world beyond your own space. When this happens she is most likely ‘raging’: she will bring wider destruction around you, and if it continues she will do a lot of damage. She can get bloodlust which spins her power out of control. In such cases she is given blood red alcohol to dampen her down...can you see how the old stories tell you how to work with a deity? Think about the story of Sekhmet and her bloodlust.

One way to keep an eye on her bloodlust is through divination. Cards can act as an intermediary vocabulary so that you can speak to the deity and she can speak back to you. If you find there is suddenly a lot of destruction happening around you and you are working with Sekhmet, do a landscape reading to see what would happen to you if you do not intervene with her. If you use the *LXXXI Deck*, do the full spread and ask the same question, and also look at what would happen in the wider world if she was not dampened down.

Though we approach these deities as personalities, they are also pure powers, and those powers sometimes need waking up or putting to sleep. Giving Sekhmet a daily light in the form of a candle keeps the door open during the day;¹¹ the flame is a magical threshold. So you may find that sometimes it is wise to keep a twenty-four hour light in front of her, at other times just a daily light, and sometimes no light at all is best. In fact most of the time her presence in a statue is enough.

When there is a lot of unbalanced destruction/attack going on, she will work hard to buffer it around you. When the risk has passed her power needs to be turned down; otherwise she will rampage out of control now that her power has nowhere to go and nothing to work on. It’s a bit like inflammation in the body: it needs a proper job to do if it is not going to get out of control.

Sekhmet can also be worked with in a ritual setting, which is something you will do. If you are working with a dangerous power in the south—

¹¹And at night if a nightlight is kept going before her.

Set¹² for example, staying with the Egyptian pattern—then Sekhmet would be in the southwest and Hathor in the southeast: they stand on either side of Set to limit and compost the power that is being worked with.


Their statues would be placed in the ritual space, they would be communed with in vision and brought to the thresholds, and their intermediaries¹³ would work with you in ritual vision handing you power, taking power, holding threads, and so forth.

But you would only work actively in ritual with these powers if it was necessary: when you work in vision with a deity, you are essentially going into their space. When you work ritually with them you bring them actively into the human realm, which can be dangerous if there is nowhere really for their power to go.

This is one of the reasons why as a magician you learn visionary work: not only to pass into different realms and meet powers on their own turf, but because it changes you at a deep level and starts to develop your own inner ability/psychic awareness. The power then switches on at a much greater level, it can easily communicate with you, and then it can be externalised through ritual, utterance, or marks.¹⁴

The relationship between deity and magician is very individual: all the information I am giving you is a starting point beyond which you will develop your own method of working, your own level of communication, and so forth. Remember this. There is no step-by-step guide that fits all once you get to this level of working.

When you look carefully at the powers with which Sekhmet works, and when you begin to work with her as a magician, all her powers will come into your orbit: disease, war, bloodlust, fierce protection, and so forth. If they have good reason to be in your orbit, you can work well with them. If you don't, then their orbits can start to decay until they crash into your life. Always treat these powerful deities with respect and not as if they were toys to experiment with.

¹²  *Stl* [5, p.254.]

¹³ Inner priests, priestesses.

¹⁴ Sigils, writing.

Hathor

Hathor is the polar opposite of Sekhmet. She is a goddess who is the epitome of the Vessel: she is the Egyptian version of the Mother. She draws in the creative aspects of power such as healing, resources, joy, music, sexuality, and creativity. She is the patron goddess of healers, musicians, artists, mothers, dancers, and stability. Because of this she was widely worshipped in the ancient world beyond the borders of Egypt, and was one of the few Egyptian deities to have her own temple. Though her temple also housed other deities: there is no Egyptian temple that has only one deity in it, rather you would have a prominent deity, such as Hathor, and then other deities in her orbit would have sanctuaries in her temple.

And that is something to be acutely aware of in your work with these deities: they always worked in orbits and unions, not as individuals. This dynamic is still alive in India: a temple may be dedicated to a particular deity, but it will also house the other deities from the same orbit.

The idea of having one deity in a temple to the exclusion of all others is a more modern concept and generally first appears when monotheism starts to show its head—in Egypt, for example, this was around 1340 B.C. in the reign of Akhenaten.

Before the concept of one overarching god became popular, a temple may well have been dedicated to a specific deity,¹⁵ but it would house the orbiting deities in very specific positions, working with them in oppositions, angles of power, and groups in order to balance out their powers.¹⁶ This balancing out of orbiting powers was not only confined to Egypt, but was prevalent throughout the ancient world.

Modern magicians often dedicate themselves and work-long term with one specific deity. This is a result of Christian conditioning, and it can take a major effort to pull away from it. Such work can quickly become unbalanced and can cause all sorts of problems for the magician.

Hathor works in a wide orbit with many different deities and more specifically with Sekhmet: they balance each other out. Long-term work with her alone can bring about too much growth: Hathor is the Light-bearer to Sekhmet's Restriction.

¹⁵Amun, for example.

¹⁶Which is something you will work with in this module.

These root creation powers echo and mirror themselves in the deities, and knowing those creation powers in depth will help you identify what power dynamic flows through a deity. Once the creation powers step down to their lower orbits, the deities that mediate those lower powers are more immediate and have bigger families in orbit. But Hathor and Sekhmet both pull on those deeper root powers, so keep that in mind.

Deity and human relationships

Before we move on to the practical work there is something to think about in terms of your own direct relationship with the deities that you work with. There is not a lot written about this dynamic, so you will have to learn, to some extent, as you go along. Paying attention and observing everything around you, and paying attention to how your body is coping when you work with particular deities, will give you insights so that you can make suitable decisions.

Some deities, particularly the ones that draw on the lower orbits of creation power, can be quite human in the way they connect with magicians. This comes with whole bag of issues. The biggest issue is sex, connection, and jealousy. I have come across situations quite frequently where a magician has fallen foul of a deity because the deity was jealous of the magician's sexual/emotional partner.

A classic deity who does this is Athena. If Athena is in a working relationship with a male magician, then at some point she will likely start trying to turn the magician against his partner. Eventually she will start to attack his partner through dreams, illnesses, and so forth.

This seems to happen often when the magician's partner is female, but less often if they are male. The reason for this boils down to the dynamics of Athena's power: they are polarised specifically to work opposite a male. We can see aspects of this in Athena's mythology, and when such a situation arises with a deity it is always good to look at their mythology, as it is there to tell you a story about how that deity power works.

Athena is a goddess who specifically favours male warriors, thinkers, and magicians. Any woman who comes between her and her men, she destroys. Her wrath was legendary, and I have found myself on the wrong end of her mood more than once.

Usually this sort of thing happens when the deity, male or female, is operating out of the lower orbits of creation.¹⁷ The closer they are to human powers the more likely they are to exhibit human emotions like jealousy. But the deeper in you go into the creation powers, the less human they are emotionally, though many are still communicative and will work deeply with you. Once you reach deeply to the point of the weaving powers, then the communication fades but the power flows through the deity image: it is enough for such a presence to be there and for you to acknowledge it.

So should you decide to work with a deity or they turn up in your life at any point, now or in the future, take this advice: know who they really are, and if you bring their presence into your work life then ensure their orbiting powers/deities are also present, or at least some of them. If they are a deity with a clear polarisation, also have their polar opposite present, even if you are not working directly with them. We will cover all these methods in the practical work of this module.

Task: The Ritual of the Four Winds, Part II

The first part of your practical work adds the next element of the ritual that when finished will bring together a specific orbit of deity power so that you can learn how such a technique works.

When you did this in the first lesson you laid out a ritual and visionary path for the powers of Shu and Tefnut. Bear in mind that the positions of the deities can move around the directions depending on what you are working on magically. This ritual placement puts them in root positions so that they balance their orbits of power.

For example when we add in Hathor and Sekhmet to this ritual, they will be placed in the cross-quarters to balance other orbits. But Sekhmet can also live in the south or north, and Hathor can live in the east or west.

For this ritual, if you can, place something in the southeast and southwest cross-quarters to act as an altar. If you cannot or there is no room to do so, don't worry about it.

¹⁷Grindstone, Unraveller, and so on.

Set up the working room, put out the tools, put on your cord, put on your stole, light the lights, and open the gates. Do the Fulcrum to tune yourself.

Before you do any ritual actions stand in silence in the centre of the room and become aware of the stone temple: be in both places at once. Also become aware of the cave at the centre of all things with the Stone in the centre, and also be in that place. You are stretched between three realms as you work this ritual—keep constantly aware of these three places.

Starting the in east, lay the sword across the altar, pointing south, and say:

“Limiter, may the east wind pass through you, and may you slow down that power so I may work with it.”

Go to the south, see the black and white path stretching over the threshold and vanishing off into the distance. Say:

“Companions of the path, may the southern wind pass through you and may you allow my access as appropriate, and guard me from the full powers of the southern wind.”

Go to the west, place the vessel before the central candle, and say:

“Vessel which carries the harvest, contain the west winds so that I may work with them.”

Go to the north and place your hands upon the stone. Feel yourself in all three places and that your hands are also touching the Stone at the centre of the cave. Say:

“Stone at the centre of all things, Heart of Tefnut, be my anchor so that the power of Shu may flow through my breath, and guide me into the mysteries of Shu, the north wind.”

Now go and stand at the central altar and be aware of the contacts, tools, and powers building in the directions. Be still for a moment and feel the powers of the Light Bearer and Restriction build up behind you.

Build the power and focus until you feel it reach a peak, and then take a step or two back¹⁸ so that you are midway between the north and the central altars, facing south.

Look at the central flame and be aware of the north power behind you. Using your breath¹⁹ take a deep breath and breathe out slowly to the central flame without blowing it out.

Once your breath is finished, say to the central flame:

“Divine spark at the centre of all things, fulcrum of the world, I bridge to you to the breath of the North Wind, of Shu, he who sustains life with his breath. I bridge to you the moisture of Tefnut, she who sustains life with her moisture. May they flow through you and out into the world.”

Bow and circle the central flame, finishing back before the central altar with your back to the north and the central altar before you.

From the central altar go to the west altar and bow. Pick up the vessel and hold it to your lips. Turn to face the southeast cross-quarter and still yourself.

Be aware of the Light Bearer at your left shoulder, utter:

“*Hwt-hrw*, Mother who tends to her children in life and in death, Mistress of the West, I ask you to express in the bridge between creation and the future.”

Walk round the directions from west, to north, to east and stop at the south east cross quarter. Place the vessel on the ground and step back.

Utter:

“She who holds the bridge between west and north, welcoming those who have died; she who holds the bridge between east and south, welcoming those who are created in life; *Hwt-hrw* who births the Divine spirits; you who guide the spirit of the heart; and who guides those lost among the reeds. Goddess of the Tree, pathway over the threshold, we welcome you into this space and may we honour you in your presence.”

¹⁸Depending how much room you have.

¹⁹And the sound if you remember it.

Bow to the cross-quarter, then kneel and be still. Close your eyes and see the Light Bearer power behind you build up and spill over your shoulder. Watch as the power fills the vessel upon the floor. Once it is full stand up, bow once more, and step back. Walk round the directions back to the position at the centre altar.

Still yourself. Be aware of the power of Tefnut and Shu in the space, and of the presence of the energy of Hathor in the southeast.

Now go to the east and pick up the sword. Turn and face the southwest corner. Hold the sword before you, point down, handle up, and utter over the handle of the sword:

“She who emerges out of the darkness, keeper of the horizon,
She who loves and guards Ma’at, destroyer of imbalance,
guardian of the desert, She who tears apart in order to preserve,
I ask you to express at the bridge between the future and the
past.”

Leave the east and walk around past the south altar to the southwest cross-quarter. Place the sword in the southwest, point down, handle up, propped against an altar, wall, or whatever is there.

Bow and kneel down. Close your eyes and remember the power of the Inner Desert. Remember its vastness, remember its feel. Now be aware of the dark power of Restriction at your right shoulder. Reach out and touch the sword, and feel the power of that dark Restriction flow through you and to the sword.

Behind the sword builds a dark power that has the same feel as the Desert. Feel that presence and once you feel it, however faint, stand and bow. Utter:

“Mistress of the desert, She whose name may not be uttered,
She who slays with her wrath, She who guards the Under-
world, She who brings destruction when it is due, keeper of
the bridge between north and east who allows the light to rise,
keeper of the bridge between south and west who brings us
to the horizon of death, welcome into this space and may we
honour you in your presence.”

Take a step back, bow, and go back to the central altar. Sit down and close your eyes for a moment.

Be aware of the powers of Hathor and Sekhmet starting to build in the cross-quarters: the powers of Light and Dark on either side of the south. Be aware of the air and moisture behind you and the stillness in the centre. Focus on the central flame and the stillness. Just sit in that silence and be with those powers.

When you are ready, blow out the central candle. Then put out the other lights, but do not close any gates, and do not put the tools away: leave them where they are if you can. If you need to put them away, keep them in those cross-quarter areas: they are working, starting to form gates. Leaving the gates open while putting out the lights allows the power to continue: you are doing this ritual in stages of time.

This is a sort of pre-opening of the door ritual that is calling for certain powers. They will not come fully into the space yet, even though you are acting as though they were.²⁰ Each lesson a bit is added, so the ritual slowly adds an element that when it is completed, begins the process of opening the door to these powers.

Deities never just answer the first call: when the call is heard, first the threshold is laid down,²¹ then the gates are opened to them (which you will do), then a pre-power first flows into the space, and once that pre-power²² has settled, the deity power²³ itself begins to flow into the space. It works in layers, and each working adds a layer to make a whole.

And you are doing this first layer in stages²⁴ so that the power can build slowly, which allows you to adjust. Hathor and Sekhmet in the cross-quarters assume the positions of guards who will limit and contain the power that will emerge in the south.²⁵

Task: Journalling

Keep a diary of your impressions (and later dreams) after doing each section of this ritual, lesson by lesson.

²⁰This is what allows it to happen.

²¹Which this ritual does.

²²A bit like an assistant!

²³Not the deity itself.

²⁴Layers upon layers.

²⁵Next lesson.

Task: Finding the ritual's sigil

Map out the ritual as it stands as a sigil, using the method you learned in your apprentice training. Each time you add to this ritual, add the tracks of the ritual in sigil form until you have completed the ritual pattern. By the time you finish Lesson 8 you will have a complex series of lines from which you will extract an overarching sigil, the sigil of this orbit of deities. You will be able to use that sigil in future in your magical work to bring the essence of this ritual into a magical space.

Task: Natal chart work

Look at your natal chart and cloth shield map to see what powers are in what areas near the deities. Your natal planet positions are the 'root' powers of your chart. Now look at the placing of those planetary powers in their current transits, in conjunction with the deities you have placed so far. Look at the planets' personalities and see if you can work out which ones would connect most to the deities you have placed so far.

This exercise prepares you for working with the deities, directional powers, elements, and planetary spirits all together in ritual.

Task: Deck work

Using a tarot deck or the *LXXXI Deck*, using Tree of Life spreads, look at the powers of Hathor in the southeast position and the powers of Sekhmet in the southwest position. The last card will indicate the power; how it gets to that point is shown by the rest of the reading. The answer will be specific to you, where you live, and the point you have reached in your fate pattern, so there is no right or wrong answer. Ponder on the results and what it means so far in the ritual pattern. It may give you clues as to what the ritual is building.

Once the ritual is finished you will do readings using the *LXXXI Deck's* Mystical Map layout to look at the overarching power the pattern brings together.

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