

Ritual Magic

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Core Concepts of Ritual Magic

Ritual magic may be performed by anyone. Generally it is the spell casters and the priests who are most likely to use it but anyone can attempt to use the power of ritual magic. It is very difficult to pursue the study of ritual magic if you are not a sorcerer, druid, bard or witch. Priests perform rites (which are fundamentally similar). Others will find it difficult or even impossible to study.

The following key concepts will be helpful when considering the use of ritual magic:

- ☞ Ritual magic comes in, essentially, two forms: Lesser Rituals and Greater Rituals;
- ☞ Either form can require a bead draw but all Greater Rituals require a bead draw (generally it is safe to assume that a spell defined as a 'ritual' will not require either a bead draw or a referee's input, unless the description says otherwise);
- ☞ It is a good idea to speak to the magic referee prior to performing a ritual if you have any doubts as to how it works and vital if it will require a bead draw (see above regarding ritual spells);
- ☞ Any form of ritual requires the use of a spell book or scroll containing the ritual to be performed. The ritual must be written in runic if the caster is a sorcerer, in an appropriate prayer book if a priest and in ogham if a keltoi ritual is being performed. Very mighty ritualists may be permitted to memorise their rituals – please contact the magic ref if you believe this applies to you;
- ☞ Many rituals are enhanced by the application of power components, these include incense and other offerings but most importantly korba (for sorcerers) and pente (for priests). A ritual or rite may fail if these are not used;
- ☞ Rituals are enhanced by cooperation – while the participation of others able to perform rituals (sorcerers with the skill or ordained priests) is more effective, anyone participating may help;
- ☞ There is a standard format for Lesser Rituals: the ground must be marked in a proscribed fashion and the spell to be activated must be repeated three times. It is on the completion of the third recitation that the magic is affected; and
- ☞ The bead draw procedure is important to rituals as in many cases a certain number of reds are required for a ritual to work properly. Some rituals (particularly at places of power) have an inherent number of assumed reds.

While every attempt is being made to make the ritual system as consistent and predictable as possible, it is inevitable that there will be some inconsistencies in judgement and even modifications required to the rules in this area. This is necessary if for no other reason than to prevent perceived or actual player abuses as this area is bound to be open to considerable abuse whether intentional or unintentional and the referees would ask you to bear with us.

Basic Ritual Forms

When a sorcerer wishes to become a ritualist they must first buy some of the various ritualist skills. The most appropriate starting point is the Ritual Casting skill.

Ritual Casting skill

Focused magic directed inwards.

This is the simplest of all rituals. All sorcerers planning to learn ritual casting are going to need to begin with this skill. This form is sometimes referred to as the circle of inwardly directed power.

In form this is a simple circle marked on the ground with the personal marks of all participants marked equidistantly around the circle. Participants must remain outside the circle while the target of the spell is within the circle (preferably at the centre). If the target is to be elsewhere, it is common to use the all seeing eye within the circle to target something elsewhere (even if only feet away).

In the event that multiple ritualists are involved and ritual materials or a place of power (see below) are used the cost may be further reduced but in this case the ritual will require a referee and be subject to a bead draw.

It can be used to great effect when combined with the Group Ritual skill to cast a mass spell. Generally this can be done once per day by each ritualist with that skill. The spell then affects up to twelve people in the circle.

It may also be used so that a caster who does not have ritual skill can cast their spell via a ritual (to increase power or target via the all seeing eye) with the aid of another ritualist. This form can also be used to attempt to increase the potency of a spell which is otherwise too weak to affect a target (for example attempting to affect a greater outsider rapidly with a dismiss effects). In this case multiple ritualists are required and ritual materials or a place of power (see below) must be used. The ritual will require a referee and be subject to a bead draw as a number of red beads will be required (usually two) to gain the enhanced effect.

All Seeing Eye

Focused magic directed outwards.

This is an additional ritual form that may be learned for 2DPs. It may be learned from anyone who already knows it and is quite widely known among sorcerers as it is extremely useful for ranged targeting and scrying.

In form, this is an equilateral triangle within a circle. Casters' marks are placed at the bottom left vertex. If there are more than one, within a circle. Target (this is the identifier of the target such as the target's name or a description written in runes) is at the apex. Control mark (this is the linking object which allows the target to be attacked, no control is required if the target is in sight but a second ritualist standing at this place is required to look at the target) is placed bottom right vertex.

This is used for ranged targeting and also to eliminate resistance as well as scrying:

- ☯ Normally a spell is limited to line of sight but a ritual with a suitable link can be cast at any distance (although it is believed not to cross water). This effect may also be used to target a circle of inwardly directed power at range; this may be desirable for the purposes of increasing the potency of an otherwise limited spell effect (for example attempting to affect a greater outsider with a dismiss lesser outsider spell).
- ☯ Can be used to reduce or eliminate a target's resistance and defences. Again this will require a suitable link. This effect can be used to overcome defences such as a spell guard. Generally one red overcomes a lesser guard, two a greater guard and three a true guard.
- ☯ Scrying can be achieved simply by using the spells sense object and locate object. These spells become very effective when combined with the all seeing eye. Locate object gives detailed knowledge of the target's location while sense object gives knowledge of the target's surroundings. Other spells like identify may be used to determine a target's magical defences.

What constitutes a suitable link can be a complex question. The personal mark of a sorcerer on his active spell card, book or ritual scroll constitutes such a link. It is also possible to create a mystical link with the aid of magic and hair etc. from the target. This requires knowledge available to druids, witches and bards and may be learned by sorcerers (for a further 2 DP).

Defences against this type of magic are extremely important and may be achieved in a number of ways:

- ☯ Clouding the nature of the target by, for example linking two spirits is very effect. The strength of the protection depends upon the will and true faith of the participants. The clouding has a basic strength of "2" which is increased by the true faith and will of the stronger linked spirit. (For example Master X is linked to the Holy Apok Y who has TF II and Will III, the clouding has strength "7"). The clouding is the number of reds that must be drawn to acquire the target, making it potentially very dangerous to attempt.
- ☯ The true faith of the target clouds at a strength equal to the true faith.
- ☯ There are spells that can similarly cloud the link and witches and druids are very capable in this area.
- ☯ There are Greater Rituals which can grant protection.

Outwardly directed Power

Un-focused magic directed outwards.

This ritual form is known to certain druids and bards but has been mostly lost by sorcerers (although it is known by the navigators). It may only be learned by sorcerers who have knowledge of the school of magic at a cost of 2 DPs as it requires an understanding of the principles of magical energies and forces.

In form, this is a double circle (circle within a circle) marked on the ground. The space between the circles must be marked with the mark of the casters and also a spiral pattern. This ritual form is used to launch a spell effect across a wide area. It is a very effective way of casting an area effect spell.

A bead draw is always required and the number of beads determines the area affected by the spell being cast. The ritual will require additional power (korba, a place of power etc). A failure is likely to lead to the magical effect targeting the ritualists. The magic referee will be required in all cases as the effect is highly variable (and likely to be subject to variation based on circumstances).

Combined with the inwardly directed power (to draw magical energy) this form can be used to create a permanent spell effect on an area. The exact process for doing this varies from spell to spell so the magic referee must be consulted (this is to prevent abuses as anything of this type is too easy to abuse and there is a fine line between being a sharp mage and a clever dick).

Drawing Circle

Pulling something (being or energy) from one place to the ritual location.

This ritual form is known to certain druids and witches but has been mostly lost by sorcerers (although it is known by the navigators). It may only be learned by sorcerers who have knowledge of the school of dimensions or spirit at a cost of 2 DP as it requires an understanding of the principles inherent in these schools.

In form, this is a single circle drawn upon the ground, divided by an x shaped cross. The caster's mark goes in the bottom quadrant and the summoned entities identity in the top quadrant. All forms of this ritual may be sealed (see below) which requires the caster to place three drops of their blood on the right junction of the cross and circle in the lower quadrant. The summoner is only safe from a summoned entity in the bottom quadrant but no-one may enter the sealed circle.

In order to use this ritual form productively, it is necessary to also have at least a variety of other information. This may take the form of spells (such as the various spells which allow the caster to regenerate their mana reserves) or the names and materials required to summon a particular spirit or outsider.

The exact process for using this ritual form is highly variable so the magic referee must be consulted (this is to prevent abuses as anything involving summoning is easy to abuse and there is a fine line, as noted above, between being a sharp mage and a clever dick). Often warning will be required as failure in this area can easily lead to monsters appearing.

Sealing a Circle

A sealed circle is one which may not be entered from the outside. So long as the ritual continues and the ritualist remains in the circle, no-one may enter or leave the circle (and in the case of the drawing circle may not move between quadrants). It is possible to break into a sealed ritual circle but it requires either considerable faith or mighty dispelling magics. The power required to break the ritual depends upon the power of the

ritualist. Cases of this sort are adjudicated by the magic referee and require his attention, if he is not present it cannot generally be done. Breaking into an active circle is extremely dangerous.

Opening the Way

Opening a portal, or sending something from the ritual location to another place.

This ritual form is known to certain druids and witches but has been mostly lost by sorcerers (although it is known by the navigators). It may only be learned by sorcerers who have knowledge of the school of dimensions or spirit at a cost of 2 DP as it requires an understanding of the principles inherent in these schools.

In form, this requires a circle overlaid with a single triangle when it is being used where there is not a transport circle present. If there is a transport circle present, the existing circle can simply be activated.

This ritual form allows the use of transport circles and places of power to access the network of dragon paths that criss-cross the land. It may also be used for other purposes (such as to traverse distances without using dragon paths or to create a portal to another dimension such as the places that outsiders come from). These other uses may require specialist knowledge (such as incense that must be burned, the name of a particular place, having been to a place before etc.).

All uses of this ritual form are potentially highly dangerous and require the input of the magic referee in order to be effective.

Transport Circles

This is the simplest use of this ritual form and is automatically known to everyone who knows this form. There are a number of basic principles which you need to keep in mind:

- ☞ The ritualist walks slowly completely round the circle then steps inside to activate it. It costs one point of mana to activate a transport circle.
- ☞ When the circle is activated, everyone in the circle is transported to the target circle. If you try to move too many people, the circle does not activate. Only carried objects move.
- ☞ There is a limit on how many people can be transported using a circle at any one time. This limit is eight for adepts and twelve for masters. It is possible to go even higher. The limit includes the ritualist himself.
- ☞ If you attempt to move from one transport circle to another down a dragon path and the destination is in use for some reason (for example a ritual is being performed there) you may simply not travel or you may be bounced to another destination.
- ☞ Once a transport circle has been used it shuts down for a period of time depending upon the distance of the trip and other factors but generally for somewhere between several minutes to an hour. This is due to the power drain

of using the circle. A trip back may be immediately possible (that uses the power of the circle at the other end).

Places of Power

Places of power are points where rituals may be performed more effectively than normal. They often have permanent ritual circles laid out in them in order to make ritual magic easier to perform there. They can take many forms including anything from a simple circle laid out on the ground to a circle of standing stones carved with runes.

Not all places of power are equally powerful. The power available takes two key forms, the amount of time it takes for the place to “refresh” itself after use so that it may be used again to perform another effect and the number of automatic reds that are considered drawn when the place is used to power a ritual.

- ☯ A place of power can only be used for a single ritual at a time once a ritual is active there any other rituals started will automatically fail. This includes other lesser rituals done in the immediate area as all the mana is being drawn by the place to power the on going ritual. The only (common) exception to this is an attempt to utilize a counter ritual in order to shut down an ongoing ritual at a site. This may prove necessary, for example, if a ritual has failed and is producing an ongoing negative result which needs to be stopped.
- ☯ Once activated for a purpose it cannot be used for a second purpose for some time. The amount of time depends on the power of the place and the ritual that was going on there (this is the “refresh” rate mentioned above).
- ☯ Only someone with the correct knowledge may activate a place of power. For a sorcerer they must know one of the ritual forms: drawing circle, opening of the way or outwardly directed power or have performed a Greater Ritual successfully. Witches, Bards and Druids all learn how to use them.
- ☯ All attempts to use a place of power result in a bead draw and therefore require referee input. As is mentioned above they also increase hazard (count as automatic red beads) in the draw so performing rituals there can be very dangerous.
- ☯ Anyone who is able to use it can seal a place of power (see above). This will generally happen automatically when a ritual is performed but can be done without performing a ritual by spending a point of mana. It cannot be done while a ritual is ongoing and can only be maintained while the ritualist remains in the circle.

Places of power may have peculiar quirks. For example, a particular place may be very well suited to certain types of effects or schools of magic but unable to support others. This can only be discovered by inquiry or trial and error.

Greater Rituals

Greater Rituals come in two forms: formulaic and free form. Formulaic rituals are set down and if followed correctly will produce the effect. Free form rituals involve a team of ritualists attempting to gain a desired effect by the use of sympathetic magic and force of will.

All Greater Rituals *always* require the attention of the magic referee who must be notified at least half an hour prior to any Greater Ritual being attempted. This is to allow time for any monsters to be prepared and for any necessary consultations to take place. A bead draw will *always* be required in the case of a greater ritual.

Formulaic Rituals

These follow set patterns laid down in a written form. This written form is itself inherently a part of the magic of the ritual and is vital to the process. As such it is not possible to copy it using normal methods. The original written document must be used each time the ritual is to be performed.

The formula contains the key information necessary to perform the ritual. The exact details are left to the ritualist. This is for two reasons: first, it gives the ritualist an opportunity to produce an effective ritual which they are comfortable performing; and second, it avoids too long a forced structure (which would lead to players being forced to practice far too much!).

Free Form Rituals

These must always be performed by a team of ritualists at a place of power if they are to have any chance of success.

The referees need to be informed in advance of the details of the proposed ritual and the form it is going to take as well as the objectives. This may well be requested in writing to avoid any confusion.

The most common use of this technique is for a priest to create a religious place of power (such as a chapel or shrine) and then to attempt a rite at that location. While it may seem very similar to a request for a miracle, it is technically slightly different and uses a slightly different approach.