

Session 7 – Amulets

Although the majority of this session will be discussing physical amulet use, there will be some cross over with their use through visualisation.

Beginning with the basics then, amulets have a long and established place in the occult world, of all the ancient civilizations the ancient Egyptians are perhaps the most well known through the prolific use of amulets associated with the dead and everyday life, many of which are still in use in one form or another today. They may have been busy, but by no means the only ones and from them and their contemporaries, amulets still are a popular device, evolving into very complex systems and appearing in many differing forms throughout time.

However you look at amulets, essentially it comes down to the symbolism used to represent an item, person or event you want to repel or attract. The object can visually represent, associated with, or be purely symbolic as in a combination of words or items with the the target.

For example, to ward against a dangerous animal such as a snake (a real hazard in antiquity), some options could be a picture of a snake etched into a stone or bit of wood, or a model of the snake in clay (representative). A bit of twig that's shaped in a fork to represent a snakes tongue, or some clay shaped into a fang (associative). Then on the more abstract levels having the name of a snake deity etched into something you carry (the view being in this case that having the associated deity means you are under their protection so snakes wont bite, or that you are able to coerce the deity to fend them off), another abstract item could be a ball of string so that the snake will tie its self in a knot or become tangled in something if it approaches you.

The effectiveness of them depends on so many things, the spell cast on them, sympathetic magical effects, the belief in the power of that amulet to protect (and that too goes for the viewer of the amulet you are wearing – the effect can be psychological and not magical). I tend to look at amulets as a form of 'wish' fulfilment as taken from my previous session on this aspect of visualisation. In this a case, whereas the practitioner would regularly recall and strengthen a wish through visualisation, an amulet is a item that symbolizes the intent of something and it reinforces this intent by its continued existence, no need for it to be worked with, it just is. This view becomes

more obvious when compared to other magical forms that employ physical items that are enchanted to have an effect of some kind.

Apart from the physical amulet there are a number of other features that are common to their use. Primarily the material and colour are important design choices, then the charging of the amulet to take it from a simple material item to a magical device.

All of these attributes are defined by what you are trying to achieve, how you intend to use it and how effective you want it to be. The properties and shape of the design obviously depends on how it's going to be used such as it hanging around your neck, in a pocket, on table, wall or by the window. The rest are really related to its effectiveness.

The choice of materials and colour for example can come from either the target of the amulet or what symbolic associations you want to call on for help, be that from your own deity or deities, or that of the target. There are lots of well known correspondences used for a multitude of uses and it can be down to what you feel comfortable with and your intuition how you choose. For example, I don't really use crystals and don't know much about colour correspondences as they are not a huge feature of my path, so I would perhaps go more with general association of colour such as gold if I want to invoke the sun god Ra, blue I associate with my goddess so I might pick that and silver for any lunar goddess. Material wise I usually go with clay or wax as they are easy to fashion by hand and are traditional ones on many paths. If it was something significant and long lasting then perhaps I would go to a more expensive material such as the various stones common to my path.

The craftsmanship of the physical item does not really have to be perfect, it can be if you want and have the skill, the key aspect is the intent you put into its creation and then the later charging and use. This is why I prefer to use wax or clay, they are very tactile, hands on materials that can be moulded in the hand. Sometimes uttering a charging spell at the same time as the material is worked to give it that extra boost as it all adds up. I tend to avoid shop made items as much as possible, this is because I don't know what vibrations etc. they may have picked up on their travels and as I've not literally had a hand in making them I don't have a connection with its purpose? That's not to say bought amulets are ineffective, countless amulets have been manufactured for third parties all through history and again it comes down to what its purpose is and the personal spin to place on it. Anyway, you can always cleanse before you if you want to be sure, I just prefer to create from scratch as I have the materials around me most of the time.

Once physically made, then on to charging the item. This is as varied as the choice of material and colour, on the simplest level your normal rituals of initially cleansing and raising a circle followed by a blessing of any connected deities that you may chose, or you go the full works and do something elaborate such as calling on multiple divinities or that of the targets, threatening them if they come close etc. Again its all down to personal taste and ritual you want to attach and appropriate levels of effectiveness you want to place on this amulet. Apply this to a Visualisation form, is charging a requirement in this case? May be, its already a particularly charged item because of the method of its general construction and the fact that its not a mundane material item trying to have an effect on a spiritual level. It certainly wont hurt doing something in your working as if you were doing it physically, it will bolster the effects.

Looking at examples I will take you back to Egyptian forms and there are a lot of them to choose from, many of them making use of puns (they loved word play, even more than us today), multiple levels of mythology and magical knowledge. I will present three of the least obscure and quite possibly the most familiar to people.

First in the list is the very popular Ankh symbol. The hieroglyph of the looped cross which forms the word Ankh is the symbol for life and health, so a very literal amulet, the amulet is a word and the word describes what the wearer wants. As a small aside, I've said the Egyptians liked puns and another common form of the Ankh is as a mirror, the handle formed from the vertical part and the mirror itself held within the looped section. The reason for forming a mirror apart from the handy shape was that the word Ankh also meant mirror, the word and the object suggests multiple connections of use in an everyday object. Hold that thought for a bit later.

A second but with a slightly less obvious meaning is an equally well known amulet called the Eye Of Horus or *Uadjet* Eye. This amulet makes use of the power of god Horus and with it grants luck and health through the mythology and magical association of this symbol with that god. This amulet instead of being a literal request like the Ankh this one uses a variety of symbols within the amulet to draw on magical powers.

The third amulet is an another well known one and that is the scarab beetle. Another amulet for good luck but this one is not quite so obvious. The scarab beetle was observed in antiquity to roll balls of dung across the ground. These balls occurred to Egyptian to represent the sun and the beetle s rolling a representation of rolling it across the sky. The imagery stuck and embedded itself among

the the mythology elevating the beetle to an aspect of divine power.

Of these examples two if not three of the above would lend themselves to visualisation use as the symbol has little connection with a physical material design. So your choice, if you have a selection like this, is to pick something that would be suitable or one that could cope with a slight alternation to fit without lose of potency. Better though would be to make your own. Simplicity is usually best so you don't have to be exotic or obtuse in the design and construction.

Another angle to take on amulets is to look at the last few centuries with the craft has been forced to do in hiding magical function beneath everyday items (like the Ankh above but they were not trying to hide it) and the use of most basic items can be very successful if approached in the same way. If they have been charged they wont be visually magical to the passer by unless you've managed to make it glow, so any protective amulets (which most tend to be) can be easily ignored on a neck chain, keyring, wrist or in a window. An amulet to us is just a lucky charm or something eccentric to someone else, though an unusually placed item may appear to a passing observant witch as something of magical use but most would go unnoticed by the vast majority of people who are on the whole not that observant.

Think about the possibilities of constructing or reusing something different and everyday. Here are some completely random thoughts on that:

1. A razor blade. To grant you razor sharp wit? Context can be flexible.
2. A piece of paper with lots of writing on so you don't suffer a writers block?
3. A small mirror to ward against ageing?
4. An empty crisp packet to ward off munchies?
5. A broken watch so you are never late or always have lots of time spare.
6. A party blower so that life is just one long party and full of fun.
7. A key. So you wont get locked out of any door.
8. A bit of paper with 'I will not....' with lots of them of things you don't want. You can be

quite literal with amulets.

9. An umbrella so it does not rain.

I've only tried out the last one and it seems to work most of the time, might give the others go sometime.

OK a lot of silly and trivial ideas but possibly usable especially when you think about some of our traditional ones for example horse shoes for luck a common and familiar item to people of those times. Look around and see how it relates to something you want or want protection from.

Another form of amulet use relates to purely written requests employing magical alphabets or symbols. Of the many forms that exist common ones include letter to number correspondences, magic squares and runic forms. Again the selection will most likely be based on your particular path, and for me, I regularly use hieroglyphic and runic forms, I perhaps now use this form of amulet above physical ones due to the ease, speed and my preference for ritual work through visualisation.

However this form does impose an obvious limit which is employed with physical amulet types, namely the benefits that a particular material has on the amulets effects. But this is just one aspect of its source of effectiveness, I don't expect its potency would be severely affected by it.

Some alphabets rely on number correspondences such as the Greek and Hebrew forms, others make use of calling on certain deities or spirits evoking the power associated with them. Or magical words such as the word Abracadabra. Or you could go all out and just write a spell on them, even if its not actually uttered, the mere fact that its written down means its just as effective. Again your path may have some bearing on this.

The most flexible I have personally used are runic characters either individually or in a compound form, by that I mean they lend themselves to fit very nicely around and into each other, so a few lines can encode half a dozen runic characters. And these compound runic forms contain a very potent power and they are worth investigating as I have a few I've regularly used for many years with great success. And I have in previous sessions mentioned my use through visualisation of these such as the 10ft high flaming Rad rune to aid in my travel issues.

Again the purpose of these amulets cover the same basic functions as with all other amulet form. Options for symbolic or word based amulets can be taken from a vast range of examples and many lie with the medieval Renaissance grimoires such as Keys of Solomon, Abramelin the Mage, Enochian, hermetic and alchemical works. They all tend to combine many forms of amulet forms, written, item and symbolistic in their ritual practices.

As discussed in a previous session on it is these less physical amulets that benefit the most from use through visualisation, although still possible to visual a physical item and use it, if you want to make use of it.

Whatever your magical need, the methods use always come down to selecting the correct tool for the job, be that the selection of the correct amulet, spell, words or degree of physical or in this case non-physical use. The other half of this process via spoken or written words, whether they are related to divine names or spells will be explored in the next session.