

Magical Healing – A personal journey

by Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

In our quest for perfect rituals for all the High Days, it sometimes feels like magic is the unnoticed step-child, left standing in the corner, unwanted and unloved. Unlike many other forms of Neopaganism, we in ADF place more emphasis on worship than on magical workings. Of course, we know that magic is an essential part of ritual, from re-creating the Sacred Center to opening and closing the Gates to hallowing the Waters of Life, but sometimes some of us get so focused that we lose sight of the fact that magic has other uses as well.

About a year ago a dear friend of mine, who I'll call **B**, called to tell me that he had cancer of the esophagus. The cancer had spread too far for an operation to be successful and it had spread to other parts of his body. **B**'s doctor had told him that this kind of cancer usually did not respond well to chemo-therapy and that he had about four months to live. **B** decided to try the chemo-therapy anyway, and if death was on his doorstep, he'd go down fighting.

As we spoke on the phone, it suddenly occurred to me that this would be a good opportunity to try some magic to aid him in his fight. **B** was not a Pagan then, but as an arborist he had always felt a connection to nature. So with some trepidation I offered to do a working for him. Somewhat to my surprise, he agreed.

In Rev. Ian Corrigan's book, *Sacred Fire, Holy Well* (86-7), the author mentions a technique that he calls the 'Druid Fortress'. This is a visualization technique that draws on the powers of earth and sky, much as we do when we perform the Two Powers meditation. In preparation for this exercise one goes into a trance. Once the trance is fairly deep, the work can begin. This exercise is all about bringing the powers of the heavens and the underworld into the three cauldrons of loins, heart and mind (as in the Two Powers meditation), but then using those powers for overtly magical means. And it's all about visualization. Once the cauldrons are filled with the powers, the 'bubbles' or spheres of power in each of them can be enlarged until they merge, forming a large bubble completely surrounding the magician. After being held for a moment, these powers can flow into the hands, where they may be formed into a ball of energy, concentrating these powers. After breathing three times, letting each breath bring more energy into the ball, the magician can hold their hands out, palms towards a target. I used a pool I could see through the window near my home altar. While maintaining my Druid Fortress, I then breathed a fourth time and projected the ball of power out over the pool, where it

hovered for a while. I waved my hands, releasing the ball of power, which then fell harmlessly into the pool.

Ian's book also mentions that these powers can be used for healing, by using the waters of the earth power to dissolve and clean out illness, and the sky power to burn it away (87).

My friend **B** was able to visit two weekends in a row, and the first weekend saw a waning moon, with the second weekend having a waxing moon. This was just too perfect! I determined to do two rites, the first to burn away the cancer and flush out the detritus, and the second to function as a rite of strengthening.

For these workings, the aid of the Kindreds would also be wanted. For the first rite, Brigit was invoked as a Goddess of Healing, Math was invoked as a God of Magic, Cernunnos was invoked as a God of the Underworld, and Morrigan was given offerings to placate Her that She might turn Her face away from **B** and not take him.

In the workings section of a full ADF rite, using trance and the Druid Fortress techniques I had practiced, we got to work. I visualized the Powers of the Heavens, mediated by Brigit, and the Powers of the Underworld, mediated by Cernunnos, flowing through me. Reverends Corrigan and Parker had warned me to be sure to only be a conduit for the powers, and not use my own energy, to prevent exhaustion. Once the powers were flowing smoothly, the earth power was staunched and the fire of the sky power was allowed to shoot out of my finger tips, aimed at the cancers which I could see in my mind's eye as white splotches in his body. I used the power to blast and burn them away, even catching little metastases running around his body. Starting at his neck, which was where the cancer was concentrated, the power then moved down his entire body, getting everything I could see. When this was completed, the sky power's fire was staunched, and the waters of the underworld were allowed to flow through me again, shooting out of my fingers to wash away the burned out cancer cells.

The next weekend we did another full rite, this time with sacrifices to Brigit and the Dagda, and also to three ancestors we called the *Matrae* (the Mothers), who consisted of my mother and two female relatives of **B**'s. This time, both of the powers of heaven and underworld flowed through me, with Brigit aiding me with the powers of the sky, and Dagda aiding me with the powers of the earth, and with the *Matrae* helping me direct the powers where they needed to go. The visual at that moment was absolutely incredible. I could see all five of them, Gods and Ancestors

alike, intently focusing on these powers that I was aiming into **B**'s body, to strengthen him for the ordeal ahead. It was then that I suddenly realized that we needed to touch, and so I laid my hands on him. It felt like electricity flowed through my hands and into **B**. I know now that the laying on of hands is essential to any healing.

To support this healing, **B** was sent a candle made in another ritual, blessed by Brigit, in which had been buried a Brigit's Cross. This was sent to him to burn daily, and when it burned down too low, he received another one from me in the mail.

A month or so later **B** called to say that the cancer had disappeared in much of his body, and had shrunk way down in his throat, so that now it would be possible to have the operation to remove his esophagus and the cancer. His doctor was ecstatic, and **B** has now had the operation and is back at work, in full remission.

So what is one to think of all this?

I have used this technique a few times now, and with remarkable success. Perhaps the Gods have sent healing through our magic and our faith. Perhaps we can heal with our own powers. And perhaps this is only an amazing example of the placebo effect, where patients heal themselves. Or perhaps it is a combination of all three. One thing we do know is that sometimes, through **ghosti* and reciprocity, powers greater than ourselves intervene on our behalf, showing us the beauty and magic of the cosmos, when ordered potential truly manifests in our lives with wonder and joy.

Bibliography

Corrigan, Ian, *Sacred Fire, Holy Well* (Madison, OH, Tredara Hearth Publishing, 2006) – soon to be released by ADF Publishing