

# Liturgical Writing 1

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**Question #1: Describe how ADF's order of ritual expresses the following concepts: "Serving the people", "Reaffirming shared beliefs"; "Reestablishing the cosmic order"; "Building enthusiasm". (minimum 500 words)**

**Serving the people** – The ADF order of ritual is all about creating unity among the people to aid our connection with the Powers<sup>1</sup>, so that we can make our offerings and receive Their blessings in return. We have opportunities to make sacrifice, first to the Earth Mother, then to a Bardic Deity, then the Gatekeeper, the three Kindreds and the Patron Gods and Goddesses of the rite. Praise offerings may be made, allowing the people to make personal connections with their own Patrons in public ritual, and finally, after all is said and done, the people may then receive the Waters of Life, the blessings given to us by the Powers in return for our love, devotion and sacrifices. This is often all that is needed, but sometimes these blessings received can then be used for magical purposes for the benefit the people in the Workings section of the rite.

**Reaffirming shared beliefs** – In ADF ritual we have places where we all can see our beliefs brought forward and held up for all to share. This helps to establish unity among the people<sup>2</sup>. We make sacrifices to the Kindreds, affirming our belief in Their existence and power, saying things like, "(Deity), accept our sacrifice!" This lets us all know that we share in the offering, that we all send it forth to the God/desses. And the idea of reciprocation, that we will receive blessings in return for our offerings, piety and diligence, is reaffirmed when we exclaim, "Give us the Waters of Life!" and pass the Waters around to all. We even have places in the liturgy where we consciously reaffirm these beliefs, where we say things like, "As our Ancestors did, so do we now", and "Children of the Earth, do you accept the gifts of the Kindreds?" Shared beliefs are reaffirmed by both the spoken word and also by our actions, as when we re-create the cosmos and open the Gates, affirming our belief that not only do the Otherworlds exist, but we can access them.

**Reestablishing the cosmic order** – Eliade describes a main purpose of ritual as the consecration of space, which can only be accomplished by "creating it anew", and the best model man would have of this is the original creation of the universe by the Gods.<sup>3</sup> So in ADF ritual, we do just that. First we perform the 2 Powers meditation, which brings the powers of the Heavens and sky as well as those of the Underworld and the earth, into the people. With this vertical axis established, we then consecrate the Well, re-connecting it with the earth powers; the Fire, re-connecting it with the sky powers; and the Tree, which is used to connect all together as the *axis mundi* or World Tree<sup>4</sup>. Interestingly enough, the people become like the *axis mundi* during the 2 Powers meditation when they connect the two powers within themselves. This re-creation of the cosmos is what allows all present to open the gates to the Otherworlds to facilitate the making of sacrifices and the receiving of blessings in return.

**Building enthusiasm** – Covert defines 'enthusiasm' as coming from the Greek and meaning, "a state of inspiration that has flowed into a person from the divine realm"<sup>5</sup>. Early in ADF ritual, sacrifices are made to a Bardic Deity to ensure that inspiration is forthcoming for that rite. The Two Powers meditation and other entrancements are undertaken to help take the people out of the profane and into the sacred. Music and chant are also used in many places to increase the trance state as well as to increase excitement, and finally, the act of receiving the Return Flow from the Kindreds is the climax of the rite, where we all partake of the blessings, power and abundance that They have offered us. Enthusiasm can also mean excitement, and the judicious use of song, chant, tempo and pacing can help carry the people along towards the emotional highs that a good ritual can create.

**Question #2: Create a prayer of praise, offering or thanksgiving to a deity modeled on a mythic, folkloric, or other literary source of at least 75 words. Include a summary of what your sources were and how you utilized them. (Summary at least 150 words)**

**JOY IS WHEN YOU COME TO ME**

When I need You, You are there,  
By my left side, Queen of Dyfed.  
On Your white horse once You rode  
And came to Pwyll's side.  
To me, You came as singing blackbirds,  
Full of joy and ecstasy!

Pwyll, Lord of Dyfed fell  
In love with you, great Goddess mine.  
I have fallen for you, too,  
Devotion is my gift.  
You bore with strength the baseless lies, O  
Horse at Arberth's outer gates!

Gratitude is what I feel -  
Mother of my heart and soul!  
Strength is what You freely share  
With me - I feel it now.  
So ride me, Goddess! In my mouth, now  
Place the bit that I may serve!

When I need you, You are there,  
Mistress of my serving heart!  
Now with thanks I pray to You  
That You might know my love.  
O wondrous Goddess, bright Rhiannon,  
Joy is when You come to me!

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My first source was the First Branch of the Mabinogi. Here, in the story, *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed*, the magical arrival in Dyfed of Rhiannon on horseback is told<sup>6</sup>. Later in the story, Her son is stolen and She is accused of having murdered him, with her punishment being that she should wait at the gate of Arberth and offer to carry all visitors to the court on Her back, like a horse. She did so, stoically enduring her unjust punishment for a number of years. This was to be a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the support I have felt from Her over the past 4 years. So I used the myth to give structure to my feelings (which were my second source!).

The third source I used was Mary Oliver's *Rules for the Dance*<sup>7</sup>. In her book, she covers the various forms that alternating stresses in the lines can take, as well as the use (or non-use) of rhyme. I purposely avoided using rhyme in this prayer as an exercise since I normally use rhyme quite a lot. Having received a lot of criticism for rhyming, I thought I'd give non-rhyme a try. There is a rhyme in the last word of the first and third stanzas, but that was unintentional and not part of any plan I had.

The rhythmic pattern that I used is trochaic tetrameter for the first three lines with each line ending with a catalexis, or final stroke. The fourth line is iambic tetrameter, the fifth line is iambic tetrameter with a feminine tag, and the last line of each stanza mirrors the first three lines. I wanted to see if I could vary the structure and still hold true to my purpose, and I think I did quite well.

**Question #3: Discuss a poem of at least 8 lines as to its use of elements (as defined by Watkins): formulaics, metrics, and stylistics. Pay particular attention to use of meter and phonetic devices, such as rhyme and alliteration. (Minimum 100 words beyond the poem itself.)**

The poem that I'm going to use is one that I have loved since childhood. It is *Ozymandias*, by Percy Bysshe Shelly:

*I met a traveler from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on those lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'*<sup>8</sup>

Watkins defines formulas as, "whole phrases which are repeated with little or no variation, rather than recreated."<sup>9</sup> Some of these phrases are common to different IE cultures, such as the one that goes, "imperishable fame",<sup>10</sup> which is common to both the ancient Greek and ancient Vedic languages. While Shelly's poem does not use the phrase, the theme of the poem clearly uses the idea of imperishable fame by ironically parodying it.

The metrics of this piece are primarily iambic pentameter (five feet containing a weak-stressed syllable followed by a strongly-stressed syllable) with other types of metrics mixed in for variety (for instance, the first line is two iambs followed by an anapest and then two more iambs).

The phonetic devices used include both rhyme and alliteration. Shelly rhymes the first, third and fifth lines. Then he rhymes the second and fourth lines, then the sixth and eighth lines, then the seventh and tenth lines, then the ninth, eleventh and thirteenth lines, and finally the twelfth and fourteenth (last) lines. By changing the rhyme as the poem progresses, he allows the poem to move forward.

He also used alliteration quite a bit. The one that repeats throughout the poem is the use of the letter 's' – "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert" is a good example. Also, "...its sculptor well those passion read which yet survive, stamped on those lifeless things..." I think that the repeated use of the 's' sound gives the poem a slippery quality, which goes well with the theme of the 'slipperiness' of fame. Shelly also uses other alliterations, such as in "cold command" and "boundless and bare", which add color and emphasis to the lines.

**Question #4: Create a prayer suitable for the main offering of a High Day rite which includes invocation of at least one deity suitable to the occasion, description of the offering and its suitability to the occasion, and the purpose of the offering, totaling at least 100 words. Any stage directions necessary for performance of the offering should be included.**

For the purposes of this question I shall submit a prayer to the Welsh God, Lleu Llaw Gyffes, for use at Alban Arthan (Winter Solstice). This High Day marks the time of year when the sun is at its weakest, but poised to return. This myth, taken from the fourth branch of the Mabinogi (*Math Son*

of *Mathonwy*), tells the story of the God from His birth through his gaining of a name, arms and a wife due to the intervention of his uncle, Gwydion. Gwydion and Math create a wife for Lleu out of flowers (*Blodeuwedd*), but She is only constant for as long as a flower can be constant before wilting, and so She soon falls in love with Gronw Pebr. Together, They engineer the death of Lleu by tricking Him into revealing how He can be killed. Instead of dying, though, He turns into an eagle when the spear pierces His heart, and He flies away. Later, Gwydion finds Him, dying on a tree branch, and restores Him to health, just as the sun begins its restoration to full glory beginning with the solstice.

The offerings used are food and drink, needed by a dying God to regain His strength. Through the Fire we offer Him pork, food of the Gods, and whiskey, the drink of fire in water. Through the Well we offer gold, the color of the sun, as sympathetic magic in a rite to celebrate the return of the sun.

### **INVOCATION OF LLEU LLAW GYFFES**

*(Incense is taken to the Altar of Lleu Llew Gyffes and the image is censed. The Priest stands at the fire, facing the altar.)*

Solar Eagle, Your light is dim,  
We barely can see Your glow.  
We search the land until we can see  
Your form huddled on that mighty bough,  
Your drooping head hung low,  
With dripping gore below.

*(A fire is kindled, and built up until it becomes a mighty bonfire. As the fire begins to burn, the following verse is spoken or sung)*

Fair haired One with the Skillful Hand,  
Shining Head, with the noble brow,  
Gronw's bane, of the magic spear slain,  
Restored in the end by great Gwydion's hand,  
We call upon You now!  
We pray You'll hear us now!

*(As the fire starts to grow large and strong, the following verse is spoken or sung)*

Solar Eagle, bright God of our people,  
Llew Llaw Gyffes, You stand by our side!  
Rising now, in our consciousness glowing,  
With joy do we greet You, great Dawn of the Sun.  
To You, this hymn we raise!  
We sing this song of praise!

Sacrifices we make to You,  
Food and drink that You may grow strong!  
Whiskey fine, and fresh pork do we burn.  
And gold, the color of Midsummer sun,  
We offer to You now!  
We give these to You now!

*(Whiskey and pork are given to the fire, and gold is given to the Well.)*

Glorious God, Your brightness is growing!  
Hope and joy in our hearts spring anew!  
Come, Great One, Your people are calling,

Libations and offerings we make to You.  
Your luminance grows bright  
As You shine with blinding light!

*(Whiskey is given to the fire.)*

Lleu Llew Gyffes, accept our sacrifices!

*(The people say)*

Lleu Llew Gyffes, accept our sacrifices!

END

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<sup>1</sup> Todd Covert, *Elements of Ritual Composition: Part 1: Purposes, Poetics, and Prayers*, (2004), pp. 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> Covert, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Eliade, "The Sacred and the Profane", (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), pp. 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> Eliade, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Covert, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Ford, Translator, "The Mabinogi", (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 42-45.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Oliver, *Rules for the Dance*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Oliver, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1995), p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Watkins, p. 13.