

Session 8 – Power Of Words*****

Words and names, spoken and written are an important aspect of most paths. In this session we will look at what purposes they are put to and probe the usefulness of them in visualisation.

First lets start with words in general, in the previous session looking at amulets I discussed written or symbolic forms, and their use being the most effective amulet form for visualisation as they provide a easy and simplistic, but still an effective medium of expression of intent. The purely symbolic side can be a little problematic so additional methods can be employed such as a vocal aspect. Spells, wishes and any vocal means to invoke your intent are obviously using words and their use is usually dictated by the ritual through the pitch, speed, rhythmic use and the language employed. These in themselves can require a significance amount of work to construct but for visualisation use they are the ideal tool as once a set of spoken forms are constructed they just need to be recalled.

Maybe obvious, but sometimes the obvious can be missed. A vocal aspect be that a rhythm, chant, statement or a demand as you would use normally, here in visualisation lends a greater weight as it is your, generally, only focus of intent. Whereas when its employed with other forms of expression the focus is diluted.

OK we have words in general but the most significant part of our vocal use of words are in names, whether that be the names of people or the divine. Sometimes though, through familiarity and repetition, we can loose the sense of the meaning, power and risk in the names we use to call to our Gods and Goddesses, and for those of us who cast spells or direct any kind of magic at or in the name of a person, the significance of that mortal name hides magical symbolism which needs to be taken into account and respected.

The rest of this session will look at what names have been used for, are still used for and why you should be careful when calling a name.

Importance of names

- To the ancient Egyptian, to preserve the name will allow that personal to live for

ever.

- The ancient Egyptian magicians task was to know the names of the Gods so that they could be used to lend their power to their magic. Similar views were also held across many other paths to know the names of Gods and Goddesses to either control or use their power.
- Medieval grimoire texts that use Christian magic to know the names of God, the Angels and the Demons for binding.
- More modern uses of correspondences, not names as we know them but ways of linking and identifying a particular force or deity can be seen in a similar way to identify.
- Various societies through time have used important stages of life such as gaining adulthood a reason to take on a new 'personal' name.
- What about modern Western uses of names? Although everyone has their given name, many still chose something more suitable for daily life with their given name for formal use, and those in the craft also tend to pick secret names for their own use or that of the group. Even differing names for various social and professional settings.

Names are important, they define or reflect our personalities, our most obvious attributes or just something that sounds right in various situations. And then what about the phrase 'He doesn't look like a Jack'? The works of Oscar Wilde includes the marvellously funny play the Importance Of Being Ernest which revolves around this strange stereotype of names possessing certain characteristics. Perhaps it's a recent association but it's quite marked. Does the name define the person or the person describe the name?

There is something about a name and how its attached or linked between the person and their label, that is more intuitive than a given. Although they are intangible, powerful and magical they are still very definite.

What about their use? To know a name provides the user of that knowledge with power over the

named, perhaps more than that, perhaps their very existence as the name defines their whole being. To know someone's name is to know every aspect of them, which echoes back to ancient Egyptian times.

In ancient and modern times they can be used to gain the power of the deities for protection, to take vengeance, grant good luck and all of the usual things that people tend to want magical help with. There are even tells of the gods trying to find out the names of other gods to gain control over them that's how important they were and still are.

Some uses however don't quite fit comfortably with modern paths and that's in attacking or an aggressive use but I will still describe common situations.

Negative uses

- There are many texts for using names to bind spirit by summoning – obviously doing this really upsets whatever it is you are trying to bind. And it will try and break the binding. This is a major problem should the bound spirit be particularly strong will resent the disruption it causes to their activities and do whatever they can to subvert it and perhaps even exert their own punishment on the caster for their impudence.

Positive uses

- Binding a spirit - now this already appears in the negative section, but in some situations it can be useful and relatively tolerable. The main use would be for a localized protection, to bind a protective force, be it an elemental, thought form or some other minor spirit to an item or place. Which ever being is chosen it is best and highly advisable to only bind for a limited length of time, no more than a year. Perpetual servitude would have much the same effect as mentioned above. And once the task is complete dissolve the binding and give thanks for the service given. A bit of good will could be repaid by more cooperation next time!
- Empowerment through invocation, multiple deities and this can be for any ritual task you may want where you need knowledge, strength of influence that's attributed to the divine being you are invoking.

- Any process where you need to make contact with another person for healing, sending a psychic message, thought or emotion (e.g. think about the times you've thought of someone that you need to phone, put to one side for a moment and at shortly thereafter they phone you? That's sort of thing I'm referring to) or locating them.
- Of course the classic use is to make them a target for a particular spell, such as luck or protection, etc.

However, in using people names you may see a flaw in using just a name, in that even for the most uncommon name you will quite likely not have a unique name. Try it in an Internet Search engine, and see how many instances of your name pop up. It's quite amazing really. Documented spirit names do tend to be unique so you can be fairly sure that you will get the correct one, but as spellings change slightly due to age and methods of translation over time, you still need to research the name to be certain you have the correct one. A mistake summoning the wrong spirit could lead to unexpected situations to say the least.

For dealings with people, the common examples where some kind of spell is placed on someone, you will find that a combination of methods are used to locate the correct individual. For example, the classic wax doll for good or bad, tends to combine the name and personal items and/or hair/nail clippings to make a connection, although in some ways this makes use of contagious magic concepts where contact with someone remains, so it's important to be aware that the use of other symbolism is important to locate and fix the target. Just think of it as fine tuning the address of the spell's destination by adding a postal code.

Following on, and connected with the issue of misspellings, is the pronunciation of the names. This becomes more of a problem when the name is not in the caster's native language and the adaptation or lack of understanding of the vocalization of the sounds could have an impact. Now, for me this is a big problem as my Egyptian path does have the added complication that the language has not had a native speaker for nearly a couple of thousand years. We have no idea how the original sounds were vocalized and what with the added impact of misspellings, translation, transliteration errors I'm walking a mine field of potentially summoning the wrong deity every time.

There are however a couple of ways around this for me and for anyone who is in a similar situation. The most obvious is use a name connected with the deity in a language you can pronounce correctly

and has been known to work. For example Isis most of people have heard of, but that's a Greek name, her native Egyptian name is Aset – is that correct? Who really knows. Then again there may be older ones and alternative spellings so where do you stop? If you pick one that's established from previous attempts then you have a good chance of calling the right one.

Another option that I go with is to make use of other connections to the name (as I mentioned above about fine tuning the address). Using the same example again of Isis, I could say that name (or Aset) while also picturing an image of her, holding one of her amulets, touching or addressing a statue of her. Any or all of these things will help in locating the subject.

An additional example recently occurred to me while watching the film *Bed-knobs and Broomsticks*, is Ashteroth and Asteroth. Two slightly different spellings some class them both as a demon, however some class the former as an aspect of the mother goddess. Which would you rather turn up if you called the name?

The whole subject of names will be further discussed in a later session on evocation as this is where the greatest dangers lie.

In summary, we perhaps take for granted the use of names and how we use them during rituals. Whenever you use name just think of what it means and what you are calling for, they may not come but they are listening (or something is if you have the wrong one), it's their choice to come freely unless you force them and that's never a good thing. Or at the very least you've alerted them to your presence and that may perk their interest in you. For the rest of us mortals, the name is as important as our souls, to use names is to play with another's existence, do so with care and respect.

For visualisation purposes using spoken words and names are an even easier option for us than any written form, as there is no need for any kind of expression or preparation for us other than the reciting from memory. However as this may be the focus of any intent with little or now supporting methods as you may include during physical working, the words will have a extra depth and importance so all of the previous discussion should help with the pitfalls in using words. Remember spirit can and certain ones enjoy taking a literal interpretation to your words. As an echo of a previous session, be careful of what you wish for.