

HANDOUTS: Actualising Physical Symbols In Ritual – Part Two

SPIRAL STORY EXAMPLE – EXTRACT OSTARA AWC 2006

Spring Maiden walks the circle. She carries the scarf. When she has made her choice she ties the scarf to the Youth's wrist. She stands next to him in the circle and takes his hand. Everyone else to join hands as she leads them in a slow spiral walk.

When she reaches the centre (and the HP who is standing there) she stops.

The HP says:

HP: *Halt. To walk the spiral you must first have the knowledge of where you have been. Life is danced upon the wheel, past and future come together in this moment. I ask all of you to sit in your spiral. Close your eyes.*

All sit.

HPS walks the spiral and begins to tell the tale. Maiden withdraws down the spiral and is given the cloak, spear and helmet for the Young Stag. He is crowned during the story. Goddess now joins the end of the line as her mortal self and the Maiden takes her place sitting before the altar.

HPS tells the story which ends with the crowning of the Young Stag.

At the end of the story the HPS asks everyone to open their eyes.

In the centre of the circle now sits the Young Stag, crowned, cloaked in green and cradling the spear in his lap. The scarf of the maiden is tied around the spear.

Young Stag: *The moon goes round the earth, the earth goes round the sun, when day and night are equal, the greening has begun.*

He stands up, taking the hand of the person next to him. He begins to walk the spiral back out to the circle, he leads the circle around once and then spirals back in, then returns to the circle once more. Everyone is now facing inwards again.

YULE SPIRAL

Laid out upon the centre of the circle is a spiral of unlit candles. At the centre of the spiral is a small cauldron decorated with holly. It contains a large unlit candle.

HPS lights a taper from the God candle upon the altar.

Everyone begins to chant as she walks the spiral. When she arrives at the centre she invokes and lights the flame of the central candle at the appropriate moment. She kindles the flame as the Child Of Promise.

Slowly the spark that is the Child Of Promise is born from the otherworld as the HPS walks back along the spiral. As she walks, she stops to light one of the candles that form the spiral.

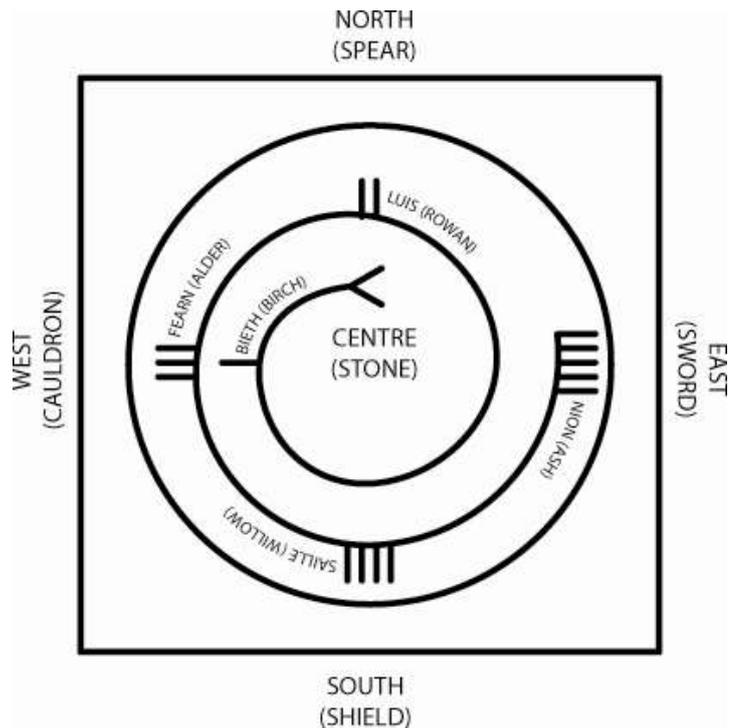
The next person to walk the spiral takes a candle and some greenery from the basket. They give a gift of greenery to the cauldron, meditate and light their candle from the central one. They walk back out of the spiral, lighting one of the spiral candles on their way.

This continues until all participants have walked the spiral and lit the spiral candles and the Child Of Promise is born into this world.

OGHAM SPIRAL RITUAL 1

This ritual is used to gain insight from a different perspective for five different oghams. This is done after participants have completed the pathworkings for the oghams. It works as a kind of living divination, as each participant invariably finds themselves being challenged in their pre-conceptions of their relationship to a particular tree.

This is an example of a ritual pattern. It doesn't matter if you are familiar with the oghams or not. Just understand that each tree can be worked with from five different perspectives (in this example). This is akin to the different perspective and meaning that you receive regarding a tarot card, depending on where it appears in the layout.



Ogham Spiral Ritual: The First Five

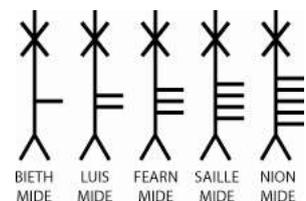
This ritual is to be used after the first three sets of Ogham Pathworkings, i.e. between Ruis and Ailm. It is designed to be used by five participants and lead by one Priest or Priestess.

A spiral is drawn upon the floor of the temple. Oghams are marked along the length of the spiral at appropriate intervals. At each quarter is placed a ritual weapon. A stick of appropriate wood is placed upon each ogham on the floor. A bag containing ogham sticks of Birch, Rowan, Alder, Willow and Ash is placed upon the altar as well as a pot of paint and a paint brush.

North: Spear | West: Cauldron | South: Shield | East: Sword | Centre: Stone

Sacred space is formed in a ritual manner by casting the circle and invoking the directions with the weapons. Whiskey is offered at each of the cardinal points. The space is made sacred by Earth, Sea and Sky and dedicated to Lugh, Mannanan Mac Lyr, Oghma and Brigid.

When the sacred space is formed, each participant is to draw one of the five oghams out of a bag. This ogham will determine where the participants will stand for the first round of the ritual. After drawing an Ogham, each person goes to stand upon spiral at the mark that matches their Ogham.



MIDE: Focus / Centre / Sovereignty

They then pick up the stick of wood and hold it in one hand. With their other hand they hold the Ogham. They are instructed to attune to the wood.

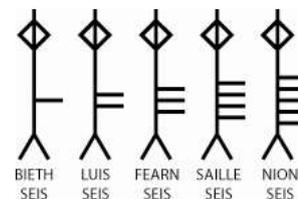
The Priestess then goes to each person and using the paint and brush, marks upon the participants' faces the Ogham they hold and the sigil for Mide. She whispers to them the name of the Ogham and the tree. She then asks them to think about the tree represented by their Ogham in Mide : focus, centre and sovereignty. This is the heart of the tree. She touches them on the forehead and sends them into trance to meditate.

After a period of time the Priestess gently calls each person back from their meditations. They are asked to hold out the stick when they are back.

They are then instructed to place the Ogham and stick upon the ground and move along the spiral to the next Ogham. Bieth moves to Luis , Luis to Fearn, Fearn to Saille, Saille to Nion and Nion to Bieth.

SEIS: Past / Harmony

They then pick up the stick of wood and hold it in one hand. With their other hand they hold the Ogham. They are instructed to attune to the wood.



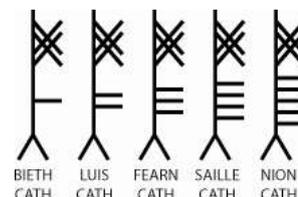
The Priestess then goes to each person and using the paint and brush, marks upon the participants' faces the Ogham they hold and the sigil for Seis. She whispers to them the name of the Ogham and the tree. She then asks them to think about the tree represented by their Ogham in Seis : past and harmony. The aspect of the tree which brings harmony. She touches them on the forehead and sends them into trance to meditate.

After a period of time the Priestess gently calls each person back from their meditations. They are asked to hold out the stick when they are back.

They are then instructed to place the Ogham and stick upon the ground and move along the spiral to the next Ogham. Bieth moves to Luis , Luis to Fearn, Fearn to Saille, Saille to Nion and Nion to Bieth.

CATH: Conflict / Battle

They then pick up the stick of wood and hold it in one hand. With their other hand they hold the Ogham. They are instructed to attune to the wood.



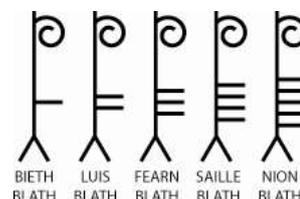
The Priestess then goes to each person and using the paint and brush, marks upon the participants' faces the Ogham they hold and the sigil for Cath. She whispers to them the name of the Ogham and the tree, She then asks them to think about the tree represented by their Ogham in Cath: conflict and battle. The conflict aspect that the participant has with the tree. She touches them on the forehead and sends them into trance to meditate.

After a period of time the Priestess gently calls each person back from their meditations. They are asked to hold out the stick when they are back.

They are then instructed to place the Ogham and stick upon the ground and move along the spiral to the next Ogham. Bieth moves to Luis , Luis to Fearn, Fearn to Saille, Saille to Nion and Nion to Bieth.

BLATH: Learning / Awareness

They then pick up the stick of wood and hold it in one hand. With their other hand they hold the Ogham. They are instructed to attune to the wood.



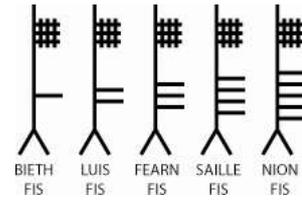
The Priestess then goes to each person and using the paint and brush, marks upon the participants' faces the Ogham they hold and the sigil for Blath. She whispers to them the name of the Ogham and the tree. She then asks them to think about the tree represented by their Ogham in Blath: learning and awareness. The learning aspect of the tree. She touches them on the forehead and sends them into trance to meditate.

After a period of time the Priestess gently calls each person back from their meditations. They are asked to hold out the stick when they are back.

They are then instructed to place the Ogham and stick upon the ground and move along the spiral to the next Ogham. Bieth moves to Luis , Luis to Fearn, Fearn to Saille, Saille to Nion and Nion to Bieth.

FIS: Manefestation / Prosperity

They then pick up the stick of wood and hold it in one hand. With their other hand they hold the Ogham. They are instructed to attune to the wood.



The Priestess then goes to each person and using the paint and brush, marks upon the participants' faces the Ogham they hold and the sigil for Fis. She whispers to them the name of the Ogham and the tree, She then asks them to think about the tree represented by their Ogham in Fis: manifestation and prosperity The manifesation of the tree. She touches them on the forehead and sends them into trance to meditate.

After a period of time the Priestess gently calls each person back from their meditations. They are asked to hold out the stick when they are back.

They are then instructed to place the Ogham and stick upon the ground and move along the spiral to the next Ogham. Bieth moves to Luis , Luis to Fearn, Fearn to Saille, Saille to Nion and Nion to Bieth.

At this point in the ritual, all participants should be back at their first Ogham.

This concludes the main part of the Spiral Ogham ritual. Now is a good time for participants to write down what they have experienced with each Ogham.

When participants are ready, they can ground out by eating and drinking. All deities and spirits are then thanked and farewellled, the sticks and Oghams are collected and the sacred space is closed.

After the ritual has been completed, participants may wish to discuss their insights into each ogham and what they experienced within the ritual. They should then write up their notes and place them with their notes from the meditations.

EXTRACT OF SPRING PHOENIX RITUAL

Power raising is performed as a cord dance with 8 golden cords/ribbons looped together in a wheel. The Maiden stands in the West with the Hoop.

The dance is performed to the Witches Rune. Those not dancing the wheel can drum, stamp and chant.

At the end of the cord dance the wheel is lowered to the ground and then lifted back up after everyone has grounded. They still keep hold of their cords whilst this happens.

When they raise it back up the introductory poem is spoken

The witch who will become the Maiden, then places the hoop over the wheel. Each person then binds their cord ends to the vine woven hoop.

Now each witch, in turn moves to the cauldron that is placed in the west. One at a time they spiral out from the Wheel and move to the West. As each person moves, the Maiden takes their place holding the wheel. The cauldron is full of spring water and floating upon the surface are flowers that have either ribbon or florist wire bound to them. There is also a chalice that sits on a small stand within the cauldron. It should be half in and half out of the water. The chalice is filled with either spring water or herb infused white wine or mead. Each witch takes their flower or leaf from the cauldron and returns to bind it to the wheel.

Any participants not holding the cords then go to the cauldron and take a flower – which they can bind to the hoop.

The Sun Wheel is complete and the Maiden having stood at each place on the wheel, now moves to the Cauldron.

PENTAGRAM RITUAL – SPIRIT TRANCE

By Blayze

This ritual is designed to send a subject into a deep trance to meditate on and prophesy from the realm of Akasha.

There are six participants in total. One for each of the five elemental realms plus the trance subject. The form of the ritual is a circle overlaid with a solar cross that becomes a six-rayed star. A pentagram is then overlaid upon the cross.

The first section of the ritual utilises the Elemental Balancing Ritual. This means that each person attunes to all of the elemental realms and is in balance before invoking and channelling their main element. Each person will be given their element to work with prior to the rite, during the Elemental Balancing ritual, that element will be the first that they attune to. At the conclusion of the ritual, they will move to stand as that element once more.

Whilst the Elemental Balancing ritual is mostly inspired utterance, the main Pentagram Ritual has strict layers of wording and speech that will need to be memorized by each participant beforehand. The inspired utterance in the Pentagram Ritual will come through the trance subject.

Whilst the temple is set-up and the Elemental Balancing Ritual is enacted, the trance subject should have a ritual bath and begin to prepare themselves physically, mentally and spiritually for the Pentagram Ritual. When they are ready, they will present themselves at the gateway to the temple space and sit quietly. There will be wine waiting for them at the gate. The trance subject should sip the wine slowly. When they are finally called by the Priest/ess of Spirit, (at the conclusion of the Elemental Balancing Ritual) the trance subject will be blindfolded and brought into the temple space.

Perform Circle cast

Perform Elemental Balancing Ritual

At the conclusion of the Elemental Balancing Ritual each person prepares themselves to act as a gateway and channel for their element.

They move to back to their original element.

All four elements place their hands on the shoulders of the Priest/ess of Spirit (who stands in the centre).

Priest/ess of Spirit: *Five are we,
Balanced be
But the sixth shall be the vessel.*

Hands are lowered and the Priest/ess goes to the altar and takes up the bell. S/he walks around the circle and rings the bell six times and waits for the sound to fade.

S/he replaces the bell on the altar

S/he then opens a door in the circle, stands upon the threshold and calls for the trance subject.

Priest/ess: *Magic is afoot this night. Are you willing to be the vessel of power?*

Subject:: *Yes*

Priest/ess then blindfolds the subject.

Priest/ess: *Then enter the temple to be made ready.*

Priest/ess leads the subject into the circle and closes the doorway.

(Whilst Vessel is being questioned, each element retrieves their gift from the altar.)

Vessel is brought into the centre of the circle.

Each element comes forward to give a gift of their element.

Earth: *Receive the gift of Earth*

Place salt upon Vessel's tongue

Air: *Receive the gift of Air*

Vessel is smudged with incense.

Fire: *Receive the gift of Fire*

Candle is moved around the body of the Vessel.

Water: *Receive the gift of Water.*

Vessel is asperged with water.

Spirit: *Receive the gift of Spirit.*

Spirit kisses the Vessel.

All items are returned to the altar.

All five elements to take up their positions on the pentagram. Vessel stands in the centre.

Earth: *Balanced am I by the Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit.
Cleansed am I by the Soil, the Wind, the Flame and the Wave.
I know the mysteries of the egg as black as night.
But tonight I bring forth the power of the Earth within me.
GHEB I call to thee!
Through the sacred gateway of PRITHVI I join with thee!
Let me be thy servant and channel this night.*

Earth visualises Gheb standing behind them. They become the gate of the yellow square. When the visualisation is strong and the connection complete, they draw the mark of PRITHVI upon the Vessel. Vibrate PRITHVI

Air: *Balanced am I by the Air, Fire, Water, Earth and Spirit.
Cleansed am I by the Wind, the Flame, the Wave and the Soil.
I know the mysteries of the egg as black as night.
But tonight I bring forth the power of the Air within me.
PARALDA I call to thee!
Through the sacred gateway of VAYU I join with thee!
Let me be thy servant and channel this night.*

Air visualises Paralda standing behind them. They become the gate of the blue disk. When the visualisation is strong and the connection complete, they draw the mark of VAYU upon the Vessel. Vibrate VAYU

Fire: *Balanced am I by the Fire, Water, Earth, Air and Spirit.
Cleansed am I by the Flame, the Sea, the Soil and the Wind.
I know the mysteries of the egg as black as night.
But tonight I bring forth the power of the Fire within me.
DJINN I call to thee!
Through the sacred gateway of TEJAS I join with thee!
Let me be thy servant and channel this night.*

Fire visualises DJINN standing behind them. They become the gate of red upright triangle. When the visualisation is strong and the connection complete, they draw the mark of TEJAS upon the Vessel. Vibrate TEJAS

Water: *Balanced am I by Water, Earth, Air, Fire and Spirit.
Cleansed am I by the Wave, the Soil, the Wind and the Flame.
I know the mysteries of the egg as black as night.
But tonight I bring forth the power of the Water within me.
NIKSA I call to thee!
Through the sacred gateway of APAS I join with thee!
Let me be thy servant and channel this night.*

Water visualises Niksa standing behind them. They become the gate of the silver upright crescent. When the visualisation is strong and the connection complete, they draw the mark of APAS upon the Vessel. Vibrate APAS

Spirit: *Balanced am I by Spirit, by Earth, Air, Fire and Water
Cleansed am I by Soil, Wind, Fire and Wave
But tonight I bring forth the power of Spirit within me.
Spirit I call to thee!
Through the sacred egg of AKASHA I join with thee!
Let me be thy servant and channel this night.*

Spirit becomes the black egg that contains all of the gates. When the visualisation is strong and the connection complete, they draw the mark of AKASHA upon the Vessel. Vibrate AKASA.

All five elements to join hands as a pentagram.

Spirit: *The connection is made.*

Earth:

*I am Earth
Solid beneath the feet
Shield of ancient bone
Midnight's embrace*

Air:

*I am the Wind
Ever moving, ever changing
Sword of sacred word
Dawn's first kiss*

Fire:

*I am the Flame
The spark of creation
Spear of the Sun
Midday's bright caress*

Water:

*I am the Wave
Flowing with the Tides
Cauldron of tears
Sunset's cleansing wave.*

Spirit

*I am Spirit
Centre and Soul of All
Four become one within me
All colours and none.*

Charge of Spirit (Spoken by Spirit)

By Bird

*Listen to the words of the combiner of truths:
It is I who knew of your birth long before time
It is I who infused you with elements divine
I am the dispenser of the colours of life
And in me they each appear
I am the caster of stars in the sky
And in me they all reside
I am the keeper of the ocean of wisdom
Swim in me and find balance
I am the keeper of the paths to the kings
Walk with me to find peace
I am the diviner of symbols and dreams
And in me they find meaning*

*I am the mother to nature's all
Without her I do not exist
I am the container, the preserver of life
And in me you will find freedom
I am the egg, the harmonious balance
It is I that is reflected in your dreams
Seek me in your temples
And find me in your hearts
Raised to the heavens
Found in the ground
It is spirit who will release you on your death.*

The five elements hold their position (or can begin to circle if appropriate). The vessel enters deep trance and can speak of what they see if they wish.

Five elements create a low level hum during this period.

When the trance is complete, unwind the pentagram ritually. The vessel can sit in the centre.

Each of the five visualise the gates closing.

Perform cakes and ale

Farewell the Kings.

Close the circle