An Introduction to Sorcery

by Phil Hine

Sorcery (also known as Results Magic, or Spell-casting) is generally understood as the use of magical techniques and perspectives to bring about a change in one's material environment. Traditionally, the use of magical techniques for direct results has been thought of as 'Low' magic, whilst the quest for spiritual growth, uniting with one's 'Higher Self' or attaining transcendence from the material world was, of course, 'High' magic. This distinction perpetuated the division of the world into matter v spirit, subjective v objective, reflecting a general philosophy (shared by science & religion) which regarded the demands of the everyday world as being inferior to abstract metaphysics.

Previous to the rise of dualistic, world-rejecting belief and philosophy, sorcerers were respected (and sometimes feared) for their power to influence events in their favour. For example, the Chinese Sorcerer Chuko Liang is said to have invoked the spirits of wind in a way that was instrumental to his master Liu Pei winning the Battle of Red Bluff (261 AD.).

For the modern magician, such a distinction is artificial and very much a sign of self-limitation. Sorcery is valuable for a number of reasons.

1) Firstly, that success with sorcery techniques embeds in one's mind the certainty that MAGIC WORKS in a way that intellectual argument or practice without clear purpose cannot.

2) Secondly, that in working with sorcery techniques, the rigorous analysis of one's own motivations and desire-complexes is itself enlightening and of great benefit to magical development.

3) Thirdly, that the practice of sorcery itself leads to considerations of personal ethics; if one is serious about bringing about change in the world, one must also accept responsibility for those changes. Moreover, bringing about change in the world tends to lead to personal changes. If I enchant for fame, then I must be able to change in order to make the best use of that fame.

4) Fourthly, practical sorcery demands identifiable results; if I choose to enchant for Wealth, I must be able to at some point be able to say how the sorcery has contributed to my wealth.

5) Finally, successful sorcery requires that we pay attention to the world as it is, rather than how we would like it to be. One of the great pitfalls in magical development is the tendency for people to, when the going gets tough, withdraw themselves into a safe fantasy and count themselves kings of infinite space. Sorcery, which is concerned with the everyday world, can help us keep our feet on the ground, which is very important for those who would reach for the stars.

Responsive Sorcery

To be effective, your approach to sorcery needs to be responsive to changes in your life situation. It can best be understood as not so much an approach to getting a "free lunch" out of the universe, but as an approach to maximising your effectiveness within different spheres of action. For example, there is little point in enchanting for a new job, if you lack confidence to the extent that you are going to blow each interview that you work for. It is often said that magic seems to work through the easiest route possible, and this should be borne in mind.

Sorcery Dynamics

The act of daydreaming or wishing for something to happen is rarely effective, as an original desire very quickly becomes caught up in a network of conflicting expectations - fear of failure, fear of success, possible consequences, worries, ego-identifications. Often, desires only seem to manifest when we have forgotten about them - when we are no longer constantly mentally rehearsing or reciting them (& what we will do when they manifest) to ourselves. Knowledge of this process is a key to successful magic in general, and sorcery in particular.

There are a vast range of sorcery techniques available in magical books, and more are being discovered as magicians develop their own highly personal approaches to sorcery workings. However, underlying most acts of sorcery is a series of dynamics, which I will now examine briefly.

a) Intention

Obviously, before you attempt to perform an act of sorcery, you must have some degree of clarity concerning your intentions as to the outcome of the working. Intentions may be *General* or *Specific.* General intentions cover a particular area of life experience (sometimes known as a 'sphere of influence') - for example, if you perform a sorcery working to increase your health generally, then you are basically affecting any area of experience which may touch upon the issue of your 'health'. If, however, you were to opt for a Specific Intent - "I want my bad knee to heal quickly" - then you are setting more specific conditions for success.

Each approach has its pros and cons. Sorcery workings oriented towards a general intent (hence a general result) i.e. health, strength, protection, vitality, wealth etc. can be useful, but it is easy to write the results of such enchantments off as coincidence, particularly if you are still struggling to prove to yourself that magic works. General workings can also be beneficial as it is often easier to 'forget' that you have performed an act of sorcery to increase your strength and it may be only months later that you look back at events and realise how your life situation has changed (due to fortuitous coincidences and your own changes in behaviour & attitude) and brought about a situation where you *have* increased your strength.

Specific intentions do have a stronger impact upon us when they manifest. But it is often the case that specific desires are often ones which are very important to us - particularly when it comes to aspects of life such as sex or money (love magic, or at least 'getting laid' magic is very popular) where it is difficult to 'forget' what we have enchanted for, as we are very 'attached'

to the outcome. Cultivating your ability to *Relax in the Present* is appropriate for sorcery working. There are a variety of sorcerous 'tricks' to assist the 'loosing' of a magical intention from consciousness, which I'll come on to later.

b) Linking Intent to a Desire-Form

This is simply the process of making an association between your intention (and the outcome you desire) and some kind of *Focus* which does not immediately call to mind that intention. When you are performing your sorcery working or enchantment, you direct all your attention towards this *Focus* whilst using various magical techniques to shift yourself into an intense Altered State of Consciousness. At the point when *Gnosis* (one-pointedness) is attained, attention is abruptly shifted *away* from the focus and the spell is 'cast' - often accompanied by some gesture of hurling (or visualising) the desire-form speeding away into the void.

There are many different types of desire-form, and I'll go into these later.

c) Escape Velocity

Although I mentioned the use of Altered States of Consciousness above, this does require some elaboration, particularly this idea of attaining *Gnosis.* Achieving Gnosis is a very unpredictable experience, and is very much dependent upon the techniques used and your general state of mind & health. So only you can judge when you have attained a degree of Gnosis suitable to launch your intention into the void.

d) The cheque's in the post

As noted above, the crucial element of sorcery is to 'loose' the desire for something to happen from your awareness, once you have performed an enchantment to 'make it so'. Once you have hurled your intention into the void, then you need not waste any more mental time or emotional energy on the matter. One way to reinforce this forgetting is to close a sorcery working with a Banishing Ritual. As noted above, it can be difficult to forget what you have done, particularly if it's something that you really want to come about. Possibilities for getting around this problem include; getting someone else do perform this particular act of sorcery on your behalf, or performing enchantments for outcomes that you are not particularly interested in, or enchanting for results which are fairly specific, yet not particularly significant. For example, a specific (yet meaningless) intent might be: "It is my will to notice a red-haired woman carrying a small lap-dog whilst I am travelling on public transport."

DESIRE FORMS

For this section, I will outline some of the more popular types of desire-forms used in practical sorcery.

Sigils

A great deal has been written about the technique of making sigils, which is in itself a fairly simple technique. Generally, sigils are excellent for bringing about precise, short or long-term results, which makes them excellent for works of Results Magic - healing, habit manipulation,

inspiration, dream-control, and the like. Once you have decided upon a particular intention that you are going to declare as an act of sorcery, there are various ways of forming a sigil based on that intent:

(a) *Monogram* - write out your intent, knock out all repeating letters, and from the rest, design a glyph. This can then be placed onto a scrap of paper for intense visualisation during an 'excitatory' ritual, or visualised onto your own reflection in a mirror, until the mirror darkens and the sigil blazes brightly in your mind's eye.

Example:

(b) *Mantra* - write out intent, scramble into meaningless phrase or word, which can then be chanted. Alternatively, you could rearrange the letters of your statement of intent so that it becomes another sentence, which can be used as a mantra. For example:

"I Desire Assistance in House-Hunting" could become "The Sun can Sing."

Personal sigils can also be incorporated into more orthodox talismans and charms, and there are many different ways of using them, some of which you can discover through experimentation.

Rhymes

Most effective spells use simple, rhythmic verses which, while they sometimes relate to the desire or outcome of the spell, can often be very effective in establishing a sense of momentum for the spell. Here's an example of such a rhythmic spell (easy to remember once you've heard it a few times):

Creatures of Fire, this charge I give

No evil in my presence live

No phantom, spook, nor spell may stay

About this place not night nor day

Hear my word addressed to thee...

This is my will, so mote it be.

Cords & String

Using cords or string can be a most effective way of combining physical movement and performing a repetitious task whilst using a mantra, word spell or concentrating on a visualised image as part of a sorcery operation. For example, you could use coloured cords to represent different 'strands' of your intention, and knot them together or run them through your fingers whilst reciting a mantra or rhyme. The number of knots tied could relate to the number of times that a mantra or rhyme is repeated, in the same way that Buddhists or Catholics count recitals of prayers on beads. You can also 'bind' spells into knots, and activate them by untying the knots in a particular sequence. Knotted cords can be hung around your house, wrapped around trees,

etc.

You can also use string & cords to create webs or nets. One example such a structure is the dream-catcher, but you could also set up webs to 'catch' a particular result that you desire. Finally, games with string such as Cat's Cradle' can be used as a focus for desire in sorcery workings.

Candles

Candle Magic is a very popular way of casting spells, and there are a number of ways in which a candle may be used in a sorcery operation. Candles can be 'personalised' by carving sigils formed out of a name, intent, etc. onto them. Staring at a flickering candle flame will induce an altered state of consciousness. Candles can be chosen to represent different attributes or intentions using standard colour correspondences. One very popular way of using candles is to 'anoint' them with an aromatic oil (which again, could be chosen with standard or personal correspondences in mind) and then let the candle burn down, either as part of your ritual, or to 'launch' the spell following a ritual to empower the candle.

Dolls

The use of magical dolls for sorcery is found in magical practices world-wide, and has a very ancient heritage. Dolls can be formed out of different media - traditionally wax and wood were popular. The attempts to create life in our own image recalls myths of golems, homunculi and Frankenstein, as well as Pinocchio and other living dolls. The use of doll magic is popularly used for directly affecting another person, for example, in works of healing, affecting a partnership (placing two dolls together or separating them) or cursing. if you are making a doll in order to perform magic on someone else's behalf then, providing you have their consent, you could place some hair, nail clippings or body fluids from that person into the doll, whilst naming it and talking to it as though it were them.

Spirits

It is common for Sorcerers to call upon the aid of various Spirits to assist them with their spell. Spirits may be ancestors, totem animals, elementals, spirits of a particular locality (genius loci), personal daemons, forest goblins, or gods of sorcery. Some aspects of working with Spirits will be covered in a later module of this course, but for now, without digressing into models or magical theories of spirit action, here's a simple technique for 'creating' personal spirits for sorcery work. All you need is some material base in which a 'spirit' can take up residence. This could be a teapot, a cuddly toy, a model figurine (as used in fantasy games), a seashell, or whatever else you think is suitable. Once you have your object (yes, this is the *focus* of the spirit), examine it, and decide what kind of Spirit would live in it, or, if the object is a living shape, what kind of spirit it is. Weave a story about that focus, and then interact with the object as though it was a spirit, or contains a spirit. I once did this with a pewter pixy, whom I decided had the 'power' to find lost household objects. Every time I lost something, I went and asked the pixy to find it for me, please. When I subsequently found the lost item (often very quickly, as I had momentarily 'distracted' myself from wondering where the thing was), I thanked the pixy, and occasionally gave him a present - a silver coin, incense, or a flower. And I always said hello

when I passed him by. Eventually I convinced other people in the house to treat the pixy in the same manner, and he found things for them as well. It's that simple, particularly if you need spirits to help in everyday situations.

A very easy way to find a 'name' for a Spirit is to narrow down the 'task' of the spirit to one or two words or a short phrase, reverse them, and put them together. For example, a spirit who's task is to help you keep track of pens & pencils might be formed from the intent PEN HERE and so could have the name PENHEREREHNEP, which could be made to sound suitably 'magical' if chanted.

I feel it's a good idea to reward spirits if they work for you, so when you are creating spirits, do something which you think will please them (according to their character or nature as you see it) after they have helped you. For example, PENHEREREHNEP would probably be quite pleased if you placed the pens he found for you in a specially-decorated pen-box, so that he could 'guard' them until they eventually got lost again.

Charms & Talismans

A Charm or Amulet is usually a 'found object' which is either kept, or given to someone to bring luck, fortune or ward off evil. Examples include the archetypal 'lucky rabbit's foot' or four-leaf clover.

A Talisman is an object which has been 'magically charged' with a specific kind of influence. That is to say, the object has been specially prepared using a ritual designed to focus the magician's awareness on particular qualities or influences. Thus a talisman made with the intention of enhancing the wearer's confidence in social situations might have engraved or painted on to it Solar symbols (confidence is often corresponded to the Sun in tables of correspondences) and Venusian symbols (Venus is said, by some magicians, to be the planet relating to dealings with others in general). The maker of such a talisman may have focused all his attention on to the talisman, whilst using a wide range of Sun-Venus symbolism. Talismans should be generally kept in a pouch or box until they are required (unless the talisman is to be worn continuously) - as this helps them retain their 'special significance' which otherwise might be quickly lost. Any kind of magically-created 'special' object should be treated with care.

Sorcery & Divination

Acts of divination can be very useful in the practice of sorcery. The reason for this is that one's initial (or 'surface') desire to make an enchantment towards a particular outcome may not be the most effective point from which to direct one's spell. For example, a sorceror decides that he will cast a sigil in order to improve his chances of finding a job. Using a method of divination to examine the different facets of his desire, he discovers that he is not sure how he will go about looking for the job he desires, so he decides to make his first enchantment to be a spell to find someone who can advise him. You can not only use divination methods to look at facets of your own desires, but to gather information about other people. A former student told me that he once planned to perform a spell to help keep the relationship of two of his friends going. Through a tarot reading, he discovered that one of the partners seemed to be desperately unhappy in the relationship, and so he realised that what he first *thought* was the 'best' thing to

do, was coloured by his preconceptions of the situation, rather than what was actually going on.

Using a method of divination prior to casting a spell is an excellent way of gaining some measure of 'objectivity' about the situation or outcome. Although magicians do use emotional energy *during* the act of enchantment, it is often more effective if the desire that you wish to enchant is examined in a state of calm, cool-headedness. Thus are Will & Desire unified, prior to the beginning of any ritual projection of them.

Sorcery & Gnosis

For now, we may consider the attainment of Gnostic States to be the 'fuel' for Sorcery Workings. One of the simplest procedures for casting a spell is to strongly visualize a sigil or symbol of intention glowing brightly in your mind's eye, until awareness of anything else is obliterated. This can be combined with either excitatory or inhibitory routes to Gnosis. If you are using a mantra as the basis of a spell, this may be chanted (aloud or subvocally) until it seems that the chant has a life of it's own. With practice, you will be able to judge for your self the onset of the appropriate moment to 'hurl' the spell into the void and complete your ritual.

A Sorcery Project

For this Project look at the above techniques of Sorcery, choose at least three distinct forms (i.e. Sigils, Candles, Cords) and experiment with them over a period of 2 months. Try and discover different methods of spell-casting, using different forms of entering Altered States of Consciousness as you feel are appropriate, and some of the magical exercises covered earlier in this course to create your own ritual sequences. You can also, if you wish, try combining sorcery methods or attempt to discover your own approaches to sorcery.