

Stages in Learning Somafera

Progress in elevation is not smooth. There are stages to learning wherein rapid advancement is made all at once, followed by long plateaus. Learning to identify different stages in elevation can teach the practitioner much about just what is going on with elevation. Here is a list of some stages as I have experienced them. These are my stages, the way I have learned. I post them here as an example of how learning might progress. But learning is a highly individual process, in this practice even more than in others. While others might have similarities in the way they learn, it is unlikely their experiences would mirror mine.

Stage One:

The first stage is barely worthy of being considered a true gangr at all. It occurs at the beginning of the mind's attempt at reaching a unitary state, which is to say that while the mind is in a unitary state, there is also significant error and major blocks are still in place. This stage is characterized by a slight sharpening of the senses and a feeling that "the blood is up". Everything may seem crisp somehow. This is not unlike the state sports players get into before a game by "psyching up". There is little, though noticeable, increase in strength and speed. Intuition may become more dominant.

Stage Two:

The second stage is like the first, but instead of being a matter of psyching up, it is more like "tripping into". Emotions run wild. The object of attention dominates one's whole world. Strength and speed significantly increase, even to the maximum possible for the practitioner's body (where so much adrenaline is released the entire body tingles, and buzzes, and feels taut), but the increase is not maintainable for very long. Thinking, in the sense of forebrain activity, is almost completely absent. The animal nature dominates. Psychetachia becomes pronounced, though difficult if not impossible to control.

Stage Three:

While the first two stages comprise "the basics" of the gangr the third stage is where the work of refining technique really begins. The wod raised to the second stage nature consumes the practitioner. Everything becomes eaten away, burnt up, destroyed by the fire that is the gangr. Hel-blindness results. There is not only no human nature (forebrain activity), there is no animal nature. There is no nature of any sort. No awareness. No world. All is empty. The opposite of psychetachia occurs, and time races by in the outside world (once the practitioner again becomes aware of it) while it stops inside the practitioner. This emptiness does not last, for some minor imperfection in it will retrigger the awareness processes. Once this occurs the brain will automatically revert to the last state it was in: wod-ful. But it only has an image of the previous wod state, and it is this image it uses. Detail has been lost, and this is a good thing. The lost details will be most often peripheral, and therefore less helpful to the gangr. Thus the hel-blindness actually serves to "clean up" the mind, make the state of the gangr purer. It also rests mind and

body so when elevation again commences, once the mind re-attains awareness, the gangr can be made even deeper, even more wod can be released and handled. This leads again to being consumed, and the whole process goes 'round again. At stage three there is better control of psychetachia. Strength and speed increase further, but there is less display (less growling, tensing of muscles, and getting really worked up). This is because the body, mind, and spirit are becoming more efficient in their operations. But there is a danger at this stage, if it is being used for martial arts purposes. The practitioner can be blindsided while in the hel-blind state.

Stage Four:

Stage four eliminates the danger of stage three. Once sufficient experience at stage three techniques is had, the practitioner can learn to have one part of the mind in a state of wod, and dealing with external things, and another part of the mind in a hel-blind state, resting and resetting. Once the moment of action has passed, the wod-mind goes hel-blind, and the hel-blind mind becomes aware again and takes up the elevation, seamlessly ready to deal with the next necessity. It may seem that there can be no unitary state while the mind is so divided, but this is not true. Both can be seen as aspects of the same thing, and as such the technique must be applied.

At the fourth stage visions start to occur with regularity. Everything in the practitioner's field of vision shines. There is an incredible feeling of being so incredibly awake it can scarce be believed. But visions can go bad here too, and become distracting or frightening, or even psychologically harmful. Voices might be heard that chant or shout obscenities. There is a real danger here of going temporarily mad, and not in a good way. This is all because everything in the mind is becoming amplified, bad things along with good. This is why the practice of somafera, especially at this level, is strongly not recommended unless the practitioner is ready, willing, and able to confront all of his or her own weaknesses, darknesses, and personal demons all at once. Remember "to light a candle is to cast a shadow."

The practitioner here will have great accuracy at predicting things, such as the next move of an opponent. There is a feeling (a knowing) of oneness with all things. There is noticeably improved control over psychetachia.

Stage Five:

In stage five the mind is sort of "shuffled", like a pack of cards. Different parts of the mind, having different states of either wod or hel-blindness, continuously interact and change each other. This is done according to certain patterns and precepts that maximize the effectiveness of finding information buried deeply within the brain. It is like being, spiritually, on a rollercoaster. It is like a snowball rolling downhill, picking up ever more snow and growing ever larger. One part of the mind makes another more aware, more powerful, releases more adrenaline, and this feeds back into the first making it stronger too, and so on.

Here, after the shining of the fourth stage, the skin all over the body begins to prickle, forms gooseflesh. The body hair all stands on end. There is an electric thrill that runs through the whole body, especially over the skin. Those practitioners who elevate via an animal spirit will usually perceive this sensation as the body actually growing new hair. As visions at this stage are deep and regular, this may appear to be visually the case (to the practitioner) as well. This, along with the spiritual feelings, gives the practitioner the impression he or she has actually become an animal.

The deeper visions also mean things like, for those who utilize visions of spirits, that they will often talk to you in a way they can be heard. They can inspire. Inspirations flow so fast that, if the practitioner is a person who works with inspiration such as a writer, poet, musician, or artist, it can be nearly impossible to keep up. Creativity is multiplied an hundred-fold. The body feels as if it were hit with stroke after stroke of lightning. Strength becomes truly prodigious. Reactions are lightning fast and always spot-on. Adrenaline flows so freely time seems to crawl, leaving all the time in the world for decision making. And more, this maximally efficient state becomes maintainable for increasingly longer periods of time. When the pure hel-blind state is entered into (and even though the mind is utilizing both hel-blind and wod states simultaneously, there are still greater periods when one or the other completely dominates) it is even more pure. (Don't ask me how, it has to be experienced to be understood.) Animal nature is unrestrained, but control is still maintained. This is a state of completely raging control.

When it is first encountered stage five leads the practitioner into a final showdown, as it were, with the inner darkneses. As it amplifies every good thing, as it makes the internal guides so much more real, it amplifies every bad thing and makes internal destructive forces so much more real. The internal demon, as it were, may start to wear a face, or have a voice. It will start to gain control over the practitioner unless the practitioner can defeat it. It cannot be fought. It cannot be reasoned with. It cannot be mastered. It cannot be controlled. It is the practitioner's own self, as much as the bright strong thing that is his or her elevated nature is. The Abyss must be crossed. The only way out is through. The practitioner must enter into the darkness, embrace it, accept it. The practitioner must become one with his or her shadow self. If it sounds like I'm being vague and mysterious, it's because I am. There is no way for words to convey what occurs here, or what is required. It must be experienced to be understood. Annihilation is the price of failure, rapture and a form of enlightenment is the reward of victory.

Stage Six:

The sixth stage not only reaps the rewards of the crossing of the Abyss, but the techniques that bring the practitioner to it are those learned in the process of dealing with that crossing. Nothing is held onto. One thing after another occurs, and passes. Joy arises, and falls away, and comes again immediately from elsewhere. Visions are continuous, as are the inspirations they bring. One form melts into another. All is flow, continuous flow. There are no blocks to impede it. As soon as each vision occurs, it is let go of before it can bring the kind of unbalance that holding onto it brings. Great rewards are reaped from the internal flow of visions and experiences here, with minimum detriment. Elevation

occurs rapidly, and quite strongly, and with little effort. I can describe no more, as the usefulness of words here fails me.

The important elements, I believe, in the above progress, are as follows: first learning how to enter into the gangr at will must occur. Then one must learn to maximize the wod (and therefore adrenaline) in the body. Afterwards, the state of shining must be achieved, with the increase in visionary states this brings. Either concurrently with this, or afterwards (though possibly before, in some cases) the body-buzzing, hair-standing-on-end must occur, with the chills that usually accompany it. Finally a state where the face flushes and the body begins to heat up is sought. I am sure there is more after this, as well, but it currently lies outside my experience.

It must be kept in mind here that the division of the process of elevation into stages is highly arbitrary. Different people will experience these things differently, and in different orders. It is all highly individual. These stages are not set in stone. They should under no circumstances be looked upon as marks of accomplishment or badges! They are not a ranking system. The fact that I, for instance, go though a lot of stages in a short period of time says less about my rate of progress than my type of progress. I progress in this art by taking myself, via training, up to the edge of myself and putting myself in a situation where I *need* to do better than my best. Through spiritual techniques I find a way to do this. Normally what would then be necessary is to do a lot of work to figure out why what just happened, happened, and to learn to repeat it, and to do it more efficiently. I do not do this. Instead I just put myself in another need situation, reach within for the inspiration to do even better still, and then work backwards. That is, having two different points of accomplishment to compare, I figure out what the steps in between had to have been. It is more difficult to do it this way in some ways than to go slow and take the time to work out each step before taking it. But it makes for faster progress, if I don't hurt myself. But I do it this way because this is what works for me. It is neither better nor worse than other ways of going about learning. Others have other paths. One person's stage two may be good as another's stage five. The sole reason they are provided is for informational purposes. The sole use they have is as a counting system, or a taxonomical one. What is named is understood in such a way as to allow for conceptual manipulation, and learning to identify one's own stages can be a most valuable tool in seeking to improve practice and learning what works and what doesn't.

Meditation

Meditation is the first skill that a practitioner of some form must master. None of the later skills can be successfully performed without it. It takes, if you have no prior experience with it, quite some practice to get the hang of it, but perseverance will pay off.

First it is necessary to define what meditation is. Commonly it is held to be a form of mental relaxation that brings about a physical and emotional relaxation. But this understanding misses the point. While it is true that mental relaxation is involved, and that it does sometimes bring about emotional and physical relaxation, these are nothing more than details and side effects. The purpose of meditation is to clear the mind, to still the chatter that is omnipresent in most people's brains, even when they are thinking about nothing in particular. When the chatter is stilled, and the mind is silent, the aforementioned relaxation does occur. But this is just setting the stage for what is to follow: a greater focusing of the mind that occurs because the mind is clear.

When there is nothing to distract the attention the minute signals that comprise the subconscious mind can be heard with greater clarity. There are a variety of reasons for desiring this. It can bring greater awareness of one's surroundings, bringing small details to the attention of the conscious mind. It can be useful in retrieval of old memories. It can be useful in introspection and self-analysis. It is critical in the art and science of attaining visions. But whatever goal is sought, the thing meditation does is to bring what is hidden within to light. This has unpleasant elements as well as pleasant ones. Meditation is actually supposed to make things bad, in order that you might learn and grow. Meditation is a tool, not a goal.

While meditation takes time and effort to learn, it is pretty easy to describe how to go about it. First of all, make sure you will be undisturbed for the period of meditation. Make sure you are sitting comfortably. Lighting incense will likely be of help, as lighting candles might be. The important thing is to set a mood of calmness, stillness, relaxation. Once everything seems right, close your eyes. Let your thoughts slow down and stop. Become an empty vessel. At first thoughts will continually arise, and will prove to be quite distracting. Do not allow them distract you. Do not focus on them. Do not follow the thoughts. By the same token, do not fight them, do not struggle against them, for this is simply generating more thoughts. Allow them to rise, and allow them to pass away, and do not interact with them. In time, the thoughts will become fewer. Also distracting are sensory impressions, such as the myriad itches that inevitably spring up whenever you try to meditate. As difficult as it seems, they must be dealt with in the same way as the distracting thoughts.

The first stage that is reached with meditation is an empty mind. After this, with continued practice and development, is becoming unattached to the ego, the self. This sounds similar to the empty mind, but there is a subtle yet important difference. With the empty mind, there are no thoughts. With an unattached ego, there aren't even the basic causes of, or desires for thoughts. This is a much purer state of mind than simple

emptiness. It will therefore be not only of benefit in the above mentioned endeavors, but it carries other benefits as well.

There is one particular kind of meditation that is of most use to the practitioner of somafera. It has different names in different times and places, but has no commonly used term in modern times. But there is a word that fits, and was used in times past to describe such spiritual practices. That term is "possession".

Possession is the state of mind/spirit wherein the mind has become empty of everything except one object of attention or contemplation. This object can be anything; a table, an idea, a spirit, anything. The second requirement is that the ego be entirely absent, which is to say there must be no sense of self. When these things are so, sustained contemplation (especially accompanied by some simple, repetitive ritual) will result in possession, where the sense of self becomes entirely replaced by the object in question.

This means different things depending on what the object of contemplation was. If it was a simple object, like a stone, then there will be a sense of "becoming one" with the stone. Every detail of it will be known, experienced, at the same time, as one experiences one's own body or self. If it was an idea the idea becomes the whole of one's being. It becomes understood thoroughly, as by an expert. If it was a spirit the self is replaced by the spirit's self, the mind and nature are replaced by the spirit's mind and nature (though interpreted or filtered through the practitioner's mind). The use this state of mind has for the practitioner of somafera is that this is the core element of the practice, that one seeks to become possessed by one's animal nature. (Or spirit, depending on one's terminology.)

The final important state of meditation to the practitioner of somafera is one for which our culture has no name. There is no perception of anything. There is no self present to perceive. This sounds like simple emptiness of thought, or unattachment to ego, and many who learn meditation mistake these things for this type of meditative state. But it is not these things. Emptiness of thought means there is still that which can contain thought. Unattachment to ego still means that there is something which can be unattached. The best way to describe it is to describe how it is obtained. It is most easily obtained through a state of possession, where the mind, possessed of one directional awareness burns itself out, and even this is gone. There is nothing left, not even a world, a sense of space. This state of mind has use for the somafera practitioner who wants to develop his or her ability to the fullest potential.

Pain as a Teacher

Let me begin this with a disclaimer. I am simply describing my own experiences with using pain to produce altered states of consciousness. I am not advocating its use, and everything I describe herein can be very dangerous - always be safe and careful if you decide to pursue these practices.

A common element of many somafera type practices around the world is the use of pain to thrust people into a highly elevated state. For instance, worshippers at Kataragama in Sri Lanka have their cheeks pierced with large metal rods, and some Sufis pound knife-points into each other's heads during ritual. Reacting to pain is one of our most basic instincts - it makes the adrenaline surge, the heart beat faster. It can also cause the body to release endorphins, which cause a "high" feeling - like that often experienced by people getting tattooed. All of these things can help trigger elevation. But there is another element - we are naturally evolved to avoid pain, to remove our hand from the hot stove. Mastering that instinct, overpowering it, going towards the pain instead of away from it, can be a powerful act as well.

From my experience, there are two basic ways to approach using pain to induce and/or strengthen elevation. The first is to rev yourself up - tense the muscles, growl, yell, focus all your energy and power into overcoming the pain. The second is to relax into it, let your sense of yourself fade away so that you no longer perceive what is happening to your body. These are similar to the two kinds of unitary state - the intense focus and union with one thing, and the dissolution of ego into Everything. Each can be useful, depending on your objectives, and also on your personality and practice methods. I have found it the most beneficial to alternate between the two.

There are many levels of pain one can experiment with, with different degrees of difficulty and danger. I think it's best to start small and work your way up, to test out your limits and slowly push them. I have worked mostly with temporary piercing and burning. You can purchase one-use, sterilized needles online, in a variety of gauges. If used properly and disposed of safely, they can be a very useful tool. It is a good idea to learn a little about anatomy and study some of the literature on "play piercing" to know which areas are dangerous to pierce and which are safe, but still rather painful. Then it's just a matter of experimentation. I have found that it is also a good training exercise to have another person you trust blindfold you and pierce you, so you don't know where or when it's coming - this teaches you to resist sudden, unexpected pain. Controlled burning is another tool which causes pain a little differently, and therefore teaches you different things, although in the beginning stages it may cause quite a bit of scarring.

So what can you learn from these techniques? Well, first of all you will slowly learn how to elevate to resist pain, which is not only useful in many situations in daily life and in training, but will also increase your overall ability to elevate. You will learn control over your body. You will have an opportunity to practice self-healing, as these methods will undoubtedly result in some bleeding, blistering, scarring, etc. You may get some insight

into the different kinds of unitary states. And over time, you may develop some rather extraordinary abilities - to not feel pain at all, and even to not show physical damage.

The Dagaz Moment

A skill critical to the development of somafera as a martial art, and one quite useful in somafera practice in any event, is the attaining of the dagaz moment, as I call it. (Dagaz being the Germanic word for twilight, the moment day becomes night, or night becomes day.) It is a default unitary state with the object of a person's attention, whether directed externally or internally, that exists for the first moment a new object enters the field of attention and for a variable time (from no time at all to more than a minute) in an only slightly tarnished form afterwards.

Consider the memory. There is the long term memory we all use to recall events and thoughts from long past. There is the short term memory that we use to recall events up to several minutes ago with much greater clarity than the long term memory, in general. And there is the working memory that, so studies show, has near limitless accurate recall of data for just a few moments, a fraction of a second in most cases.

The reason that the recall is both so large and so accurate is because of the fact that so little, if any, time has elapsed. Think about the state of the working memory the very instant that the sensory data or thought hit it; those data, that thought, would be recorded with perfect accuracy, for nothing other than the recording process has created the memory. Thought is a physical process, involving the firing of neurons (the nerve cells of the brain). This takes a certain amount of time to occur. Until it does occur, no corruption of the data can possibly occur. The mind's understanding of the object of attention is perfect, and without error. This is the moment I call the dagaz moment, the moment of twilight, for the sun quickly sets upon this uncorrupted perfection. The moment thought occurs, the potential for error to be introduced into the understanding, into the working memory occurs. After all, no one and nothing is perfect, all of our thoughts are a little off; partially, potentially flawed.

This means that action taken precisely in response to the dagaz moment of a particular thought will be right on; swift, accurate, strong. But learning to recognize a dagaz moment quickly enough to be able to so take advantage of it is quite difficult. But it is possible. A dedicated practitioner of somafera could benefit enormously from skill in this area, for it would allow he or she the ability to respond instinctively to things, and as part of that response mentally set up conditions so that it is easier to recognize and appropriately respond to the next dagaz moment.

Take somafera as a martial art. The martial artist who could recognize and respond to dagaz moments quickly enough could attain a dagaz moment unitary state with the mere beginnings of an opponent's move, accurately anticipating where it will land well enough before it does so that it can be countered with minimal energy and minimal movement, leaving enough attention in the mind to recognize the next most appropriate dagaz moment to respond to.

The dagaz moment can be extended (sort of) a little while longer than is natural for the practitioner simply by being in a clear minded meditative state, preferably unattached to

the ego. This will ensure that while some inescapable minimum of subconscious thought-association is going on, it will not seriously corrupt the image of the dagaz moment a little while longer.

A practice I undertook to help myself recognize dagaz moments involved throwing small rocks at young trees or poles a good ten yards away. I would have my gaze lowered, or away, or was inwardly focused, and would suddenly look up at my target and throw the rock I was holding simultaneously at it. This helped the action to be taken directly in response to the dagaz moment, and I grew more easily able to identify this occurring.

Another practice I found useful involved sword cutting practice. I would practice swinging my sword at its target (a log) and stopping short a hair's breadth away from it. Not pulling back on the swing, mind, but naturally stopping short at that point. This required developing the skill of noticing and catching dagaz moments. A good aid to the process was to be looking away, suddenly look at the space just above the target and cut, and immediately close my eyes, so no further visual data were being processed. (Word of warning: don't cut your fool self doing this, only attempt if you really know what you are doing with a sword. And of course never perform anywhere near others, one can always lose one's grip.)

Burning the Wod

One of the chief difficulties to overcome in the process of elevating is that of burning the wod. Wod is an old word that means both "fury" and "possession". It is both a spiritual state and it indicates the presence of elevated levels of adrenaline in the body.

The mind is a machine, not unlike a computer. Thinking about something is a form of processing like what a computer does. But unlike a computer, thoughts are not exact. Thoughts associate. Seeing a house, for instance, brings memories of other houses that were like it, and of different experiences in houses, all unbidden.

Elevation is (amongst other things) a process of combining thoughts with emotions, especially those emotions that reflect adrenaline (such as fury). Wod quickens the blood, makes the mind race. This quickens the racing of thoughts through the mind, makes them more powerful. It also makes them less exact. Each thought requires a certain amount of energy to make it happen. Energy in excess of this "spills over" into other thoughts.

I call this "burning the wod" (because the feeling it produces in the mind is a "burnt" feeling). Unintended associations spring up when the wod is burned. This can diffuse or even stop elevation entirely. This is especially so because, as Jung pointed out, opposite thoughts are stored close together in the brain. Thus "ice" is close to "fire", "don't want to" is close to "want to". So burning the wod while elevating will particularly bring out anti-elevating thoughts. Additionally, burnt wod can have physical effects. It can over-adrenalize the muscles to the point where there is no elevated strength at all, but just debilitating cramps and shakes. In such circumstances it can be difficult to even simply stand up.

It is especially easy to burn the wod when first learning to elevate. This is because you don't as yet really know how to elevate correctly. Subconsciously you are likely to overcompensate and raise the wod up much higher than it needs to be. But as with carrying a cup of liquid, it is better not to fill it right up to the brim. Think of it like trying to free a car stuck in the snow. Using too much gas does nothing more than spin the wheels uselessly. One of the first things a new practitioner of somafera will need to do is to learn how to use just enough wod to elevate without using too much. In this the various practices and training exercises of somafera are particularly useful.

Healing Yourself

Somafera can be used to heal existing physical problems - it is also an important skill to learn even if you don't tend to get sick or injured, because the practice of elevation has certain negative physical side effects (muscle strain, high blood pressure, etc.) that can become serious if not treated when they occur.

On the most basic level, you may find that over time practicing somafera strengthens your overall immune system. I used to catch every bug that was going around, and yet I haven't had a flu or even a serious cold since I began elevating. Usually I don't get the virus at all. However, sometimes I can feel the beginning of a cold starting to develop - that is the time to elevate and fight it. How you do this can be tailored to your own way of working. For instance, you might approach it as a spiritual battle, fending off the invading virus. Or you might focus instead on aligning and balancing all your internal systems so no outside force can upset them. Personally, I also find it useful to know how the illness operates, and visualize my body's immune system going into overdrive to protect me. (If you work directly with any gods and/or spirits, it might also be helpful to ask them for assistance - to give you the energy to fight it, or give you specific instructions on how to heal it, or however they interact with you.)

It's important to understand the nature of your ailment in order to heal it - for instance, allergies are not the same as viruses (in the former case, your body's own chemicals are the problem) and are not fought in the same manner. Or another example - if you have a migraine, you do not want to elevate in a way that's going to increase your blood pressure (as it often does) since that's just going to aggravate the headache. Learning a little about anatomy and physiology will probably help you here. And some of it is just simple trial and error. I was having no success trying to rid myself of my allergies until I changed my approach and stopped fighting them like a disease. Fortunately, you can tell pretty quickly if something works or not, and can fine tune your healing techniques based on the results.

Elevation can also be used to heal wounds such as cuts and burns, especially if done right after the injury occurs. Elevate and focus all your energy on that one spot, on making it whole again, sealing the wound or cooling the flesh or whatever is needed. If it hurts, use the pain, let it push you into a deeper state, and sharpen your focus. You should find that after some practice you are able to effect a much quicker healing time for your wounds, both big and small, eventually you may be able to accomplish this so easily and even subconsciously that it happens without even trying.

You can also work on any long-term health problems you may have. Let the somafera practice teach you to be more in tune with your body, to know where the imbalances are and how to fix them. Practice, for instance, focusing all of your energy and attention while elevating on one particular part of your body - a finger, a patch of skin, the back of your knee, whatever. Try to attain a unitary state with that part of your body. Now try it for an internal organ. It's possible to do, and very useful once you can master it. For instance, I have often been able to prevent an oncoming asthma attack by achieving

enough of a unitary state with my lungs to be able to have more direct control over their "involuntary" workings, and can force the bronchial pathways to expand instead of constrict. You can also attain a unitary state with your whole body (which is so important to somafera anyway), in order to affect a more general, overall improvement in health. I truly believe that the sky's the limit with this, and that it would even be possible to heal such serious diseases as cancer this way. However, if you have a serious condition, you should also seek conventional medical attention - there's no reason you can't do both.

Using elevation to heal yourself will not only make you a healthier person overall, but will also help you counteract the physical problems that result from somafera practice - just use these same kinds of techniques on whatever problems arise. You will eventually get a feel for what works for each thing. And in the end, you will have a stronger and healthier practice.

The Road Ahead

So you have just broken through and elevated for the first time. What lies ahead? To a certain extent this varies greatly between one practitioner and another. But there are certain things that are common experiences to a majority of those who go through this.

One of the first things for most people is fear. Most people are unaccustomed to ever giving up even a fraction of their conscious self control, and for them the process of elevation feels like they have been "taken over" by their bodies, or by their unconscious minds, or by the animal within, and it is for them a highly unpleasant experience, because of the worry that things might happen to them, or that they might do things, that they do not want. But this fear is felt less by those who have had experience with some sort of spiritual or religious art which regularly involves the loss of conscious experience and the obliteration of the ego. And in any event, practice with the gangr will bring about an understanding which lessens that fear.

For most, a period of time will follow the first breakthrough wherein everything is different, absolutely everything. The practitioner might feel that he or she is always elevated, at least a little. The senses might have changed, and be a little sharper, and this makes all of one's reactions feel a little "off". There is often a period of feeling that everything is unreal, or plastic. It will be very easy to slip back into elevation, whether deliberately or accidentally. The practitioner will feel very clear-minded, and very closely in contact with spiritual elements. Some find this time quite pleasant, others unpleasant. Its depth and duration will correspond to the intensity of the change the breakthrough brought about. This change is brought about a rearrangement of the mind brought about by the breakthrough. New lines of thought become possible, new associations as well, old hangups and inhibitions are gone, and the cumulative effect of these is a perhaps subtle, but definite change in personality and nature.

Along with this sometimes comes another change. There might be a withdrawal from the rest of the world. In some this might be slight. In others this will be more severe, and sometimes it will sever most relationships and ties one has to society. This is because of the change in personality and the standards one has.

But the changes in mind and inner nature set off by the first breakthrough can only go so far. There will almost inevitably be a backlash to all of this rapid change, these new abilities. The newly opened mind is a double-edged sword that not only releases those parts of the inner nature that make elevation possible, it releases all parts of the inner nature. Eventually the truly deeply buried portions of the subconscious will make their way to the surface of the mind. What this means to the individual practitioner will depend to a great extent on that practitioner. But it will mean one thing to virtually every practitioner; that practitioner will suddenly no longer be able to elevate, or at best will no longer be able to elevate all that well.

This is because those buried parts of the subconscious do not mesh well, either with each other or with the conscious mind. They have never been thought about, or specifically

related to. They have not been learned from. They have not been dealt with. This is, of course, because they have been buried. But now they must be dealt with, for they are so noisy and distracting, they introduce so much error into the practice of elevating, that they make it difficult if not impossible. This "out of contact" period will be quite distressing and even frightening for some. The longer it goes on, the easier it will be for the practitioner to feel that he or she has "lost it" entirely, and that the original elevation must have been a fluke. And this period can last for months.

But this is a necessary stage to learning the practice. It should be remembered that not only is this all new, but that the practitioner is also all new, like a newborn. This is the stage analogous to the newborn's learning to walk. The initial elevation took place in part because of the phenomenon of beginner's luck, and now the practitioner must learn to stand and take steps on his or her own.

There are many ways for the practitioner to learn to overcome this. In one way or another, the practitioner will develop techniques, certain things to do that will ameliorate the problems. The range of possible techniques is quite wide. On the one hand, they may involve self-examination and character development. After all, the problem comes from the nature of the unitary state itself, wherein all that is in the inner nature is utilized. Subconscious blocks, inhibitions, and desires normally unable to affect anything in normal conscious mind operation are significant factors during unitary mind operation, for all that is within is used. Simply doing enough self improvement by character work to remove these inhibitions, attachments, etc. can greatly improve one's somafera state. This approach was utilized to a certain extent by the ancient berserker brotherhoods, who had an iron-clad rule against any berserk in the brotherhood speaking even a single word of fear, or doubt, or negativity.

On the other hand the techniques may less involve character development than specific mental/physical techniques that are designed to shift around the way mind and body operate from one way to another quickly enough that the subconscious problems are continually sidestepped. These techniques may also simply involve learning to be meditatively still so well that these problems roll over the practitioner like water off a duck's back. Techniques also may involve simple classical conditioning, wherein some physical factor is used to trigger the gangr, and simple repetition makes the mind so receptive to that trigger that it outweighs any of the problems stirred up from the subconscious.

But there's a Catch-22 here. Every action of the conscious mind, every deliberate intent, generates ripples in the mind. For every action there is a reaction, for every cause there is an effect. These techniques can do wonders for reducing the amount of subconscious interference but they also generate further subconscious interference. Techniques are necessary for the practice of the art. Without technique, elevation quickly dissipates. But with them blocks are set in the road. For this reason, the practitioner must learn when to put aside the techniques, when to let go of the practice.

Training in the use of these techniques trains the subconscious mind to act along these lines. It trains the hypothalamus to use them as instinctive reactions. This has two benefits. The short term one is that after applying the techniques in an elevation ritual for a certain period of time one has got the mind into an appropriate groove, and then the techniques can be set aside, and the subconscious mind will naturally follow them without intent (for a time). The longer term benefit is that these instincts can be so conditioned that eventually one does not ever need to use the techniques, the subconscious nature will simply follow them.

One can easily see from this that the more one becomes free from attachment to the ego the more easily the state of somafera is entered into. This is because the ego is a conscious attachment, and generates subconscious echoes that interfere with elevation. The more that the practitioner frees him or herself from the ego in more and more fundamental ways, the more the practitioner comes to be his or her true self.

Wod Raising Technique

After the initiation into the practice of somafera (a necessary experience if it is to be deliberately invoked or controlled) it is usually not desirable to simply repeat the initiation experience in order to bring about the somafera state, for they often involve large amounts of pain, danger, hardship, etc. And fortunately it is not necessary to. Once the true depth of the somafera state has been experienced once it can be brought about again utilizing certain techniques to raise the wod, or "possessionary fury".

These techniques center around the concept of dynamic tension. Dynamic tension can be achieved by tensing all the muscles in, say, the arm, and then moving the arm around. These sorts of motions tend to raise adrenaline levels, which triggers wod. Wod is also raised by both hyperventilation and deep breathing. One can combine these things with the basic elements of ritual and end up with a concise, effective, easy wod raising technique. Turn the wod raising ritual into a sort of a dance. Crouch low on the haunches, balanced on the balls of the feet. Raise up, return to crouching, over and over again. Tense the muscles of first one arm, then the other, then the first one again. Build up a rhythm. Move the arms, tense, in and out, from one side to the other. Breathe deeply and alternate it with rapid shallower hyperventilation. Suddenly leap to some random other place and land crouching on the balls of the feet. Suddenly spring up onto the tiptoes and whip the head around backwards. (Warning: only do this if you have gymnastics, dance, or martial arts experience AND KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING! It is quite possible to seriously injure yourself doing that.) A little while of this sort of dance, especially combined with vision-inducing techniques and/or prayer will have a great effect on the level of wod experienced.

Runic Berserking Technique

After the somafera initiate has gone through the initiation ritual he or she will desire to develop a technique to effect the transformation. (A process sometimes called, in modern times, elevation.) One component for such a ritual are those techniques described in the Wod Raising Technique article. Another effective element would be one that incorporated both emotionally affective imagery and left-brain intellectual conceptualizing. (Note: this is not the same thing as using left-brain discriminating thought. It is rather a right-brain gestaltic understanding *of* a complex left-brain-defined concept.) Such an element would be, (for berserks or others using a Norse religious/mythological framework), the use of runes, as the ancient practitioners of trollaukin used. Runes are metaphysical symbols that have emotional associations and definitions derived in part from their inherent meanings and partly from their relationship to surrounding runes in the case of rune magic. The following are a pair of runes based conceptually on the trollaukin runes from the collection of Jon Arnason, but utilizing the Elder Futhark. One reason for this is that the trollaukin runes utilize the Icelandic rune row, but the Elder rune row is the one is most common use today. Another is that by rewriting it slightly I was able to work in symbolism reflecting our modern understandings.

The first rune is first of all supposed to evoke the Helm of Awe, appropriate enough I think as a source of emotion/power for the elevation. Next come the algiz runes. Algiz, while the least is known from old sources about its proper interpretation, most likely means connection with the realm of the dead, and also communication, especially as with spirits, and even more particularly with beneficial guides and protectors. Now there are four of them, a completeness of them, to work with Norse numerological folklore symbology. I will say therefore that this means that this spirit-connection-with-the-world-of-the-dead spreads throughout the whole mind/self. Furthermore you might take the arrangement of four algiz runes oriented like this as meaning they also comprise a gebo rune, a rune of sacrifice and partnership. This has a few useful meanings. One is that this rune therefore give a partnership with some spirit from the Outgarths, and is therefore a rune of possession. Another reading is that the spirit connection sacrifices the self (as with Odin on the world tree), thus meaning that this rune is useful as well in destroying the ego-self, a necessary prerequisite for possession. Still another is that sacrifice of the self creates partnership with a spirit. The other major structure of this bindrune is the ing-isa structure. Ing is fertile energy, raw creative power, it has a sexual implication. Isa is ice. Combining them gives a rune that can be read with either of two interpretations. One is that fertile energy is frozen, rendered impotent. The other is that the fertile energy is rendered indestructible, eternal, like ice.

There are four possible ways to read this rune as a whole then.

- 1) Sacrifice of the self establishes communication and partnership with a spirit. This contact strengthens fertile energy, gives more of it.

- 2) The spirits in contact with the berserk destroy him, tear him apart, kill him (all in ritualistic, shamanistic fashion), end his fertile energy, take his life, leave him nothing.
- 3) Stilling the fertility is a sacrifice that calls upon the spirits and gives partnership.
- 4) Being torn apart by spirits gives endless fertile energy.

Interpretations 1) and 4) share conceptual similarities, as do 2) and 3). Two and three describe sacrifice in one fashion or another, death. This can be equated to Odin's sacrifice on the Tree, descent from Valhalla to Hel. One and four speak of eternal fertile energy gained from death and sacrifice. This describes his ascent back from Hel to Valhalla, armed with new knowledge, nature. This seems a natural relationship to the ends of establishing two of the kinds of spirit-visions. The journey Helwards and the journey Valhallwards. This would provide connection to two of the gods, namely Odin and Hela. Alternately it might provide connection to alfs or other spirits with such Odinic or Helish natures. This makes this rune essentially like the gapaldur rune then. It establishes simultaneous spiritual connection in two opposite but powerful directions, and it spreads this connection through the whole self. It further tends to invoke the sorts of visions (sacrifice, ascent) that comprise the "standard" shamanistic spirit-journey.

The other rune is a hagr and uruz. Hagr can be interpreted as "hail". Hail has both a negative, destructive aspect and a positive, generative one (hail melts and becomes crop-nourishing water). Uruz means "aurochs", and as such means raw, mad, wild, primeval power. (And what more appropriate rune for the gangr?) This rune therefore has two meanings; primeval power that nourishes, helps; and primeval power that lays waste. One concept is much like the ginfaxi rune, which seemed to speak of storm upon the sea. Hailstorm that destroys seems another way of saying the same thing. This means that the berserker is being opened up to all the mad destructive forces within. This is an enormous source of stress, and so will actually serve to promote elevation. Additionally it is wise, IMHO, to embrace closely all those horrible destructive, wild elements of the gangr. It keeps such things as elements of the vision accompanying the gangr being experienced. That means those forces will be *integrated into* your state of mind, rather than remain invisible, somewhere "out there", and really messing with you. You know, "keep your friends close, but your enemies closer"? It also spends those forces, blunting the damage they can do, but using their energy to create the vision symbolizing them. Also, by embracing these forces you subject your mind to a purification by scourging; all the weakest elements of your spiritual state will be eradicated by it. If you can hold on to the main elements of the spiritual state, a purer, deeper, more genuine spiritual state will result.

There are two ways these two runes work together. One is that the destructive, scourging elements are drawn from the contact with the spirits/forces of the first rune. This serves to unite the visions of these two runes into one, encouraging unitary state by making sure all thought and emotion are flowing along harmoniously. The other way is that the possession by the spirits, raising your fertile energy, turns that energy into the mad primeval passion of the gangr. These runes will act upon each other, and form an

interesting system. When the first rune is activated there is an equal tendency to move spiritually in either of two directions; Helwards or Valhallawards. The deciding element of whichever you experience then most predominantly will be a matter of random chance, whatever is currently most dominant in the subconscious. The second rune aids in this by raising the level of subconscious contact, and thus helps ensure that the resulting vision is more likely to work most closely with those elements of your subconscious and spiritual state that are currently the closest to the gangr already. When motion goes too far in either direction, and your need is for more of the other direction at the moment, you will start experiencing interference from the subconscious. This invokes the destructive forces of the second rune, which tends to destroy the spiritual state you are currently in, leaving you spiritually ripe to naturally move in the opposite direction in the new phase of your vision. (If you've ever studied Jung's theory of shadow and persona, you'll understand why.)

This is a naturally self-correcting system. Motion that tends in the right direction is strengthened, motion in the wrong direction tends to be inhibited. The more practice you have with using these runes, the more speedily and naturally they will bring about the gangr just from contemplating them. They will tend to keep a vision going, in a continuous sense, and tend to make it stay in areas that easily lead to the sorts of emotions/experiences that bring about the gangr. It is adding an element missing, I fear, from much practical spiritual science. That is left-brain input. The left brain is traditionally regarded with suspicion by occultists, but I think it should not be. After all, it is very useful. Repeated practice with just such a ritual as this will provide a strong left-brain oriented image. The wonderful thing about the left brain is that it is able to guide, precisely, every content of the mind, even the powerful emotions of the right brain. Repeated practice with these runes will lead to a deep understanding of them, an instinctual understanding. This means that simply thinking about them even lightly will still naturally and strongly guide the contents of the mind along, without effort. And this means that since there will no longer be any striving, any conscious intent, practice with these runes will give you all the advantages of left brain guidance and fine tuning with none of the drawbacks of left brain interference, noise, and anti-unitary discrimination between things. Furthermore the deeper the understanding of these runes, the less energy required to actually elevate, to transform into the wolf, bear, whatever, the more energy left for utilization in other things.

And in keeping with tradition I would say to wear these runes on each foot, like in the ancient spell discussed in the *Perchtenlauf and Trollaukin* article. Or maybe one on each hand.

A further use of these runes is all the many different interpretations, connections, and symbolisms that can be made from and between them. Far too many to hold consciously all in the attention. But by striving to do so, you naturally overwhelm your conscious mind. If you learn to let this happen, this is the necessary stress, the overwhelming energy that destroys the ego, that are necessary to become possessed, to invoke the gangr! Thus these runes encourage the gangr through a heavily mental component. This requires much

less therefore in the way of physical stress/pain, and so makes the gangr even easier, and increases the power you have at your disposal still further.

Initiations

Deliberately invoking the state of somafera is a very difficult thing to do. Even those who are born as berserks and such, who are naturally able to enter into such a state, are generally able to do so but rarely, usually only in times of great need. For this reason many traditions of somafera involved an initiation, a ritual designed specifically to put the initiate into a deep somafera state. After this the initiate would more easily be able to deliberately invoke it, simply by knowing what it feels like.

As the state of somafera usually responds best to real need, the initiation ritual must center around creating an element of real need. Old initiation rituals, such as those practiced by the berserks, or warriors practicing the Heroic Feats, tended to rely on creating real danger, such as fighting a bear alone, or fending off thrown spears. But as need, even genuine need, can be created without so much danger, there is no need for it.

There are different ways to do this. One berserk I know used a prolonged period of solitude and fasting; no food, no water. Another used deep study and intensive martial arts training. Another ended up having a spontaneous initiation forced upon him by being trapped with an enemy for an extended period of time. And a couple, myself included, have used the following ritual, as we felt it offered the likeliest method of producing the strongest response.

Before beginning the ritual I spent two months studying all I could about the berserkergang (my form of practice) and human physiology as well. I also spent this time in extended prayer and meditation. This readied my mind for the upcoming experience, sensitizing it to certain key elements. It left me feeling clear and open and ready for the experience. I recommend it for the initiate. I chose to hold the ritual in an old ghost town, abandoned 350 years ago from fears of the werewolves that legend had it lived amongst the townspeople. The reason I chose this location was two-fold. One was that it was 200 miles away, and the very act of having to travel far to get to it would make it a more effective setting for the ritual. After all, not only do we esteem too lightly that which we gain too cheaply, but we also instinctively place more value on things that have cost us. The other was the atmosphere of the place. Ancient ruins, haunted by dead werewolves... the perfect place to perform such a spell. This was the beginning of attaining the unitary state. Such an atmosphere would call out strong associations in my mind that could be built upon by the later ritual. Similarly would I recommend that care should be taken in selecting location.

The ritual began with an old Slavic spell for becoming a werewolf. The spell required a copper knife to be made, and then stuck into a tree. But making a copper knife is not easy. Even if the initiate eschews forging it, and simply files it down out of copper bar stock, no small amount of effort or small amount of time are involved. And this is the reason for the knife. Over that time strong emotions will come to be felt. Boredom and frustration at the least. Perhaps even pain, as it is easy enough to cut a finger when making a blade. The initiate will grow intimately familiar with the blade, its every nick and warping. For these reasons it becomes a powerful ritual tool. It has become a symbol

to the initiate. Just holding the blade, just looking at it will call out all of those emotions from the memory. Actually using it in the ritual will connect the words and acts of the ritual to the emotional energy associated with the knife. No need to think to use it, no need to focus upon it, it thus acts in a way as to increase the power of emotion in the ritual automatically, without effort. In this way does the unitary state start to develop. Now the initiate has, floating around in his or her mind, the emotions and images invoked by the location with the emotions and images centered around the brain. These things begin to merge, to become associated with and confused with each other, after being held in the attention a while. This is simply due to the natural tendencies of the way the brain works. The phase shift to unity has begun.

Next the initiate must find a fallen tree. This requires some small act of looking, which is a physical matter of walking about with the intent to perform this ritual. This improves the readiness of the mind to receive the new experience. Then the initiate must stab the knife into the fallen tree. This act symbolically begins the ritual, and causes the initiate's mind to snap to attention. Then the initiate walks around the tree, looking at the knife. The act of walking raises energy levels in the body and so stimulates the mind as well. This gives energy to those thoughts going through the brain, making them stronger. And because the walking can be made into a wolf-like pacing, the image of the self as a wolf joins the other images in the mind, and benefits from their energy if it is held in the awareness long enough for the thoughts to associate.

While walking the initiate intones the following incantation (preferably using diaphragmatic breathing):

"On the sea, on the ocean, on the island, on Bujan,
On the empty pasture gleams the moon, on an ashstock (or whatever tree it is) lying
In a green wood, in a gloomy vale.
Toward the stock wandereth a shaggy wolf,
Horned cattle seeking for his sharp white fangs;
But the wolf enters not the forest,
But the wolf dives not into the shadowy vale,
Moon, moon, gold-horned moon,
Check the flight of bullets, blunt the hunters' knives,
Break the shepards' cudgels,
Cast wild fear upon all cattle,
On men, on all creeping things,
That they may not catch the grey wolf,
That they may not rend his warm skin!
My word is binding, more binding than sleep,
More binding than the promise of a hero!"

These words are important to the attaining of the unitary state. The incantation begins by describing a wolf doing exactly what the initiate is doing; approaching a tree. This identifies the initiate with the wolf, a sensation that is unconsciously given more sense of reality by the physical action of walking. Any thought or image associated conceptually

with an action the brain automatically assigns a greater sense of reality to. In this way the unitary state deepens. The mind now contains multiple sources of emotion, all beginning to be tied in with the image of the initiate becoming a wolf. The second half of the incantation continues this process. By asking for the aid of the moon in stopping people from harming the wolf, the initiate is subconsciously identifying his sense of safety with that of the wolf's. By casting himself in the light of a thing hunted by humans, the initiate is by implication declaring "I am not human!" The last two lines are a standard element of many incantations, and seal the effects of the ritual in the mind by identifying all that has gone into producing a unitary state of mind with the image of unbending strength and resolve to do this. This part of the ritual is ended by springing three times over the tree. By actually **acting** as a wolf, while speaking such sealing words, the unity of the mind with the self-as-wolf image is made strong and durable.

It is the next part of the ritual that actually triggers the change. The initiate goes to a fire, and casts nine herbs on it, herbs traditionally associated with wolves. (Any nine with the right association will do. This is another ritual tool like the copper knife, for some trouble must be gone to to obtain them.) Then the initiate oaths most strongly to hold his or her hand in the fire until transformed. There will be pain, and screaming (so make sure to hold this ritual far away from others), and a moment of almost irresistible need to pull the hand out of the fire. This is the critical moment. Hold on through this moment, keeping to the state of mind produced by the spell, and the change should be triggered. The unitary state results from the enormous **NEED** to end the pain, and from the overload of adrenaline in the body, and all this incredible energy rips through the mind, firing its contents into ecstatic super-life. This all taken together prompts the change in physiology that is the characteristic of somafera.

The Berserker as a Martial Art

The berserker is not simply a religious practice. It is also a martial art. It functions by raising and directing the flow of an energy called wud, focusing it to amplify natural physical abilities. For this reason it is a form of internal martial art, like Tai Chi Chuan and Kung Fu are, as opposed to an external style like Karate or Tae Kwon Do. The berserker has no forms, no "kata". It concentrates on the three basics of all martial art: strength, speed, and right action.

Wud amplifies the strength. This is one of the berserker's most basic weapons, as a fight can be ended simply by causing enough damage in a short enough period of time, or by grappling with and completely subduing an attacker, or just knocking him out. But reservoirs of wud are not limitless, and expending it in striking or moving drains the berserker, making him or her unable to call upon it again for some variable time. This can leave the berserker vulnerable to a sudden counterattack. One of the most important things for the berserker to learn is wud management. This involves raising the wud to a high enough level that it can amplify strength when used, but so that it is not all spent on the attack. Learning also to increase the maximum amount of wud that can be raised and learning to decrease the time it takes to raise it are critical to the fighting berserker, as is learning to hold high levels of wud in reserve, without using it for physical action.

Wud also amplifies the berserker's speed. This increased speed of movement allows excellent use of stop-attacks, where an opponent's attack, just begun, is countered not with a block or evasion but by making a more rapid strike of the berserker's own. For this reason the berserker must learn to move as efficiently as possible, to make no unnecessary movements of any kind. The fewer the wasted movements, the faster (and stronger) the motion. This increased speed also allows the berserker to make use of various tactics of deception. One such is standing out of distance, or what would be out of distance for a non-berserker fighter. This will in many opponents cause them to lower their guards at least a little to conserve energy, allowing the berserker to suddenly and surprisingly rush in and hit home.

The third pillar of the berserker style of fighting is right action. This is attaining the knowledge to take whatever action is most right, most appropriate, for the circumstances of the fight. This is why the berserker makes no use of forms. Forms create expectations, but are only really appropriate in a limited number of circumstances. This can lead to counterproductive reflexes and missed opportunities. Berserkers tend to cultivate an open observing state of mind, free, flexible, ready to do anything. It is a concept similar to why professional drivers "float the suspension" by stepping on neither gas nor brakes over rough patches of road. When things are prone to changing rapidly and any action at all might be called for, and if the car (or body) is busy doing the wrong thing, there is that much more energy and momentum to be overcome before the proper remedy can be applied, and this additional delay could mean the difference between victory and defeat.

The berserker gains this knowledge of right action through various means. One way right action is gained is through heightened senses. Possessed by an animal spirit, the berserk has the sharper senses of that animal. (That's me speaking as a spiritual man. Speaking as a scientist I might say that the rapid processing of the sensory data going on in the mind in the unitary state of consciousness produces the appearance of sharper senses by more accurately and rapidly analyzing them and their meanings.) Sharper vision allows for even slight flaws in the stance of an opponent to be noticed, and for the line of the opponent's attack to be predicted from just the slightest initial twitching of his body as the attack just begins. Sharper hearing can allow for increased indications as to the opponent's intentions, by picking up on subtly shifting stances or tensing muscles from the sounds of rustling clothing and creaking joints. Sharper smell can allow for the opponent's emotional/spiritual state to be determined, as the berserk in the unitary state has the ability to smell subtle hormonal changes like some animals do, enabling the berserk to smell fear, aggression, weakness, etc.

Another way the berserk gains the knowledge of right action is from the faster processing of the mind caused by elevated adrenaline levels, increased electrical energy in the nervous system, suppression of activity in the forebrain, and reliance upon the much faster processes of the hindbrain. Mind, body, and spirit functioning as one increases this processing speed by increasing the amount of physical resources being pumped into the processing (more parts of the brain than usual, powered by more parts of the body than usual, work to process each and every thought/reaction). This higher reaction speed makes the berserk more capable of mounting an effective defense to any attack as well as becoming quick enough to take advantage of small weaknesses in an opponent's defense. It also allows for the highly aggressive fighting style of the berserk to be safely performed. While many non-berserk scholars think that berserks just pressed their attacks madly with no thought for defense, in reality they were taking advantage of their extraordinary reflexes to make attack and defense one. By immediately reacting to the flaws and weaknesses in the opponent's defenses (mental, physical, and spiritual) berserks are able to make attacks that because of their lines do not allow the opponent any line of attack himself. Attack and defense in one motion. This creates a highly energetic, furious, aggressive attack, one that is continuous for long stretches of time. This circumvents a weakness many other martial arts are prone to, that of waiting, reacting, and backing up, things encouraged by many styles but vulnerable to manipulation by a knowledgeable opponent.

The effect all this increased rate of neural processing has is called psychetachia. This is the impression the berserk comes to have that time in the outside world suddenly seems to slow down. Falling objects float to the ground. Opponents move as if through molasses. It is critical to the development of the gangr as a martial art that the berserk learn to control this sense of psychetachia.

This increased rate of neural processing is the foundation for the gangr's most advanced technique, the Warfetter. Truly difficult to correctly perform, it is capable of defeating even an opponent superior in all other respects to the berserk. It should be used to take on an opponent who has resisted or is capable of resisting the berserk's other methods, but it

should generally not be attempted at the beginning of a fight. For one thing this is because it takes no small amount of time to raise the wod high enough to perform it and it also takes time to observe the opponent well enough to enable it. For another thing this is because the Warfetter takes so much energy it will completely drain the berserk, leaving him or her very vulnerable to attack if it fails, so it should be saved as a last resort. The Warfetter is the expansion of the unitary state the berserk is in to encompass the opponent as well as the berserk's own self and animal-fetch. Once the berserk has observed the opponent for enough time (which varies greatly depending on circumstances) and has observed the range of strength, speed, and techniques available to that opponent, then the understanding resulting from that observation can become the object of ritual focus that creates the unitary state. (The object of ritual focus is the visualization, concept, mantra, or such thing used to deafferent (shut off) the OAA, or Orientation Association Area, triggering the unitary state.) If this unitary state is formed in the correct way then it will coincide with a powerful triggering of the fight-or-flight response. This brings about a sudden massive increase in wod, supplementing the already high levels the berserk should have in reserve for this technique. The result of this is that suddenly the berserk is capable of knowing *exactly* what the opponent will do in response to a wide range of attacks. Once this occurs the berserk knows, instantly, what his opponent will do next in any circumstance. This anticipation allows him to forestall any motion the enemy makes, even before he begins it. The enemy's motions are stopped at the very "p" of "punch", the very "e" of "evade". Combined with the temporary super-speed (even higher than normally possible for a berserk) the effect is that the berserk can move freely while his opponent seems to stand still, frozen, bound (hence the name). I've never used it in an actual fight, though I've used it a few times in sparring matches. My opponent (a non-berserk) said it looked from his point of view like I suddenly moved so fast I became a blur, striking home several times before he could even raise a defense against the first blow.

There are several things the berserk can do as training to increase his or her abilities as a fighter. One is learning some basic wod raising techniques. One simple trigger for this is through hyperventilation. (Though it should be kept in mind that when the breath wants to change, it must change. Never fight the breath.) Another is causing pain, by such methods as yanking on the beard or hair, digging fingernails into flesh, and biting the lip. Still another is the C-back, where the back is rounded with the shoulders thrown back. This triggers wod in two ways. One is by putting pressure on the base of the lower neck, a location on the spine where many important nerves enter the spinal column, which causes a lot of adrenaline to be released for reasons not adequately understood. The other is because an instinctual response of the hypothalamus, the brain's "master switch", which panics when too much pressure is put on the spine, as it is then vulnerable to breaking easily. It causes adrenaline to be released at an increased rate in order to prevent this possibility, by giving the berserk a boost of strength. Whipping the head around (which should only be done by experienced martial artists, dancers, or such as know how to do it safely) does the same things by the same means. Grimacing, pulling the lips back while clenching the teeth (lightly, it is possible to crack teeth from clenching them in the gangr) also triggers wod. The theory behind this is that laying the ears back is a common mammalian sign of fear or aggression (such as with wolves, horses, and cats), and that

humans still have an evolved-in trait causing us to associate the motion of certain muscles near the ears with these feelings, causing the triggering of physical processes associated with these feelings.

The first skill the berserk should seek to develop is to learn to react properly to dagaz moments. Dagaz is an old word meaning "twilight", and is a term I use to represent a default unitary state. Such default unitary states occur when a berserk first sees something. Because no time at all has passed, the perception the berserk has of that thing, whatever it is, is flawless. There are no errors, no misconceptions, no mistakes made from expectations, assumptions, distractions. Because not enough time has passed for subconscious association, much less subconscious thought, the berserk is in a unitary state with whatever it is he or she is seeing, for that one moment. Action taken reflexively (NOT deliberately) in response to a dagaz moment will be spot on, accurate, perfect, flawless. The ability to successfully respond to dagaz moments is the key for all berserk techniques. Throwing small rocks from a great distance at very small targets is a good way to develop this ability, if the berserk does it by not looking at the target at all and then making looking and throwing one single, seamless action.

A way to increase the maximum amount of wod the berserk can raise is through practices such as rock throwing. By throwing a heavy rock the berserk can learn those things, both physical movements and mental/spiritual techniques that call out the most wod. Such practices also provide the berserk with an easy method of measuring his or her progress. The standing broad jump is another good way of doing the same thing. And obviously punching/striking exercises are good for this as well.

Developing the sense and control of psychetachia can be done with any number of exercises. One good one is to hang coins from threads or twine from a ceiling and, standing in the middle of them, seek to keep them all in motion by striking them with finger tip or knife point, never allowing them to strike each other or the berserk. This can also be done outside with posts driven into the ground, standing only upon the posts. Another good exercise for psychetachia is in throwing a small rock and then running to catch it before it hits the ground.

Another thing the berserk must practice is a thing called in other martial arts traditions "eagle vision". The berserker martial artist must cultivate a broad vision, focusing on nothing, aware of everything. This allows for use of the peripheral vision (because those fainter signals are not being drowned out by conscious focus of vision, a much "louder" mental process). This allows the berserk a much broader field of vision.

Another thing the berserk must learn is that ALL motion should be from the waist. The waist is the largest, most powerful joint in the body, a fact under-appreciated by many fighters. Most fighters throw punches from the arms and shoulders, an inherently MUCH weaker form of strike. And worse, compounding their error, many of these martial artists then seek to develop huge muscles to increase the power of their strikes, killing their speed. Any strike must originate from the waist, and the striking limb must be whipped around by it. This is true power.

There must be no wasted movements of any sort in each and every move the berserker makes, even those that are neither attack nor defense. The berserk must train relentlessly to eliminate all that is unnecessary.

Another sort of attack used in the gangr is one that is especially effective against non-berserks because non-berserks, unable to do such things naturally unless they are body-builders, tend not to have a defense against it. This is simply using one's natural high resistance to pain and damage to weather a few blows from the foe in order to get inside his or her guard. Then, using his or her elevated strength the berserk simply picks up the foe and throws him. The opponent, upon landing, will likely not be on his feet and will therefore be vulnerable to kicking and stomping, and will be unlikely to rise again. Additionally this is an excellent move to use when fighting multiple opponents, for one opponent can be thrown into others, potentially taking down many at once. And also it does lend the berserk a aura of awe and fear, and can readily demoralize the enemy.

There is another sort of practice the berserk must develop as well if he or she is ever to reach his or her full potential, both strength-wise and spirit-wise. And this is the art of healing. During the unitary state both the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are simultaneously active, working in most unusual synergy. The sympathetic system provides the berserk with power, and the parasympathetic system activates the berserks natural healing abilities, boosting the immune system, speeding up the rate of damage repair, and relaxing stressed and tense muscles. In the gangr the parasympathetic system can draw on the mad power of the sympathetic system, greatly speeding up the healing process. This will make the berserk much more resistant to damage. The berserk can become immune to shock and concussion, and can even become able to be cut without bleeding, by contracting veins and capillaries closed. (This is responsible for ancient stories of berserks that credited them with the power to blunt sharp weapons with their gaze.) And the ability to instantaneously relax muscles increases the berserk's effective power output, allowing him or her to make strikes and throws that are so strong the berserk's body becomes a crippled mass of knotted muscles, which normally would end a fight, but which in the berserk's case suddenly smooth out and relax as if the berserk had been resting for days. It is difficult to describe how to develop conscious control of such elevated healing, as it is an entirely internal process. But practicing the other exercises should allow the berserk plenty of opportunities.

Lastly, aside from the issue of wod management, the greatest problem the berserk faces with the gangr is heat-related. The gangr generates ENORMOUS amounts of internal heat. This can be quite a problem in battle. While berserks can be capable of shrugging off a state of heat stroke that would kill a non-berserk, even this high tolerance can be rapidly exceeded. This I feel is the real reason berserks fought without armor (or even clothes in many cases), the need to dump much more heat faster than other fighters. This problem is another reason to cultivate movements with no wasted energy.

Emotional Elevation Technique

The key to elevation is intense, transcendental emotion. During the initiation ritual this emotion is generated by applying some external stress, like pain, danger, or fatigue. But as continually using such triggers is both difficult and dangerous, it is better to find another way.

Part of the key to this lies in the initiation ritual itself. By experiencing such a thing once, it becomes easier to duplicate in the future. The other part of this lies in learning to feel strong emotions at will, even without outside triggers, by learning some simple techniques. (Note: though the techniques are simple to describe, learning to apply them might take some time.)

To learn to generate emotions at will it helps to perform this exercise: every time you feel the desired emotion naturally, say some particular word or picture some particular visual image or symbol. (It does not matter what, so long as the word, image, or symbol is symbolically representative of that emotion for you.) After a time of this the pairing of that word/image/symbol and that emotion will be instinctive. Once this occurs simply uttering the word, or picturing the image or symbol will call up the emotion, at least faintly.

It is also necessary to learn meditative stillness. It is difficult to generate an emotion while the mind is busy and other things are being felt. By learning to clear the mind through meditation the ground is cleared for the formation of new emotions.

Emotions can be called up by recalling past circumstances in which you felt that emotion (while in a meditatively clear mind); using the word, image, or symbol described above; and thinking about events, people, and images (as well as prayers, gods, etc.) that are associated with that emotion.

It might seem that the thing to do is to use this to create emotions that are powerful enough to effect elevation. But it is truly difficult to use this (or any) technique to create such transcendental emotions lacking any external triggers, such as a hand in a fire. It is one thing to create emotions at all, but it is quite another to create truly powerful ones from whole cloth.

Luckily it is not necessary to do so. Instead of trying to create depth of emotion, you should try for breadth of emotion. It is much easier to induce several different intermediate-level emotions at once. Once you have learned to induce emotions rapidly enough, simply continuously induce them. That is, once one is created immediately create another without stopping to experience it, before it can waste away. Do this as long as necessary to build up quite a number of emotions all trying to be felt at once. This will have much the same effect as a single powerful emotion. Indeed, after a little while the mind's natural tendency to fuse different lines of thought will take over and combine these all into one powerful emotion anyways. It will be even easier if the emotions that

are evoked also relate to each other in some way. If they do, then they will tend to call out still stronger emotions as they interact.

Control and the Gangr

The gangr is a unitary state of consciousness. Furthermore, it involves a shutting down of the activity of the forebrain, the conscious part of the mind. These things are related, for the mind cannot be really unified while the conscious mind is active, for the nature of the conscious mind is to make discriminations, to say that a thing is "this" and "not that". This means that the function of the conscious mind is to shut off input from certain parts of the mind, in order to categorize and compartmentalize things. Unitary action of the mind cannot occur if part of the mind is engaged in shutting off and inhibiting other parts.

This means that control of the gangr (or of anything while in the gangr) is utterly impossible. And this has some fairly serious implications for practitioners of somafera. Entering into the somafera state means amplifying the emotions that are predominant in the mind the moment somafera is entered into. And the emotion leading most readily to somafera is rage. Rage amplified by the unitary state is a horrendous thing indeed. This is why many ancient practitioners such as the Norse berserkers were horrible monsters. Murderers, bullies, living only for battle and greed. And even where they were not of such a nature, the gangr could sweep them away, and cause them to commit acts they found reprehensible when recollected to their senses.

As somafera practitioners are born prone to entering gangrs, this can be a cause for real concern. And because control in the gangr is impossible, it is cause for real serious concern. And even aside from this, somaferans who desire to develop the gangr as a martial art, or as a supplement to other physically demanding skills (such as auto racing), would find this a concern as well. But just because there is no possibility of control there is no reason to resign oneself to a fate of murderous rages and undisciplined gangrs.

The subconscious instinctive nature is dominant in the unitary state. The hypothalamus, the brain's "master switch", will direct action in response to external stimuli according to which neural pathways are most easily activated. That is to say, the hypothalamus selects instinctive responses to external circumstances based on what one is most used to doing in such circumstances. So training in the desired responses to every circumstance ensures that those are the responses that will be instinctively chosen in the gangr. It is a matter of simple classical conditioning, as with Pavlov and his dogs. This means doing sufficient character work to alter one's responses, so that anger can't run away into rage. So that the proper martial responses occur to the proper circumstances. One way to go about this is to learn to associate some other emotion with anger. One might do this by making sure to picture or remember some circumstance where love or compassion is felt every time one gets angry. Even if it is mostly an intellectualization at first, with no real feeling behind it, diligent effort will make that feeling grow. Another way to do this is to associate unpleasant, aversive feelings with anger, such as guilt, by picturing the horrible consequences of unchecked rage every time anger is felt. In time (much time, in all likelihood) anger will be naturally and instinctively balanced by emotions that will tend to keep it in check. This means that the somaferan can receive the benefits of rage, with its easy prodding into the gangr, but be shielded from its drawbacks, for the stronger the rage rises the stronger the compassion and/or aversive emotions rise as well. In this way

emotional balance is naturally kept, without the need for conscious control. And of course similar techniques can be used to train in specific martial techniques.

There is no term in the English language for this. But one has been developed by modern somaferans to describe it. This term is "huvadka". Its formal definition:

A change in the subconscious (the minni, the mind-intent) that causes the somaferan's actions to naturally and spontaneously flow along the desired path without conscious choice. It is a sort of "subconscious decision making process" that is simply the instinctual following of learned patterns of behavior, resulting from simple classical conditioning. It's what the conscious *would* want if it were turned on. It has all of the advantages of the conscious mind with none of the disadvantages (slow, clunky, prone to error, non-unitary).

Don't Fight the Gangr

Somaferans have a number of distinct differences from non-somaferans, and while these differences give rise to the many benefits of the altered physiological state that is the gangr, they also give rise to unique weaknesses and problems that non-somaferans do not share.

One of these differences is our strong mind-body interface. The unitary state, the state the brain functions in during the gangr, is partially defined by the simultaneous activation of the sympathetic nervous system (that causes the "fight or flight" responses) and the parasympathetic nervous system (that heals, rests, and rebalances the body). Normally mutually exclusive in non-unitary states of consciousness, their simultaneous activation during the gangr means that the parasympathetic nervous system becomes able to draw upon all the racing excess energy of the sympathetic nervous system. This provides somaferans with stronger, quicker-than-usual healing capabilities. It also makes us much more susceptible to psychosomatic illness. A simple soon-to-pass bad mood, harmless in most people, is often a sufficient stressor in a somaferan to induce stress-related illness. Long term stress can be even worse, and possibly makes us much more prone to heart attacks.

The pattern seeking elements every human being possesses as part of the basic circuitry of the mind are especially sensitive in a somaferan. It is primarily what allows us to so easily enter the unitary state, whereas most non-somaferans must struggle and study for years to enter it even once, by quickly finding patterns in almost everything, so no matter what state of mind or emotion the somaferan is in, no matter what the somaferan is doing, the somaferan can quickly and easily unify the contents of his or her mind, driving all the different parts to start working along the same lines, together. We do not need all the ritual non-somaferans need to enter the unitary state, it is reflexive for us because seeing patterns in many different things is reflexive for us. But this has some serious downsides as well. One is that it can turn the volume on the "inner critic" that everyone has to some extent or other WAY up. Every mistake the somaferan makes, both in large matters in small can come to seem unbelievably stupid. Every time the somaferan fails to learn from a mistake something an immediate haranguing from that inner voice starts up, drowning out all other thought, unstoppable. This sort of thing, combined with the natural excessive emotions somaferans are prone to, can easily create such emotions as self hatred and despair. This sort of thing can all too easily become a habitual way of thinking.

The reason we somaferans are so vulnerable to this is those pattern seeking elements of the mind work so well that we cannot help but be aware of the myriad errors and mistakes everyone makes doing everything (after all, perfection at anything is impossible). Non-somaferans easily learn to dismiss these thoughts. Somaferans cannot, but as we are usually raised in non-somaferan societies we are rarely taught emotional and intellectual skills to cope with such issues. And of course this propensity to find fault and be dissatisfied can be unconsciously directed outwards into the somaferan's judgments of others as well, creating a host of interpersonal problems.

A corollary to this sort of problem is the propensity for problems to look worse and worse to our eyes the deeper we go with the gangr. The purer the mind becomes, the more unified it becomes, the more it contrasts with impure states of mind. Thus any impure state of mind, any mistake made by any part of the mind, becomes ever more glaringly apparent as the somaferan progresses with his or her art. The reason why can be likened to the state of cleanliness of a mirror. A mirror that is cleaned infrequently accumulates dust and a little dirt. Because these impurities are more or less everywhere on the mirror the eye does not tend to notice them, the eye tends to see only the mirror. But a mirror that is cleaned very frequently is shiny and reflective everywhere. So if even a tiny piece of dust or dirt lands anywhere on a very clean mirror it is very apparent. Indeed, the eye will be drawn immediately to the impurity, and the rest of the mirror might not even be seen, so glaring is the imperfection. So a somaferan quickly loses a baseline of comparison with which to judge other problems, and becomes lost in a world where all bad things great and small alike seem unbearably horrifying.

As somaferans we cannot escape our Shadows. No one can, really, but we have even fewer places to hide than non-somaferans. The Shadow is a part of the mind, an Archetype, to use Jung's terminology. It is the negative space into which every individual evolves. It is all the repressed, buried, ignored, inexperienced parts of the mind. It is all the things we would rather not think of, all the things we fear, hate, and don't understand. Jung, the father of much of modern psychology, believed that the Shadow would, when too strongly repressed, slip out of control and temporarily take control of the actions of the individual repressing it. This is the reason, according to Jung, for such things as Freudian slips and the knack some people have for screwing up just those things that are most important not to screw up. This is because emotion, all emotion, even negative emotion needs expression. Emotion is energy, and energy never simply vanishes, it just changes from one form into another, as naturally as water runs downhill. The more the Shadow Archetype is repressed, the more it is denied any ability to express the emotional energy that powers it, the more that emotional energy whizzes 'round the subconscious, looking for weak spots where it can overpower the conscious restraints and spend itself.

In the somaferan this tendency of the Shadow to respond to repressing and avoiding it can be much more dangerous, and not just too ourselves. Many somaferans are like the Norse berserks: spiritually predatory animals. Adrenaline is synthesized in our bodies easily and reflexively. For many of us rage is a powerful motivating force in our lives, and a prime emotion by which the gangr is attained. In the unitary state of consciousness this rage is amplified to something transcendental in nature, a roaring black storm of hatred that can completely engulf the somaferan. Many of us, after one experience with this, sense the horrible implications this sort of uncontrolled emotion can have for us: broken relationships, things, and people. Anyone of us coming face to face with the beast within knows that many of our kin must be confined to jails or mental institutions for failing to come to terms with it. And so the natural reaction becomes one of exerting control over it, repressing it. This often involves learning how to stop gangrs entirely once they start, learning how to fight them off, how to scale back on the emotions.

And unfortunately this is, I believe, very much the wrong thing to do, for reason of the Shadow-nature Jung described. The inner monster may horrify the outer human but the inner monster is just as much part of these somaferans as the human. More maybe. And that is a load of emotional energy that cannot be denied ultimately. Repress it, fight it, restrain it however the somaferan will it will eventually find a way out. Inevitably the beast will slip its chain. For no matter how good the emotional discipline of the somaferan sooner or later random chance (and Murphy's Law) will put the somaferan in a high-stress unanticipated situation wherein the disciplines and controls cannot be quickly or easily applied. And when the beast does break loose it will be all the more powerful and raging for its long confinement. When this happens is when situations slip out of control so quickly that no matter how well-intentioned the somaferan is bad things result.

And this creates other problems as well. Long term fighting against one's own true nature creates long-term stress. The gangr is a part of us, and so that powerful mind-body connection is a part of us whether we consciously utilize it or not. But repressing the gangr creates instinctual blocks and hang-ups about it that can inhibit the free flowing of mental energy. These things tend to bring out many health problems over time. Some berserks I have known who have fought against the gangr all their lives seem to age prematurely, developing arthritis, chronic fatigue, and a parade of colds, flus, and pneumonia infections one right after the other. Allergies in such repressed berserks can run amok. This sort of powerful mind-body connection working against the mind and body so connected can also bring out latent health problems such as epilepsy, high blood pressure, strokes, and heart conditions.

And other problems result from fighting the gangr as well. The tendency of problems to become exaggerated in a somaferan's eyes grows exponentially worse the more the gangr is repressed. This can result in a phenomenon like a sort of sight that is semi-hallucinatory, a state where everything the somaferan looks at seems to be in the process of decay, of death. Everything is seen to be rotting, withering, failing. Everything seems dirty, impure, unclean. Everything seems stupid, slow, an ugly caricature of itself. This produces feelings of horror and disgust in the somaferan prompting a further reaction of gangr-repression, making the problem even worse, even leading to madness of a rather unhealthy sort.

In my honest opinion the worst thing the practitioner of somafera can do is to fight against the gangr, repressing it. All the benefits are short-term only, all the detriments not only long-term but progressively harder to fight the longer the repression goes on. The thing to do is embrace the Shadow. Embrace the rage, spending it harmlessly in the visionary state, leaving it too weak to affect the somaferan's physical deeds. This, some berserks have said, is the ultimate test of the berserk. I have heard the theory put forth that we somaferans have not one but two adolescences. One is the standard one. The other is involved in coming to terms with the Shadow, with the inner monster, and that this involves embracing it as one's own self, and that it is only after this is done that "control" over the gangr can be truly established. By racing to meet these things seeking to dominate control of the every somaferan's nature the somaferan can choose consciously how his or her gangr will proceed, and this means better emotion than rage

can be used, like love and joy. This is not control, for no limits are set. Instead this is a supreme sort of balance. The somaferan, by embracing his or her true nature, can never act against it. And while that means that the inner monster always has input into the somaferan's thoughts, deeds, and perceptions, then it also mean that all the nobler thoughts, deeds, and perceptions can never be acted against either.

How Do I Control It?

One of the most important initial questions for any somaferan is "how do I control it?" Control usually means the ability to prevent the state from occurring or avoiding its occurrence, and sometimes the ability to trigger it at will, and almost always means learning how to overcome the "impulse control problems" inherent in most somaferans, as well as the temper problems that go along with it.

The first response almost every somaferan has to this question is to find a way to suppress the state, bottling the emotions up inside. But the lucky ones realize the inherent danger of this approach before something really bad happens. For the longer the emotions are bottled up inside the more likely a truly wild and uncontrollable berserker gang will erupt at the worst possible time, even for no apparent reason. This is because the trigger for the somafera state is a powerful enough concentration of emotions held inside instead of spent in expression. This approach also tends to give the somaferan a whole host of psychosomatic illnesses and conditions, usually stomach problems, headaches, depression, and anxiety disorders.

One of the more long-term ways to avoid problematic somaferan states is to play hard. Somaferans have great stores of emotion and energy, and these stores are meant to be used. It's what we were evolved for. So go out and play sports. Spar with a friendly opponent. Exhaust yourself. Run yourself into the ground, in a good way. Satisfy your competitive instincts. Go mountain climbing, or hang gliding. Fulfill your urge to seek danger in a safe way while using a lot of energy. Party hard. Let go of your inhibitions, and the constant effort and stress of holding onto them.

Anything that will spend a significant amount of your energy and emotions will be of great benefit in coming to terms with the problems we somaferans share. We can be a loud, exuberant, energetic people, and that is our strength as well as our weakness.

Instead of suppressing the somaferan state, it is much better to learn to huwardka better responses. "Huwardka" means to instinctively, effortlessly, and unconsciously choose certain responses over others. (As opposed to deliberately and consciously choosing.) The reason that the somafera state is so difficult to control consciously is that the forebrain, the conscious mind, is shut down by it, making it unable to exert any control. So the inner animal becomes dominant as the hindbrain processes take over, and chaos results. But with training the somaferan's instincts can be altered to reflect what the conscious mind would want if it were on. This is huwardka.

Learning to huwardka is not easy. It requires not just a lot of self-awareness but also discipline. One of the most effective ways to do it is simply a matter of conditioning. First choose the emotion, thought, or instinct you wish to change. Then, every time you find yourself in circumstances that bring out the unwanted emotion, thought, or instinct, deliberately try to feel, think, and act in the way you want to act instead. (This is where self-awareness comes in.) At first the impulse to feel, think, and act differently, when it can be remembered at all, will be quite small, likely fleeting in duration and little more

than an intellectualization. But repeatedly doing this will cause your mind to learn to associate the unwanted emotions, thoughts, and instincts with the wanted ones. This will slowly start to make the desired feelings, thoughts, and actions stronger, making them more likely to be something you can pay attention to even when distracted by the old ways of feeling, thinking, and acting. And once habit has made them strong enough to notice, then it all comes down to a simple effort of will. Choose always, in every way possible, to pay no attention to the unwanted thoughts, feeling, and instincts (do not fight to suppress them, though), and to pay attention instead to the wanted ones. To act not in the unwanted pattern, but to force yourself to act in the wanted one. Making the correct choice often enough will greatly strengthen the impulse to act in the new way. Eventually, the circumstances that gave rise to the old, unwanted feelings, thoughts, and actions will themselves call out the new ones, which, because they are now stronger than the impulse to have the old ones, will arise without being accompanied by the old ones at all. Once this occurs, you no longer need deliberate effort to feel, think, and act in the new manner, you are hvardking the new ones.

This can readily be used to combat inappropriate rage by simply learning to pair the undesired emotion with a more-desired emotion. For instance, every time you feel rage, anger, or even irritation, try to feel also joy. Just any emotion won't do as well as every other. Since what is desired in this example is to combat inappropriate rage, but not useful rage (such as for defense of yourself or another, or as an aid to hard labor), trying to learn to hvardka calm would be counterproductive. It would also be much more difficult, for rage and calm are as opposed as it is possible for two emotions to be. But joy is more similar to rage in that it is active and energetic, like rage is. This makes learning to hvardka it along with the rage much easier. It would then be a matter of fine-tuning to adjust your instincts so that what you experience is joy and rage together in the right circumstances, with the joy programmed to grow in direct proportion to how out of control the rage is getting.

In time, this will allow the berserk to elevate with a much more balanced set of emotions than pure animal rage, emotions that are still energetic enough to allow for the gangr. The very act of the negative emotions of the gangr getting out of balance will automatically call up a stronger more positive impulse to calm the wildness, while still keeping the energy directed back along useful lines.

Another method of learning hvardka is more concerned with the technical skills of hvardking. (And both methods should be practiced for optimal gain.) This is the attainment of dagaz moments. Dagaz is Old Norse for "twilight", the moment of transition between one state and another. A dagaz moment is the moment that occurs upon first perceiving something. Because all that has occurred is perception, and not enough time has elapsed for any thoughts or feelings to arise in reaction to that perception, the mind hasn't had a chance yet to be wrong about anything.

The reason that most people's actions are a little bit off, and they find themselves missing the coat rack when tossing their coat upon it, and missing the fly ball, and thinking they recognized an old friend when it was nothing more than a stranger is that the mind is a

complex, complex place. In order to go through all the steps necessary to actually do, think, or feel something fast enough for it to actually matter (after all, you can't take half an hour to figure out how to catch a fly ball, or recognize a face in a crowd) requires the mind to make a lot of assumptions, guesses, and simplifications and even in the best of circumstances some of these will be wrong. But the mind's understanding of anything in the moment before any of this occurs is flawless, for it is simply perceiving the thing directly as it is.

Learning to instinctively react instantaneously to the dagaz moment of something then will allow you to react to it as it really is, rather than as your mind might categorize it or describe it, if it were allowed to. (A description, while it can be good, is never the same as the thing itself. The name is not the man. The map is not the territory.) Because there are no conscious or discriminating thoughts attached to this perception, the mind is in a sort of default unitary state with the thing being perceived, for just a moment. Because the reaction is instinctual, the whole mind moves as one in response to whatever it is that is being perceived. (This gives, by the way, a method of learning to attain the gangr or other sorts of unitary state: learning to simply flow from one dagaz moment to the next, without coming back to normal perception. This is mostly a matter of learning sufficient meditative stillness of mind to calm it enough that it does not get distracted. In this way a single dagaz moment itself can also be extended, delaying the corruption of the mind's perception by thought and feeling.)

The dagaz moment is obviously a form of huvardka, but one more easily learned than a lot of other forms, because it can be practiced as an almost purely physical exercise. And because it teaches the same skills used in any form of huvardka, learning it will improve all other huvardka practices.

One of the best ways to learn to attain dagaz moments is practicing throwing small rocks. Simply pick up a rock, face away from your target or close your eyes, and in the instant you turn towards the target or open your eyes to see it, throw the rock. At first no real results will likely be seen, and the acts of seeing and throwing will still be two separate actions. But practice will teach your subconscious mind something, and in time you will automatically come to have the throwing and perceiving become one thing, and you will attain a dagaz moment.

Similarly, but with a partner, you can learn to attain them by catching a ball or something in the moment of perception. Another exercise is practicing *stop-cutting*. A stop-cut is a technique practiced by some martial artists who work with swords, and is simply cutting at something, even full strength, while stopping a hair's breadth away from the actual target. Note that this means stopping naturally. Pulling back on the swing is not a stop-cut. By making the swing and the looking at the target one thing, one also learns dagaz moment attainment. Another way is to look at the target but once and then swing with the eyes closed.

This exercise can be done with a stick but, whether with stick or sword, care should be exercised, and this probably not be done around other people, as the possibility that you will lose your grip on the sword and send it flying mid-swing exists.

Of course, another way to work on the problems inherent in the somaferan nature is to simply do enough character work to make yourself a better person, learning why you act the way you do, what things set you off and how, and learning better points of view to cope with these problems. Cultivating humility is an excellent means of coping, for by weakening the ego you are making it less likely to react in anger when its desires are thwarted. Losing your attachment to your ego is to be desired anyways, for it makes the whole process of attaining the unitary state much easier, as the ego is inherently non-unitary. Learning the philosophical maxim that "everything furthers" is another way to combat the problems of somafera, for it teaches the somaferan to light a candle instead of curse the darkness, and instinctively see whatever can be gained out of any situation, instead of focusing on what was lost. Some somaferans would benefit from seeing a psychologist for assistance in this.

Svipal-Nature and the IOBF

Somafera is the art and science of transcending one's own limitations through alteration of physiological and spiritual state. It is experienced most often as becoming transformed from one's own normal self into a very different self. So obviously any practitioner of somafera must cultivate letting go any attachments he or she has to their normal, usual, or current selves. After all, how can you transcend what you are clinging to?

The gangr is not the only form of somafera, and certainly not the only sort of unitary state. There are related practices in other traditions that will be of great use to the somaferan who desires to eliminate all clinging to his or her mundane self. (Or any self.) One such is a form of unitary state that results in psychological transformation. Unlike the gangr, which focuses mostly upon the body and the outer environment, this unitary state focuses upon the internal environment in such a way as to induce a radical transformation of the way the practitioner thinks and feels about certain things. It works along the same principles as any unitary state does, by focusing enough of the mind along the same lines long enough to effect a deep dissociative state which solidifies the focus. This means that the change in personality can become permanent, or nearly so, as the result of a single effort, rather than as the result of months or years of training in new habits.

Though in truth these sorts of changes in personality are rarely actually permanent. They will in general act as if they were a permanent and long-term part of the practitioner's personality, even the dominant part, for hours, days, weeks, months even, but then disintegrate. However, on occasion the change is actually permanent. In any event, repeated applications of this technique will still make the changes permanent in much less time than learning a new habit will.

One such technique of this type is sometimes called the IOB ritual. IOB stands for Identify, Objectify, Banish. It is a unitary state obtained from focusing upon a certain portion of one's personality. First the practitioner selects a part of his personality that he wishes to do away with. That part should be thought about in depth. What makes it the way it is? What features does it have? What does it cause you to do, and in what circumstances? A name should be given it, that is symbolic of its nature. A visualization should be constructed of it, with features symbolic of its nature. A person wishing to get rid of sloth, for instance, might visualize their own body with flabby useless muscles and a dull, vacant expression. This is the Identify portion of the ritual. This portion of the self should then be used as an object of ritual focus, and a unitary state formed from it. If done properly, the part of the practitioner's own self that is so focused upon should then appear to the practitioner like a separate or near-separate entity. (Connected to the practitioner, perhaps, by a silver cord.) This is the Objectify portion of the ritual. Once this is done, the practitioner must attack the other self, and destroy it. Severing the cord with a ritual knife might be a good method, if such a visualization is employed. And this is the Banish portion of the ritual. The practitioner must attack the objectified portion of his spirit with real rejection. Anger may help. Martial attitude may be appropriate. This attack must become a new object of ritual focus. This will result in a unitary state formed from the

concept of destroying a certain portion of the personality, removing it from the mind entirely.

The manner in which this functions is very simple. The unitary state involves the loss of the self and its absorption into a different sense of reality. The mind, the memory, treats memories of this state as no less real than physical experiences. Indeed, if the unitary state is powerful enough to have that "realer than real" feeling, then the mind will treat it even more seriously than "real" physical events. This means that if it experienced summoning a part of the personality up and destroying it, it will act as if that part of the personality is indeed really and totally gone.

That this practice can be dangerous should be obvious. In a way, it is like psychotherapy with a chainsaw. It just hacks a part of the self away without necessarily any real knowledge of the consequences of that action. And because the practitioner is internal to the changes, if something goes wrong, he or she is often going to be unable to see it. Such sudden radical changes can even cause problems (and benefits) that don't surface until months or years later. Like any powerful tool, it is supposed to be used with care. (Credit goes to Donald Michael Kraig for this form and name of this ritual, in his book *Modern Magick*.)

There is a parallel practice called fusion. It is the reverse of this practice. Here the Identification is of traits the practitioner wishes to acquire, the Objectification is the unitary state where those traits are perceived as a whole, real thing, often in the form of a spirit, and then instead of banishment there is Fusion, where the practitioner attains a unitary state with the visualization of merging, becoming one with the new spirit.

I think what works best is to perform both rituals together, as one. The IOBF. This engages more of the mind into the experience, making the changes stronger than with either technique alone.

That this can be used to eliminate attachment to the self should be obvious. The IOB portion can be used for the practitioner's traits that tie him or her to their concept of their own selves. That make him feel that "I am me". It would be possible to just use one's current self as the object of ritual focus, and eliminate it, and simply let the new self form around whatever the practitioner's circumstances need it to be.

The fusion portion could be done most easily for berserks (meaning Odinist somaferans) by fusing with Odin as Svipal, or with those parts of one's own nature that are like Svipal, depending on what works best for the practitioner. Svipal is one of Odin's many heiti, or nicknames. Each name refers to a different personality, a different self of Odin's. Svipal simply means "The Changeable", and refers to his mercurial nature. Odin has no permanent self. His myths quite clearly show him ever-changing, adapting always to what his situations require of him. By having no permanent self he is free to become any of the myriad selves he can be. So when he needs inspiration he can become Odhr, whose name means inspiration. When he needs to fight he can become Sigfater, the victorious. When he needs to travel he becomes the hardened traveler Gangleri, accustomed to the

road. When his advice is asked he can become Gagnrath, he who gives wise counsel. He does not do things halfway. When a task needs doing he wholly gives himself to that task, utterly gives himself to it, so that his very nature changes. In this manner he is always at his strongest, wisest, most powerful, most competent.

It should be remembered that this is not really a loss of self. It is a loss of the concept one has of oneself. But the map is not the territory. The berserk who fuses with Svipal-nature in a way becomes more himself than ever. He becomes any and all of his past selves at need. His 20 year old self, his six year old self. He can become the Lover, the Family Man, the Fighter, the Problem-Solver, anything at all that he has done or imagined, even his Ideal Self. And this certainly seems to me like being more his real self than ever before.

Fusing with Svipal-nature will bring out that same mercurial nature in the berserk. It will enable easy elevation, for no work needs to be done to leave the mundane state. It will by the same token enable the most rapid elevation, an invaluable skill for the fighting berserk.

One very good image to use for fusing with Svipal-nature is the breath. Ever notice how very like a life in miniature each breath is? It begins, coming out of nowhere, and grows greater and greater until, peaking, it is let out and begins its decline into death. To experience this aspect of breathing, to experience a life in every breath, would be to experience Svipal-nature. To simply and only be aware utterly of what one is doing is to be completely shaped by one's circumstances. The subconscious mind is a very simple, direct thing. Lacking more complicated instructions from the conscious mind, when confronted with anything it simply selects the memories or instincts that are most connected with what it is confronted with. Your subconscious mind is not stupid. It remembers. It knows what has worked in the past, and what hasn't. It contains the deepest parts of human nature, so it also is in contact with the superego, the ideal self, the best standards one has. It will instinctively select the best personality and instincts from memory if you just let it, and do not confuse it with expectations, hopes, and fears.

So when inhaling, immerse yourself utterly in your present circumstances. Do not react to them in any way, including trying to stop reactions from occurring. Feel that you are actually breathing in the world around you, and that that is destroying you, pushing you aside, crowding you out. When exhaling, exhale not just your breath, but feel you are exhaling your will, your intent, out into the world with that breath, to reshape it.

To tie the imagery of taking the world inside you with your breath is a very powerful ritual focus, because it so accurately mimics what you know breathing in to do: take the air and whatever's floating in it from outside your body and bring it in. This powerfully reinforces the image of bringing the world inside yourself, for the subconscious mind isn't too picky, and will confuse inner and outer concepts. This reinforces the notion of your self being destroyed, and leaves one's sense of the world as the dominating factor in shaping the mind.

The exhalation works the same way. The subconscious associates exhaling with removing things inside the body, or self, to the outside. This reinforces the feeling that one's will dominates all, as it is being expelled from the self to overwhelm everything. But the practitioner has just shaped his own self to fit the outside world. So the will or intention he exhales is perfectly shaped to effect the outside world. If the practitioner is a berserk in a fight, such inhalation will eliminate himself to let himself be shaped completely by what his opponent is doing. His response, on the exhalation, will be instinctively the best countermeasure, and having thought and breath be one encourages acting upon that thought to be one with thinking it to. This is a *dagaz* moment.

Of course, to be *Svipal* one must not only restrict the sense of dying and being reborn and dying again to just every breath. Every time the practitioner finishes a whole thought, or feeling, or reaction, or feels aware that he is doing something, he should die, and become totally absorbed into it. This may involve holding the breath, or breathing very shallowly or slowly for a time.

Using the breath (and all other time intervals the practitioner is aware of) is an excellent image for the IOBF. It encompasses both the banishing and the fusion. The phrase "a life in every breath" would be an excellent addition to the visualizations. The experience of this unitary state, the IOBF for becoming *Svipal*, is like dying and being reborn as an amorphous, mercurial shape-changer with no real form. It is a rather radical shift in perspective, usually. And I recommend that it form the backbone of any berserk's training.

The IOBF can be made maximally effective by powering it with a *gangr*. Begin by entering a *gangr*. That way when the rest is performed, it will be performed with as much power as possible, and will be as effective as possible. For this reason, the actual body of the ritual should contain some symbolic death and rebirth that involves actual hardship, and pushing the practitioner to his or her very edge. This will not only make the experience seem much more like a real death, it will also make the change easier. (Easier to change selves when standing at the edge of the current self.) The way I often do it is to work out physically first, to the point where I am exhausted and maybe even a little injured. (Pulled muscles and such.) Then I elevate again and again, and work out an image and name for the Identify sections through inspiration. Then I work out again, with the objects I wish to banish and fuse with as the objects of ritual focus. This second workout, started from a weak and injured state (sleep deprivation helps too) easily pushes me over the edge in the unitary state I am in, and makes me feel like I am being utterly destroyed. This makes the whole death, and hence the whole rebirth, all the more powerful and convincing. So my first object of ritual focus is my current self, and I banish that. I then fuse with *Svipal* and "a life in every breath". The exhaustion and strain from the second workout feels like it's killing my current self. My focus on utter focus on every breath then automatically causes *Svipal*-nature to fill the void left by myself.

Nothing is a greater part of martial art than breathing (according to Bruce Lee), so this also means that in martial art I am constantly reinforcing *Svipal*-nature when breathing in the *gangr*. This is why, while all time intervals the berserk is aware of should end in death

and rebirth, why all time intervals should contain total absorption, the breath itself is one that is particularly stressed.

The breath IOBF can also be used to enter the gangr entirely though dagaz moments. By becoming totally absorbed in one's surroundings, and having it last for the space of a breath before moving on greatly encourages the dagaz moment. The practitioner has only a moment of time in which to become one with his environment, only looks at everything for a breath-moment. (The next breath may accompany a view of the same environment, but the practitioner is new-born, and approaches it as if for the first time.) This does not give the practitioner time to react to or think about what he sees much. This encourages the dagaz moment, the default unitary state, to occur. By doing this with every breath the practitioner moves from one dagaz moment to the next, sliding easily and effortlessly along the dagaz network, so to speak: the experience of the world as a series of dagaz moments. Doing this for long enough encourages the unitary state to be entered.

True and False Helblindi

For a long time the other somaferans I am in contact with on the forum and I have equated the wod-based somafera states such as the berserker gang with the Buddhist state of positive samadhi, or one-pointed awareness. So we were also aware of the further state of pure samadhi, or zero-pointed awareness. We had always borrowed terms from different spiritual traditions to describe things we discovered or experienced, such as wod and chi energies, but were growing leery of doing so for fear of building blind spots and mistaken understandings into our growing lore. So we coined a term for it for our own use, and chose "helblindi". It means "death-blind" in Old Norse, and refers to popular folklore of many countries, including the Nordic ones, that the dead are still and quiet, and see all.

We had discussed the helblindi state many times before, and still found we knew very little about it. We knew of its existence scientifically as well as historically, as the deafferentation (shutting off) of the whole OAA, whereas the gangr deafferents only the left half. We had, from various personal experiences, philosophies, and guesses, come up with certain descriptions of it. "It is like a great darkness," was a common simile. "It is a feeling of becoming one with the world/universe," was another, though perhaps less common. "It is a state where the mind has ceased acting, and no thoughts move" was still another. Thus it is taken as an opposite counterpart to the wod gangr, like chi energy is to wod energy.

But there seem to be some serious problems with these descriptions of it. Let's look at these descriptions in more detail. If all thoughts cease, then what is the difference between this state, which is supposed to be beyond the wod gangr, and the mindlessness of a rock? Isn't the darkness this state seems to engender just another form of ignorance and blindness? How is this superior to the wod state? The description of feeling like becoming one with the whole world also leaves something to be desired. We know what

the wod gangr can do with its uberfocus upon one thing. So why, if this unity of self and object can do so much, do the helblindi states we have attained with this feeling of becoming one with the world not seem to make any especial difference over the uberfocus? Why can we still be surprised in a helblindi state, as some of us have commented happens? Why can't this state always respond freely to the environment? Shouldn't it?

We have explained the sense of simultaneous darkness and becoming one with the world as the feelings of the loss of the self and its replacement with the sense of the outside world. But actually, this simultaneous sensation of becoming one with the world and being engulfed by darkness seems to mean that this is, in fact, not actually the helblindi state. Think about it. The wod state already has a loss of awareness of the surrounding world that corresponds to the heightened awareness upon the object of focus. (In other words, the more focused we are upon something in the wod state, the less aware we are of everything else.) So this thing we have been describing as the helblindi state is in fact no better than the wod state. Helblindi is supposed to be radically different, and superior. So this cannot be it. Instead, this must be described as a state of false helblindi, nothing more than a wod state focused upon oblivion, thus seeming to have many of the same characteristics we would expect of the helblindi state.

Realizing these things, I sought to find out what the true helblindi state would be like. Through much research and practice I concocted a technique for entering that state. Another initiation ritual. I did this through studying techniques of other cultures, medical science, and simply applying logic to my understanding of the shortcomings of our current ideas about helblindi as described above. From these I came up with a list of things that would be signs I was still only in a false state of helblindi.

The primary factor for determining if a state is true helblindi (the death of the self and total merging with the whole of everything) should be awareness. The practitioner in this state will be incredibly aware of everything; in his or her immediate environment, in their internal environment, and in the world as a whole. Nothing can catch the practitioner by surprise in this state.

This awareness, as it is a product of a unitary state, should give rise to another feature of this state: that it is a state of "not one, not two". There is no discriminating thought at all in this state (for if there was, the whole self would not be shut down), and thus there isn't even a conception of being one with everything. Everything, lacking any perception of independent selfness on the part of the practitioner flows into everything else, and everything is seen from all angles simultaneously. Thus things apart from the practitioner's body are both seen as separate from the practitioner and as one with him (or her). Or, more accurately, there is neither a sense of oneness nor of separateness, and there is also a sense of being both one and separate. Our previous sense of oneness with everything itself should have been a clue that we really weren't, that we were merely one with a concept of everything. Not even in the same ballpark.

And this leads to an excellent way to determine that a state is definitely not the true helblindi state, and this is if it feels like anything. If there is any feeling like anything at all, it cannot be the real helblindi, for the feeling is a part of the mind wasting its efforts in observing itself instead of actually perceiving. It means that not all of the mind is unified. Thus the true helblindi state is where neither body nor mind remains itself and you are pure and clear as the sky, neither scattered nor oblivious, but if you feel yourself pure and clear as the sky, neither scattered nor oblivious, and you know that neither body nor mind remain themselves then this is only deluded thinking.

It should be noted that in this state there is a distinct change in the nature of the mind. (Note I said "change in the nature of the mind", NOT "change in the feeling or perception of the nature of the mind".) Most people go through their lives with a feeling that they "live in" their heads, having been taught all their lives that the brain causes the sense of self. But because the brain is profoundly affected by the functioning of the body, the whole body can be seen as taking part in thought and feeling, and therefore the self can truthfully be described as distributed through the whole body. In the true helblindi state this should be realized at an instinctual level, and the self seems to reside spread through the whole body. (That is, seems in retrospect.) Because of this, the functions of the body seem to take part in the instincts and responses, the subconscious "thinking" that occurs in that state, as if one's heart and stomach are capable of rational thought, for example.

And more than this, one's self should not really be confined to the body, either. There should also be something that in retrospect seems to be the rest of the world, or parts of it, taking part in the process of thinking and feeling, just like the body is described to above. The reason for this is, of course, the lack of inherent individual identity. It can seem, for instance, that music playing nearby will actually be causing the practitioner to play Tetris with increased skill, like the music is adding to making the decisions involved in the game more accurate, and faster. If this were not true, then the mind would not be unified really, and flowing freely. These two things mean that every process of the mind takes part in every other process.

With the helblindi state the moment you feel it or know it, it is already lost.

Also it should be remembered that the real helblindi state should be effortless, requiring no striving or effort to maintain. It is like pure calm abiding in your meditative state. It is seeing everything like you do sometimes when you first awaken, and have no names for anything, and see everything without thinking about it or conceptualizing it, see everything in a pure and immediate way. If a state lacks ease it cannot be the true helblindi state.

It is very important to remember not to confuse purity and clarity resulting from the physical body being at peace for the true helblindi state. Also, do not mistake accidental momentary purity for the real thing. These things depend on fortuitous chance arrangements of mind, body, and external stimuli, and not only can they not be counted on again in the future, but the benefits such things confer are not necessarily that strong or useful. It is very easy to stumble into such states. Try it for yourself: run far, or do an

exhausting workout, then have someone come up to you and say "good, you've already made it, you're home," and you'll find that your mind will feel solid and pure, and there will be a feeling of enlightenment. Confusing this for the real purity and enlightenment of the true helblindi state is exactly the sort of mistake to guard against.

It is very easy to mistake a mere clear and empty mind for helblindi, but such a mind is lost when tired, and is easily angered or annoyed at obstacles and distractions. It can cause great eruptions of temper, and has no vital energy. It tends to a stable grey emotional state, where most highs and lows are lost. This is not a true transformation of physiology, it is merely a false conception that is easy to make when pursuing these practices and studies. A pure consciousness may seem like a great thing, and may seem to impart great wisdom, but it is like viewing the sky through a skylight: it may seem clear, but it is not the whole sky.

The true helblindi state cannot be found in seeking, for seeking is a deliberate intentional action, utilizing discriminating thought. Waiting to see if the desired state arises is just as bad, for it too is a form of discriminating thought, even if it seems more clever in that it eliminates intentional action. It is necessary to learn to put your effort into performing your practices without giving thought to the results.

The very next step beyond the ability to function without seeking or waiting is the capability of functioning purely by reflex and instinct, which must be an important feature of the true helblindi state. Huvadka.

The false versions of this state tend to be oblivious to some extent or other. This can range from a sense of losing the sense of self or the world and then being swallowed up in utter oblivion, like dying or falling into a coma, to having many of the qualities mentioned above yet with some particular "blind spot". Merely being pure and alert, while not being aware of anything, is not a true helblindi state.

The true helblindi must be when you neither scatter in confusion nor sink down into oblivion. However when you are aware that you are sinking into oblivion or scattering in confusion then it is neither oblivion nor confusion, but helblindi. Whether or not a certain state is a unitary state is whether or not you are aware, for is not awareness unity of mind coupled with free flowing thought?

Even if the state is aware and not scattered or oblivious, if it lacks instinctive drive to transform the mind then it is not the true helblindi state. This instinctive drive is not the intentionality of the conscious mind, it is instead the intentionality of what some Buddhists call "the body born from intent", and what the ancient Norse called the "hamr".

It is also not a true helblindi state if there are within it desires for one thing and not another. These involve some form of modeling, of separating a part of the mind from the rest, and so are non-unitary. Note that this does not mean that in a helblindi state you are immobile and incapable of action. It is just that action in this state is caused purely by

reflex and instinct, not out of desire. You simply act according to your true inherent nature.

Rather a lot of negative indicators, not a lot of positive ones. But this seemed to me to give enough to go off of to start designing a ritual that might get me there. What I came up with was to begin by entering a wud gangr, and to make it as pure as possible and as calm as possible (meaning not a non-rage state, but one that required minimal effort to maintain and control). Then I followed the following steps:

The practitioner must contemplate the mind's lack of inherent independent existence. The more detail the better, in general, but the thoughts must stop nowhere. No matter how awful, fascinating, beautiful, or boring things, thoughts, feelings, and experiences are, do not turn your attention towards them. They will arise and pass away naturally. Do not fight them. Do not follow them. Once this contemplation has been occurring awhile a sense of the mind's lack of inherent existence will appear. Then the practitioner must take this sense and use it as the object of meditative focus. This is not at all easy, as it turns out. I think it is one of the most challenging forms of meditation there is. The practitioner must have a very firm grasp, intellectually, on the concept of the lack of inherent existence of the mind, and must be able to maintain focus on a very nebulous concept and sensation.

When the time seems right, if you will imagine the will symbolized as a sword and the attempt at entering helblindi a battle, then it is time to put aside the sword. Time to stop deliberate action and discriminating thought. Time to stop trying, and let the building momentum coast. If it is sufficient, it will continue along the lines you have set up and cause the true helblindi state to occur.

To truly put aside the sword of the will, to end all deliberate action and discriminating thought, one must be careful of certain things. These things are habits of thought and feeling that must be deliberately given up, sacrificed to make the true helblindi state occur. One is rank ostentation, the gross desire to appear powerful, wonderful, wise, whatever, either for your own sake or that of another. Another is the more pedestrian form of catering to your ego, which is desiring to do well and succeed, even for good reasons, like the desire for self improvement. Even if rank ostentation is done away with, impulses or desires to succeed can still be present, causing an expectant, watching, waiting, seeking state of mind, which is non-unitary. A third is the subtler forms of ego, such as an even momentary feeling of pride when something you do succeeds, or even a momentary feeling of shame when something you do fails. Ego is worse than useless, it is an image of the self that is separate from the true self, and the mind cannot be unified when dominated by ego.

In addition to these, it is necessary to put aside all feelings of power, strength, ability, or doing well. These too are conceptualizations, habitual ones to most people who are used to checking up on how they seem to be doing all the time. The mind is unified when being powerful, fragmented when feeling powerful. For this reason it is well to cultivate something of a sense of humility.

Rational thought and deliberate action must be surrendered. All technique, all exercises of will, must be ceased.

Discriminating thought must be surrendered. Just be easy and open, and ready to react naturally to everything. See everything you do as when you first awake, and have no names for anything, and have made no decisions. When knowing establishes dualistic (subject/object) views, it is the cause of ignorant and deluded thoughts. What is desired is for knowing to establish no dualistic views.

The sexual urges must be purified. These means different things in different traditions. In some it is necessary to so abstain from all sexual contact and thought that the urges either never arise and distract the mind (as they will be prone to in a powerful unitary state, as they are powerful emotions and all emotions are active) or so that they are transformed into some other emotion. Other traditions aver feeding the sexual urges, making them grow, and using the power to turn towards the fetch-wife, the Anima. But either way they are purified, they must be purified so that they encourage or allow unification with the spiritual, and do not scatter the mind in confusion.

We had, in past conversations, hypothesized that since in the case of helblindi the posterior superior parietal lobe was fully shut of, and in the state of wod only the left half is shut off, it must not just be a deeper or different feeling gangr, but it must involve a truly different transformation, with a different nature and different benefits. This idea was supported by Buddhist writings that talked of positive samadhi and samadhi, states analogous to wod and helblindi, as being utterly different levels of mind, and implied they each involved a separate physiological transformation. So all in all, it seemed like true helblindi should be a second elevation, a second transformation, on top of the first. The initiation I took was designed to trigger it by putting myself in a situation where my safety depended on having not just the heightened reflexes of the wod state, but an open and unhindered mind, unity with all that was around me, not just a single focus, such as distinguished the helblindi state from the wod.

The initiation took place over three days. I spent that whole time, every minute I was awake, either in study, meditation, or training. Training was of various sorts: elevating with no specific physical focus to turn it upon; training my reflexes, huvardka, and psychetachia with video games such as Breakout, Missile Command, and Centipede; and normal physical training such as pushups, squat jumps, HIIT, etc. wearing 50 pounds of weighted clothing. During this period I started gaining much greater control over psychetachia. And I also started having flashes of another state as well, what I came to realize was the second elevation. Like a car trying to start, and flaring briefly into life and dying again.

It all really came together at the end of the third day of the initiation. Then I hung six knives from the ceiling, at various levels, so that they would strike at my heart, stomach, eyes, and so forth. I trained myself through normal means, in the gangr, to the point of exhaustion. Then I applied the techniques I had figured out for entering the true helblindi state. And I set the knives swinging and stepped into the center of the circle of knives and

applied the technique I hoped would effect the new state. The need for the great huvardka required to keep from getting injured or killed, and to keep all the knives moving, and prevent them from tangling up in each other, and the stillness engendered by my meditative state, the intellectual realizations I'd had, and the overwhelming of my attention triggered a new state.

I can't say what it was like, for it wasn't like anything, as all of me was simply aware, and had no time for thoughts or feelings. So my descriptions are of what the state seemed like in retrospect. It was like a perpetual Warfetter, but without the effort and revving up that usually requires. In fact, the state was completely effortless and relaxed. That is not to say that it was not raging. It was just a free-flowing, calm rage, if that makes any sense. It was a state of seeing everything as you do sometimes upon first awakening: no names for anything, no conception of what anything is or does. My actions were all pure reaction, unhindered by thought or doubt. Immediate. It was like my mind was not just spread through my whole body, but though the whole world. I could not be hurt by the knives because they moved me in the right way to avoid them. Like they were thinking for me. Like they were me. It was like we were not one, and also not two, for we were separate, and so I could dodge them and we were one, because they moved me, I did not move myself.

This state also brought extreme, rapid healing. I had badly injured my knee earlier, and it healed up without the least effort, nor has it troubled me since. It also brought being simultaneously aware of both the mundane and spirit worlds. The energy drain was enormous. I felt like I was dying afterwards.

My awareness was broad, and encompassed everything, even while focusing on one thing. After this experience I've had several experiences where, in this state, I tried to heal myself and had a powerful awareness of what seemed to be my body in the injured area on a near cellular level (visionary thing), and was able to give very specific instructions in repairing the damage. When this happened my healing was much faster even than usual for the wod state.

I only scratched the surface of the potential of this state, I believe. I cannot be said to have really mastered it in any sense. I have only entered it a few times since this time, though I have not been trying to very hard, in order to avoid the paradox of trying to unify from the basis of striving and desire. But the fact that it requires special preparations still, and comes but infrequently means my state must still have impurities. But even so I think this level has far more potential than the wod state. Indeed, it seems to have all of the advantages and fewer of the drawbacks. It will take much study and practice to really use it. But I think this is the real deal, the true helblindi state at last.