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1 A General Framework for Conjunction

I'd like to start a series of explorations that dig deeper into the practical aspects of Solomonic magic. It's a form of magic that seems to be frequently mischaracterized in some modern circles, as needlessly adversarial or coercive towards spirits. I find that view to be somewhat shallow. Solomonic magic has a tremendous amount to offer modern practitioners. The overall structure of spirit conjunctions has been fairly consistent for nearly two millennia, and this structure is preserved in Solomonic texts. Rather than viewing it as a product of Abrahamic religion, we can view it as a bridge that links us back to techniques of spirit work that first rose to prominence in Greece, Egypt, and the near east at the beginning of the common era. It also works phenomenally well, which is ultimately the standard by which we should be judging our practice.

Before we go further, we should define what we mean by Solomonic magic. Solomonic magic is a tradition of magic, primarily based in spirit conjunction, that draws on imagery associated with the biblical figure of King Solomon. In the bible, the figure of Solomon appears as a king, both devout and renowned for his wisdom. The apocryphal legends surrounding Solomon go further — that he was provided by God with a magic ring and was granted power over demons. Through his command of these demons, he was able to accomplish great feats such as the building of the temple at Jerusalem. For magicians who wanted to perform spirit conjunctions in the context of Christian society, the figure of Solomon provided a convenient role-model to point to — the pious magician who traffics with unclean spirits, but is not tainted by them.

Because of these legends, huge numbers of historical grimoires claim to contain the secret techniques of King Solomon, or to have been authored by his hand. These attributions are universally spurious, but still combine to create a large corpus of magical writing in the “Solomonic” tradition.

Solomonic texts generally have a few elements in common:

- They deal with magic that operates by the agency of spirits. This often revolves around the explicit conjunction of spirits, but may involve the creation of pentacles or talismans that are implicitly powered by spirits instead.
- They are generally Abrahamic in their theology and the powers upon which they call.

- They often make reference, to a greater or lesser extent, to the figure of King Solomon.

The spirit conjuration rituals they contain also tend to follow a similar overarching structure. Understanding this structure lets us work much more fluently with texts in the Solomonic tradition. Such an understanding lets us categorize parts of rituals as doing particular things. It makes much clearer when particular texts are corrupted, out of order, or otherwise missing important instructions. It also lets us break rituals up into modular pieces, to facilitate the combination or adaptation of multiple sources into our own personal practice.

Dr. Stephen Skinner gives an outline of the structure of Solomonic ritual, which we will use as a basis for further discussion.¹ It consists of six different steps that comprise the overall effort of spirit conjuration:

1. ***Consecratio Dei*** — Literally “consecrations to God”, this is the first — and generally the longest — step of the operation. It consists of collecting, creating, and consecrating a variety of magical tools and materia. It also covers purification of the self by fasting, confession, or chaste behavior. As well as the cleansing and consecration of ritual space. All of which together works as a sort of spiritual sterilization, a “clean room” free from psychic debris, into which the desired influences can be effectively conjured.
2. ***Invocatio*** — The second step involves the invocation of higher powers to aid you in your operation and invest you with the authority required for the summoning of a spirit. This generally includes invocations to ultimate godhead, but can also feature other powerful god names, angels, or spiritual patrons you want to aid you in your work.
3. ***Evocatio*** — The meat of the conjuration. This consists of calls directed to the spirit you are actually trying to conjure. These calls often start more amicably, and escalate to become increasingly adversarial and coercive if the spirit doesn’t appear, until you are actively cursing the spirit and doing things like roasting its seal with sulfur over hot coals. This is where the conception of Solomonic magic as adversarial comes from, but it’s worth noting that not every conjuration is

¹See his works *Techniques of Solomonic Magic* and *The Goetia of Dr. Rudd*.

expected to go through all (or even most) of this escalation. At any point during this stage you may opt to call it quits and continue or shut down the ritual, instead of escalating.

4. ***Constrictio*** — Once the spirit appears, you put some constraints on its behavior in your presence. This can involve instructions like putting on a form that isn't monstrous or frightening, not departing before the end of the ritual, and not harming anything as it comes or goes.
5. ***Ligatio*** — This is where the magic actually happens, in a negotiation with the spirit once it has been summoned. This can involve asking the spirit questions or making petitions of it, as well as the negotiation of protocols or pacts. It can also involve making offerings, such as incense or libations, to the spirit.
6. ***Licensia*** — The conclusion of the ritual, giving the spirit license to depart back to its normal abodes, giving thanks to the powers that aided you in, and any other shutdown procedures required to return everyone back to their normal modes of operation.

Other occult authors have split up conjuration rituals along slightly different lines. Aleister Crowley, in his *Magick in Theory and Practice*, splits the first stage into: **Banishings, Purifications, Consecrations, and Oath & Confession**. Banishings is mostly relevant to those working in a Golden Dawn or Thelemic context, but there is some value in differentiating between purifications, consecrations, and confession, as the function of each is slightly different.

In future chapters we'll dive much more deeply into the function and structure of each of these stages, but for now a high-level understanding of the framework turns out to be hugely useful. It helps expose the modularity of Solomonic rituals, and how those modules can be shifted and recombined. If a grimoire presents the invocations to God after the evocations of the specific spirit, an understanding of this structure suggests that we might want to try them the other way around. If a particular source is missing a license to depart, it gives us a hint that we likely want to import one from some other source. The pieces begin to fall into place.

There's one final objection you often hear when the topic of Solomonic magic comes up: that it's unnecessary. Why go to all this trouble, the

argument goes, when meditating on a spirit's seal or chanting a demonic enn is just as effective?

The obvious counterpoint being that this argument nearly always comes from people who haven't *tried* Solomonic methods. Is meditation as good? That's a question for each individual practitioner to decide for themselves — but until you have experienced both, how could you possibly know? In this, as in everything else, personal experimentation is king.

2 Exorcism and a Clean Slate

In the last chapter we talked about some high-level theoretical frameworks of Solomonic magic. This one we're going to be diving into the details of putting them into practice. Starting with the first step in nearly every Solomonic operation: consecrations.

Why are tools and materials in Solomonic traditions consecrated prior to an operation? There are a couple of different arguments, depending on the theology you subscribe to. For a Renaissance monk bought into the Catholic idea that non-angelic spirits are uniformly evil, with the sole goal of tempting and corrupting humanity, then it makes sense to consecrate as much of the ritual paraphernalia as possible. The more ways the power of God can be channeled into the rite, the more that power will constrain and compel the demon into doing whatever it is you want. But even outside of this adversarial paradigm, there is another reason to consecrate your tools: the removal of psychic residue.

As humans, we are tremendously affected by our surroundings. Let's say two people sit down to have a conversation about their childhoods. Imagine how much differently that conversation will unfold if they meet to chat in a cozy cafe, a sports bar, or a graveyard in the middle of a downpour. What if they are having that conversation while hearing birdsongs or pounding techno music? If their environment is scented like fresh-cut grass or decaying garbage? All of these environmental factors will impact how they choose to show up for an interaction, and how that interaction goes.

And that's for *people*. How much more of an impact does the environment have for a spirit, who has no physical body to anchor it. A being more attuned to the subtle layers of reality is likely to be even more influenced by subtle factors. By making sure that our ritual space, and everything in it, is free from unwanted psychic influence, we facilitate clearer communication with the spirit we are attempting to contact.

This accounts for two factors often seen in grimoire instructions: the consecration of all implements used for magical work, and the emphasis on using "virgin" materials — materials freshly collected or crafted, that have never been previously used for another purpose. A pact written on a piece of virgin parchment consecrated to magical use will have a different character than one written on the back of an old grocery list, or a page torn out of a favorite book. Sometimes a pre-existing psychic impression is what you

want, but for generic spirit conjuration we'd rather be starting fresh.²

This is also the reason that many Solomonic consecration prayers start with an *exorcism* step, before getting into the blessing proper. Even with fresh materials, they may have picked up some impressions from their environment before the moment of consecration. Exorcising them first clears these impressions and renders them spiritually sterile, in the same way that a surgeon would seal and autoclave their tools before a medical operation.

Consider the following passage from pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*:

This therefore is to be known, and firmly observed, That if any Consecration be to be made of things profane, in which there is any pollution of defilement, then an exorcising and expiation of those things ought to precede the consecration. Which things being so made pure, are more apt to receive the influences of the Divine vertues.

So we start with fresh, new materials and, prior to performing the blessing proper, we exorcise them. What formulae do we use? Let's look at some examples. First up, a Catholic ritual for the consecration of holy water, that involves individually exorcising and blessing water and salt, before mixing them together:³

For the salt:

God's creature, salt, I cast out the demon from you in the name of God ✠ the Father almighty, in the love of our Lord Jesus ✠ Christ, and in the strength of the Holy ✠ Spirit. I purify you by the living God, the true God, the holy God, by God who created you to be a preservative for mankind, and ordered you to be sanctified by His ministers for the benefit of the people who are about to embrace the faith. . . [continues to blessing]

For the water:

²A knife that has been carried into combat by a soldier has a very strong martial character, which may be what you want if crafting a martial talisman. Hoodoo makes use of things like coffin nails or pages torn from the bible for similar reasons.

³When looking for consecration prayers appropriate to Solomonic operations, Catholic rites are a great place to start. There are prayers for blessing almost everything under the sun, with the weight of long religious use behind all of them.

God's creature, water, I cast out the demon from you in the name of God ✠ the Father almighty, in the name of Jesus ✠ Christ, His Son, our Lord, and in the power of the Holy ✠ Spirit. . . [continues to blessing]

Consider also the following conjuration from the *Heptameron*, an exorcism of the fire used in the ritual:

I exorcise thee, O thou creature of fire, by him by whom all things are made, that forthwith thou cast away every phantasme from thee, that it shall not be able to do any hurt in any thing.

Each of these exorcisms follows the same basic structure: 1) addressing the item (and the spirit of the item) directly, as if it is a living being, 2) exorcising it of malignant influence, and 3) citing the powers upon which you are calling for authority (powers which match those you will be invoking later in ritual). Any prayer that mostly follows this structure should be sufficient. I personally use a form closer to the *Heptameron* version, as it's a little less actively hostile. I don't need to characterize the influences I'm trying to exorcise as evil, just unwanted in this particular item at this particular time.

If it's appropriate to the tool or material, I also like to seal the exorcism by sprinkling the item with a little holy water, either holy water obtained from a church or some you made yourself.⁴

Ultimately, the practice of consecration in Solomonic magic — and particularly this first step of exorcism — isn't about slavishly following tradition, or binding and opposing spirits. It is about establishing a clear and focused energetic foundation on which to perform our ritual work. By carefully preparing our tools and space, we're cleansing them of unwanted influences and shaping an environment conducive to the subtle communication required for spirit work. Whatever your views on the later stages of Solomonic ritual, the principle remains the same: a clean slate, energetically speaking, allows for clearer reception and more reliable results. So, as we embark on our Solomonic journey, remember that this initial step is an investment in the clarity, potency, and success of our future operations.

⁴You should be able to walk into any Catholic church with an empty bottle and get some holy water for home use, no questions asked. Many have designated dispensers in their foyers for just this purpose. If you don't want holy water that is specifically Catholic, there are dozens of rituals for consecrating your own.

3 Blessings and Consecrations

In the last chapter we talked about the first step in consecrating Solomonic tools and materials: exorcism of any unwanted influences that might be present to start with. But there is a second stage required for a consecration. We need to bring those influences or psychic impressions we do want into the item as well. Nature abhors a vacuum, so in addition to just banishing the existing influences, we want to replace them with something.

Let us look at another couple of quotes from pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*:

And now we come to treat of the Consecrations which, men ought to make upon all instruments and things necessary to be used in this Art: and the vertue of this Consecration most chiefly consists in two things; to wit, in the power of the person consecrating, and by the vertue of the prayer by which the Consecration is made. . .

. . . There is used also the invocation of some Divine names, with the consignation of holy Seals, and things of the like sort, which do conduce to sanctification and expiation; such as are the Sprinkling with Holy-Water, Unctions with holy Oyl, and odoriferous Suffumigations appertaining to holy Worship. And therefore in every Consecration there is chiefly used the Benediction and Consecration of Water, Oyl, Fire, and Fumigations, used everywhere with holy Wax-lights or Lamps burning: for without Lights no Sacrament is rightly performed.

There are a couple points worth discussing here. The first is the distinction between the power of the person making the consecration and the prayer of consecration itself. Here it's worth recognizing the difference in Catholic doctrine between a *sacrament* and *sacramental*. A *sacrament* — something like Baptism or Eucharist — is a religious rite that must be performed by a priest who holds the apostolic succession. Anyone who holds that succession can perform the sacrament, there is no particular belief or lifestyle requirement beyond having the proper initiation. A *sacramental*, in contrast, derives its power from the piety and moral authority of the person conducting it. The blessing of Holy Water (as well as other things) is considered to be this latter category. A pious and morally upright person, even with no religious training, can conduct an effective blessing. This is the first

form of power mentioned in the *Fourth Book*: the power of the person consecrating. A person with that power need follow no prescribed forms, calling upon higher powers and clearly stating their intent is sufficient to bless an item.

But there is a second form of power, that derived from the prayer itself. This is one of the advantages of using standard forms of blessing — either from religious rites, traditional grimoires, or biblical passages. The more people have used a particular blessing for a particular purpose, and the more that blessing invokes imagery and stories in which large numbers of people have faith, the more that blessing carries its own weight of religious power — irrespective of the power of the person using it.

The other thing worth noting in this passage is the use of other materials in the consecration. We already touched on sprinkling an item with Holy Water as part of the exorcism, the blessing stage can be further strengthened by passing it through the smoke of incense,⁵ by anointing it with holy oil, or by performing the consecration in the presence of a candle or oil lamp that provides holy light.

So, we know we want to consecrate our item to the powers we will be calling upon later in the ritual. We know we have the option to consecrate them through our own personal power, using any words we like to set our intent, or through standard prayers and commemoration of religious narrative. We know we can strengthen the consecration through holy lights, holy water, holy incense, or holy oil.

Most consecration prayers start with a generic appeal to God to bless the item in question. Let's look again at the prayers from last chapter. First the Catholic rite for holy water:

For the Salt:

[begins with the exorcism]... In the name of the Blessed Trinity may you become a saving sign empowered to drive away the enemy. Therefore, we beg you, Lord, our God, to sanctify ✠ and to bless ✠ this creature, salt, thus providing a perfect remedy for all who receive it, one that will permeate their inmost being. We ask this in the name of our lord Jesus Christ, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire. Amen.

⁵Frankincense is traditional, as is myrrh, but really any church incense blend is appropriate here.

For the Water:

[begins with the exorcism]... May you be a purified water, empowered to drive afar all power of the enemy, in fact, to root out and banish the enemy himself, along with his fallen angels. We ask this through the power of Jesus Christ, who is coming to judge both the living, and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.

As well as the next passage from the *Heptameron*, after the Exorcism of the Fire:

Bless, O Lord, this creature of fire, and sanctify it, that it may be blessed to set forth the praise of thy holy name, that no hurt may come to the Exorcisers or Spectators: through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

There isn't much to note here other than that the prayers appeal to the powers that will be called on for authority later in the ritual, and ask that they bless and sanctify the item in question. Some consecrations end here, and for a consecration of minor materia (incense or candles, say), this is a perfectly reasonable place to stop. But for tools that you want to play a specific ritual role, you will sometimes see consecrations that continue in one of two ways.

The first way that consecrations continue is in the recitation of Biblical passages that are particularly suited to the purpose of the tool in question. The psalms see a tremendous amount of use for this, in the Solomonic tradition. Reciting a set of appropriate psalms, or a single psalm a number of times, can further set the energetic imprint for a tool. Psalm 23 can be used for general blessing, Psalm 51 for items intended to purify one's person, Psalm 91 for protective implements, etc. It might also be appropriate to read passages from Genesis, Exodus, or Revelation.

The second direction that consecrations can go is by appending a longer freeform prayer to clarify the intention of the tool. We'll look at a couple examples used for blessing holy water, and the principle should be easy to extrapolate from there.

The first comes from Rufus Opus's *Red Work* course, which he in turn adapted from the *Mikros Agiasmos*.⁶

⁶The *Red Work* course was some of Rufus Opus's early work, a precursor to his book *Seven Spheres*. It's no longer directly available from him, but he's authorized Sam Block of *Digital Ambler* to continue [distributing it](#).

Bless, purify and sanctify this water by your heavenly blessing. Grant it the grace and blessing of the Jordan, and the power to cleanse all defilements, to heal all illnesses, and to drive out evil spirits and their deceits and snares. By the power, action, and grace of the all-holy Spirit, show this water to be for the cleansing of the soul, the calming of passions, the expulsion of all evil, the increase of virtue, the healing of illnesses, the sanctification of homes and of all places, the driving out of all destructive and evil-doing spirits, and the reception of your grace for those who drink this water in faith or receive it or are sprinkled with it.

The second example, also for water, comes from Josephine McCarthy's *Quareia* course, in [Apprentice Lesson 1 Module 7](#). It is part of the ritual for a cleansing bath, which also includes some great nondenominational exorcism and blessing passages I'd recommend you check out. The prayer of intention goes as follows:

I exorcise all influences and seeds of evil from the person who will bathe in this bath: I exorcise all demons, parasites, thought-forms, golems, all ghosts, all beings that bring disease, all beings that bring death, all marks of destruction, all marks of death, and all spiritual dirt. And I exorcise from them all magical attacks that have been cast against them: all magical spells, curses and bindings, rituals, visions, beings, and utterances. I cast upon them all the spell chains and I cast them into the outer darkness where they shall trouble not this Servant of God.

Amen, Amen Selah.

In both cases we see a clarification of the purpose of the item, in this case Holy Water, beyond just a generic consecration to God. It crystallizes the intent with which this tool will be used, the role we expect it to play, and the actions we expect it to accomplish.

Similarly, we can bring in particular influences to an item by conducting our consecrations with intentional timing: in certain lunar phases, lunar mansions, or planetary days and hours. I almost always try to conduct my consecrations during a waxing moon, in the [planetary day and hour](#) of Mercury — Mercury being a psychopomp, and the patron of both magic and

communication, this seems a particularly apt influence to bring to bear on Solomonic ritual works.⁷

So, let's recap the consecration process as we've outlined it over a couple of chapters:

1. Start with fresh materials that have never been previously used for some other purpose. ("Virgin" materials in the parlance of the grimoires.)
2. Choose an appropriate timing for the consecration. If you're unsure, the day and hour of Mercury during a waxing moon is almost always appropriate.
3. If possible, light a consecrated candle, oil lamp, or some other source of holy light.
4. Conduct an exorcism of the item in question, addressing it as a living being and calling upon the powers of the ritual to cast out any malign influences from it. If appropriate, sprinkle the item with holy water.
5. Conduct a generic blessing of the item, calling upon the appropriate powers to bless and sanctify it. If desired, fume it with incense or anoint it with ritual oil at this time. (If you can consecrate the incense or the oil beforehand, all the better).
6. Optionally, further set the intention of the tool by doing one of the following:
 - (a) Recite scripture passages that are relevant to the purpose or usage of the item in question. If you're unsure where to start, Genesis and Psalms are both great places to look for inspiration.
Or
 - (b) Create your own freeform prayer that articulates the intention for the tool. What do you want it to do in a ritual? Describe that here in your own words.

And that's it. At its core, it's a reasonably straightforward process of clearing unwanted influence from a ritual item, asking those powers you appeal to in ritual to bless it, and setting your own energetic impression on it for how it will be used later on.

⁷The one exception is if I am consecrating something specifically to bind or confront spirits, in which case a Saturnian or Martial timing is more appropriate.

Depending on how exhaustive you want to be, and how many tools your operation calls for, the process of acquiring/crafting tools and consecrating them all can take a while. But I would encourage you not to think of this as unnecessary busywork before you get into “the real magic.” Going through the process of pre consecration builds magical momentum; you’re frontloading the work, such that when you actually step into the circle, you have a substantial head start from which to launch your ritual. The conjuration started the moment you began crafting your tools.

4 Drawing the Circle

Over the last few chapters we've explored the idea of consecrations in the Solomonic tradition. That everything brought into the ritual space is exorcised and blessed ahead of time, to give the magician a spiritually clean environment in which to work. There are two final pieces we haven't talked about yet: the purification of space, and the purification of self. This chapter we're going to be talking about space.

You certainly *can* consecrate space in the same way we consecrate anything else — holy water and incense, reciting prayers of exorcism and blessing. In fact many Solomonic operations start with exactly that. But there is another element to creating a ritual space that is hugely important in the Solomonic tradition, and that is the creation of a ritual circle.

The idea of a circle to surround and protect the magician during a spirit conjuration goes back millennia. In Graeco-Egyptian magic, it sometimes took the form of a snake, laid out in a circle, biting its own tail. Sometimes the circle was traced with a sharp iron blade as part of the ritual, to give it further protective and apotropaic qualities.

As spirit conjurations got Christianized, the form of these circles changed. They became more elaborate, including many layers of divine names, angels, or spiritual powers. The function, however, was more or less the same: a shield to separate the operator from potentially hostile spiritual powers.

Why is a circle necessary? It's been a subject of substantial speculation, and I don't know that anyone can ever answer it definitively. I'll present a number of theories here, and let you draw your own conclusions.

The first idea, influenced by Wicca, is that the circle is an energetic barrier. While it may function to keep hostile spirits out, it is equally important in keeping the energies of the ritual *in*. It separates the ritual space from mundane space, prevents the energy raised in ritual from dissipating, and thereby makes the ritual more powerful. Think about the efficiency difference between a fire burning in the open air, versus inside a wood stove. In this paradigm, the circle is as much for you as it is for the spirit.

The next idea is that the circle helps to locate the ritual in time and space. Spirits don't experience spacetime the same way we do, so when called in a Solomonic operation, they may struggle to identify where the call is originating. The existence of a circle, particularly one that includes time-based powers such as the angels of the day and hour, can serve as a beacon to help them locate us and initiate contact.

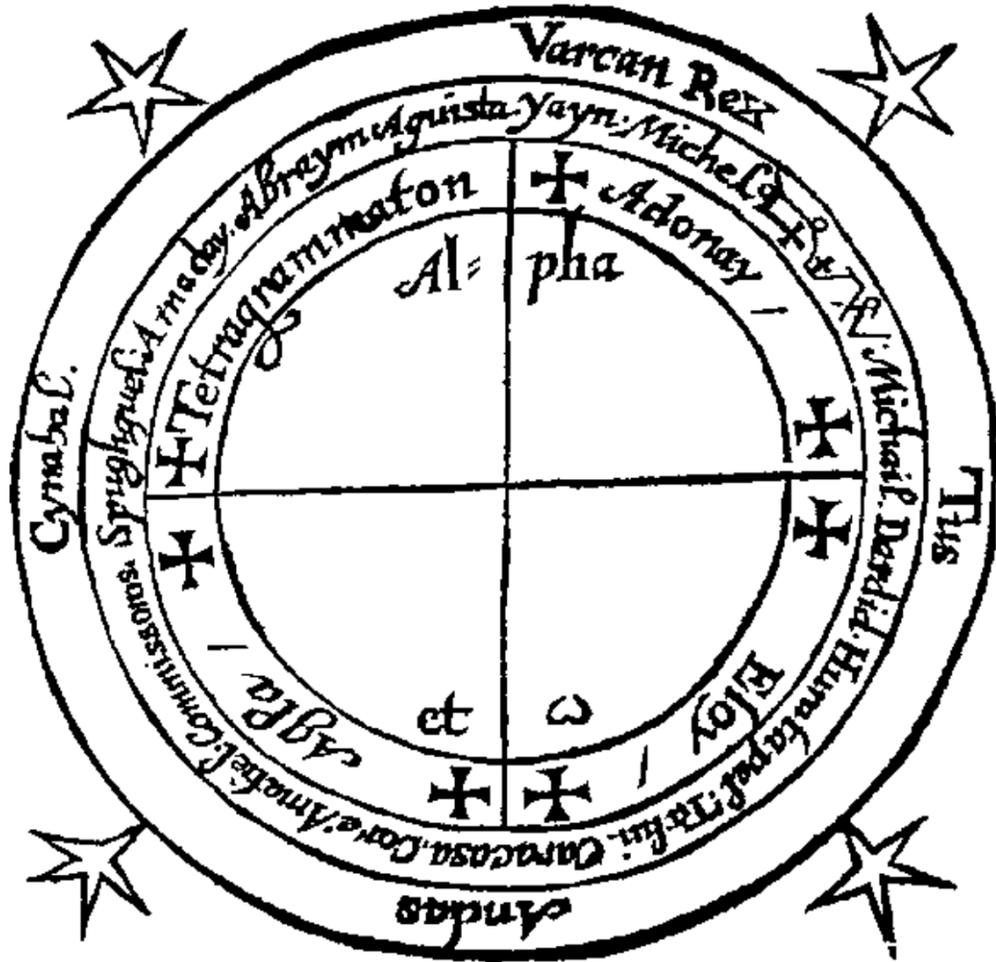
Those theories are both somewhat modern, treating the circle as ritual tool as much as protection. What about circles as a more traditional protective element?

Many traditional conceptions of spirits involve them being a little bit OCD. The classical *devil trap bowls*, for example, are earthenware bowls with prayers written on them in a spiral. The idea being that a spirit encounters the bowl, feels compelled to read the prayer, follows it into the center of the spiral, and then can't figure out how to get out.⁸ A protective circle might work in a similar way: a hostile spirit encountering it tries to follow it to the end, and because a circle has no end, gets stuck going around and around.

A second option is that it's more analogous to a personal mandala: it represents the structure of the universe as you understand it, and the powers you have aligned yourself with within that conception. In this case it's less about the spirit being *unable* to breach the circle, and more about them being reluctant to do so because they don't want to tick off the powers you've named as your protectors, allies, or source of authority.

Regardless of the exact mechanics at play, the inclusion of a ritual circle is one of the most important components of a ritual in the Solomonic tradition. Let's look at a couple classic (if highly complex) examples.

⁸Scattering seeds in front of your door is a traditional way to ward off vampires; one of the explanations that I've heard for that is similar — that the vampire will feel compelled to stop and count the seeds, which prevents it from causing harm.



The first example is drawn from the *Heptameron*. It is composed of three rings of names. The innermost ring contains names of God, the outermost the names of the spirit(s) which you are attempting to conjure. The middle ring contains names, angels, and ministers of the season, day, and hour, sun, and moon. This composition of the circle localizes the ritual in spacetime and shows that the magician has the appropriate keys to conduct the operation.

Rituals vary slightly on this. Some perambulate around the circle, sprinkling it with holy water and perfuming it with incense, reciting prayers of exorcism and blessing similar to those discussed in previous chapters. If the circle has a long list of magical names, they may be recited and called upon for protection. Many rituals trace around the circumference of the circle with a blade or wand, declaring it to be hallowed space. From *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals*:

In the name of the blessed Trinity, I consecrate this piece of ground for our defence; so that no evil spirit may have power to break these bounds prescribed here, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*:

Ego consecro, et benedico istum Circulum per Nomina Dei Attissimi [sic] in eo Scripta, ut sit mihi et omnibus Scutum et Protectio Dei Fortissimi ☩ Elohim ☩ Invincibilis contra omnes malignos Spiritus, eorumque Potestates. In Nomine ☩ Dei Patris ☩ Dei Filii ☩ Dei Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

[I consecrate and bless this Circle by the Names of the Most High God written therein, so that it may be for me and for all a Shield and Protection of the Most Mighty God ☩ Elohim ☩ Invincible against all evil spirits and their powers. In the Name ☩ of God the Father ☩ of God the Son ☩ of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.]

Magicians that come from a modern ceremonial tradition — such as the Golden Dawn or Thelema — may opt to include their own rituals for banishing and consecrating space, such as the *Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram* or *Hexagram*. Not strictly traditional, but able to integrate well into the remainder of a Solomonic operation if such rituals are already part of your practice.

A circle is one of the most consistent ritual elements of Solomonic conjuration. Whether you choose to view it as a protective device, a beacon to draw the spirit to you, or a container to preserve the delicate energies raised in the ritual, it serves to set the ritual space off from the mundane world. It marks the space of the operation as a world apart. A sacred place in which to conduct our sacred work.

5 Personal Purity

We're now several chapters deep into an exploration of consecrations in the Solomonic tradition. We've discussed consecrations of tools and of physical space. There's one final piece of the puzzle to talk about when it comes to consecration: consecration of the magician themselves. And this is one of the most important elements, as the thing that ultimately engages in communication with a spirit is... you.

There is often a knee-jerk reaction against the purification instructions in the Solomonic grimoires. This stems from several misconceptions. The first is the idea that these purifications are uniquely Christian additions to the tradition, or somehow not in keeping with the nature of the spirits being contacted; if you are excited to commune with demons, being told the first step is attending mass and confession is somewhat anticlimactic. The second is the idea that these restrictions, such as abstinence, are founded in outmoded moralities. If our society has moved beyond the idea that sex is inherently sinful or unclean, why would we need to refrain from it?

Let's look first at fasting and abstinence, which we can expand to cover all acts of self-denial. Depending on the source, this can include eliminating certain foods (meat or alcohol), restricting the foods consumed more severely (bread and water fasts), or eliminating food altogether for a prescribed period. Some sources mandate periods of abstinence or chastity. Some call for the avoidance of immoral behavior, such as swearing or intoxication.

These requirements can certainly be viewed through a Christian lens: before beginning an operation where we call on Christ, we should model ourselves on a Christian ideal of behavior. But there is a deeper significance to these requirements as well. They are as much about self-mastery as they are about any particular standard of behavior. They give us a period where we demonstrate that we can overcome our vices, placing the importance of our spiritual pursuits above earthly pleasures. They also move us closer to the plane on which the spirits we are attempting to contact reside. The more "sublime" we can make ourselves, the more easily we can bring ourselves into contact with subtle spirits.

Through this lens, anything that saps our attention or anchors us more firmly in the physical world is worth avoiding during our fasting period. Food, sex, and intoxicating substances are classic examples. But we might decide to include a fast from social media, video games, or digital devices entirely — despite this being beyond the scope of any traditional source (grimoiric or

Christian). We can attempt to follow the spirit of these injunctions to fast, rather than just the letter.

The next requirement often encountered is the need to attend mass, go to confession, or take the Eucharist. These are actions that, to a Renaissance monk, brought one into closer contact with the divine. For Catholics, this is still a great place from which to operate. For the rest of us, we can look for other opportunities to connect with divinity. Perhaps in our practice that looks like periods of prayer, meditation, or contemplation. Confession in particular tends to be a sticky topic with modern readers, given the complex feelings about “sin.” However, I would encourage you to think of it not as an outmoded system of control but as an acknowledgment of human failure. We should take a hard look at our imperfections, own the mistakes we have made in the past — without excuse or blame — and release the guilt we may feel around those failings.⁹ The recitation of psalms, prayers, or biblical passages that petition the divine for forgiveness of our innate human failings are appropriate here.

The final element of personal purification is physical cleanliness. In many ways, a ritualized cleansing of the body plays a similar role to confession. Just as we might sprinkle a tool with blessed water to exorcise unwanted influences, we can bathe ourselves in similarly blessed water to wash away undesirable patterns or energies.¹⁰ But there is also a very pragmatic element to personal cleanliness.

The spirits we are attempting to evoke are subtle, often explicitly aerial in nature. There is a large corpus of traditional sources indicating such spirits are sensitive to smells — prohibitions on priests eating fish that date back to ancient Egypt, the warding away of hostile spirits with garlic or pungent herbs, the burning of sulfur or asafoetida to banish spirits from a place, etc. For a disembodied spirit of the air, you showing up to a ritual covered in your very human body-stink might be revolting. Being freshly bathed before entering into your ritual space heads that issue off as well. Cleanliness, as the saying goes, is next to godliness.

Personally, I like to use a two-part approach to purification. An initial phase of self-denial lasting anywhere from one to seven days. How rigorous

⁹Prolific author and conjuror Jake Stratton-Kent incorporated elements of confession as an important stage in his own rituals, despite his coming at spirit conjuration from a decidedly non-Christian lens.

¹⁰Indeed the two intention prayers discussed in chapter 3 are explicitly for blessing water to use in this way.

this self-denial is depends on the operation — from eating lightly and giving up vices on the light end, to full on fasting, chastity, and digital detox on the heavy end. Following this period of self denial, I take a cleansing bath immediately prior to beginning an operation. This is a bath in blessed water,¹¹ during which I recite the 51st Psalm in conjunction with the *Confiteor* prayer. Between these two stages I come into a ritual cleansed, focused, and well-aligned to get in touch with a spirit.

We've covered the exorcism of materials to remove unwanted influences, the consecration of tools, the construction of a circle, and now the purification of the magician themselves. All the pieces required for the first, *Consecratio Dei* stage of our Solomonic framework. We have created a cleansed and fortified ritual space, purified ourselves spiritually and physically, and are (finally) ready to step into it and begin the work of spirit conjuration.

¹¹Exorcised and blessed as outlined in previous chapters.

6 Calling the Powers

So far in our Solomonic magic series, we've covered the first step of our conjuration ritual framework: *Consecratio Dei*, the consecrations to God. We've talked about pre consecration of tools and materials, personal purification, and creation of ritual space. Now we're ready to step into the circle and begin the actual ritual of conjuration. The next stage in our framework is *Invocatio* — preparatory invocations.

To start with, what is an invocation? Modern practitioners sometimes use “invocation” to mean rituals intended to call a spiritual power *into* the oneself or one's personal sphere. To highlight in us the traits or energies associated with a particular spirit. This is contrasted with “evocation”, rituals to call a spirit into one's presence but not directly into oneself. This is very much a modern distinction though, rather than one rooted in any historical understanding of the terms.

The word *invocation* comes from the Latin word *invocare*, meaning “to call upon” or “to implore.” Historically, it was used to mean any text that called upon the power or influence of a spiritual entity. A prayer, in other words. In human terms, invocation is like reaching out to an influential friend and asking them to intercede on your behalf in some situation.¹²

In a Solomonic context, our preliminary invocations are prayers to various powers asking them to lend their authority to the conjuration ritual, make it successful, and open the way for the spirits we are attempting to call.

So we know the purpose of the invocations in our ritual, but which spirits do we actually call upon? This is one of the places where there is the most variation between grimoiric sources, and the most room to customize things to fit your own personal practice.

Often the first step is to call upon God, as a highest level of spiritual power and ultimate arbiter of the success of a ritual. My favorite example of this comes from pseudo-Trithemius's *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals*:

Oh, God! who art the author of all good things, strengthen, I beseech thee, thy poor servant, that he may stand fast, without

¹²In contrast, the word *evocation* comes from the Latin *evocare* — “to call out”, “to rouse”, or “to summon.” It's not a distinction between calling a spirit into yourself vs. outside yourself, so much as a difference in the character of an interaction. If invocation is like asking an influential friend to intercede on your behalf, evocation is more like rousing your kids out of bed in the morning to get themselves ready for school.

fear, through this dealing and work; enlighten, I beseech thee, oh Lord! the dark understanding of thy creature, so that his spiritual eye may be opened to see and know thy angelic spirits descending here in this crystal. . . [and grant] they may be constrained to speak intelligibly, and truly, and without the least ambiguity, for Christ's sake. Amen.

This section can also include invocations to various powers to help localize the ritual in space or time. In the *Heptameron*, this includes invocations to the angels and ministers of the day, the hour, the season, etc. In a lodge magic or neopagan context, it may include invocations to rulers of the four directions to guard the ritual space or open quarter gates to allow the free passage of spirits.

If you have particular patrons or tutelary spirits that you work with in your practice — particularly psychopomps, messengers, or intermediaries — you may want to include prayers to them as well, asking them to find the spirit you are attempting to call and convey them before you.

Finally, we may include calls to spirits with authority over the spirit we are conjuring. This generally follows one of two patterns: adversarial spirits or superior spirits. Adversarial spirits are those thought to have some combative power or dominion over the spirit we are ultimately calling. Superior spirits are spirits with authority over our target spirit in the spirit's own hierarchy. In human terms, if we were attempting to get a low-level mobster to do what we wanted, the adversarial approach is like getting a cop to threaten them; the superior spirit approach is like getting their mob boss to give them the order instead. Both are ways of putting more weight behind our future conjurations, by reinforcing them with authority other than our own.

The adversarial approach is classically seen in the *Testament of Solomon*, where each demon reports that there is a particular thwarting angel appointed to them, at whose name they become obedient. This can also be seen in some versions of the Lemegeton's *Goetia*, where the 72 demons of the spirit catalog are paired with angels drawn from the 72 Shemhamphorash.¹³

The superior spirits approach is most clearly seen in the *Grimorium Verum*, where demons are conjured by their own infernal hierarchies, originating in the ruling triad of Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Astaroth.

All of which is to say that, while it's valuable to start off our conjuration ritual with various prayers for success and authority, there is a lot of leeway

¹³Specifically, Dr. Stephen Skinner's edition *The Goetia of Dr. Rudd*.

on which specific powers we invoke. Pick a source to get you started, and adapt from there. There's generally not much down side to adding in additional prayers in this stage beyond what is called for in a specific source.¹⁴ Personally, I like to start with a general invocation to God like the one listed earlier, an invocation to my primary tutelary spirit, and a few to localizing spirits (either the angels of the day and hour, or Agrippa's kings of the four directions, depending on what I'm doing).

As with most things, experiment for yourself to find out what works best in your practice.

¹⁴Within reason. Try to stay generally in the same pantheon — rather than mixing prayers to Adonai, Thor, and Kali in the same ritual. There are also diminishing returns here. One invocation to an intermediary spirit is great; ten invocations to ten different intermediary spirits isn't better.

7 Choosing a Spirit

Let's recap where we are in our Solomonic ritual. We've consecrated our tools, our spaces, and ourselves. We've drawn out our circle. We've invoked various powers (God, angels, intermediary spirits, patrons, directional guardians, etc.) to set the stage. Now we're ready to actually summon the spirit we are trying to contact. Before we can get into the actual meat of the conjuration, it's important to know which spirit we're attempting to call.

How do we choose a spirit? It depends a lot on what we're trying to accomplish. Different spirits have different powers and affinities. For any given spirit, certain types of change will come easier to them than others. Our work is most likely to be successful if we're matching our desired outcome to a spirit who is well suited to bring it about. This is just like in the mundane world; depending on the kind of work I need done, I might be more successful approaching someone in a library, or a dive bar, or a Home Depot parking lot.

In many grimoires, spirits are assigned (more or less explicitly) to astrological concerns, most commonly the seven classical planets. This gives a good hint at the domains in which a spirit is likely to be potent. Venusian spirits (such as the Dukes of the *Goetia*) tend to be oriented around relationship engineering, Mercurial spirits (the *Goetia's* Presidents) more oriented around knowledge and intellectual pursuits, etc. But even within a particular celestial attribution, there are differences in how spirits show up. This is where spirit catalogs come in handy.

Spirit catalogs are books where previous magicians have documented long lists of spirits, along with descriptions of their powers and offices. Far and away the most famous example of this is the [Lemegeton's *Goetia*](#); most of the book is taken up by a catalog of 72 different demons — along with their appearances, ranks, offices, and the number of legions under their command.

We can also look to the mythology of a particular spirit or their antecedents for ideas of affinities. Let's look at a concrete example: Astaroth. In the *Goetia*, Astaroth is listed with the following entry:

The 29th spirit in order is Named Astaroth, he is a Mighty & strong duke and appeareth in the forme of an unbeautifull angel, ridding on an Infernall like dragon, and carrying in his right hand a viper (you must not lett him come to neare yu least he doe yu damage by his stinking Breath. Therefore ye Exorcist must hold

ye Magicall Ring nere to his face and yt will defend him. He giveth true answers of things present past & to come & can discover all secreets; he will declare willingly how ye spirits fell, if desired, & ye reason of his own fall. He can make men wouderfull knowing in all Liberall siences; he rules 40 Legions of spirits. . .

So a Duke, and therefore a Venusian spirit, likely related in some way to relationship engineering. But the specific powers listed — giving true answers, discovering secrets, teaching the liberal sciences — don't have an obvious tie in there. Let's compare that to the *Grimorium Verum*.

Verum lists Astaroth as a Grand Duke, part of the ruling triumvirate of hell, specifically ruling over the spirits of the Americas.¹⁵ It also notes:

Astaroth appears in black and white, most often in human form, and sometimes in the form of a donkey.

The most helpful piece of this, honestly, is the designation of Astaroth as ruler of North and South America. That suggests a highly placed spirit in the infernal hierarchy, one whom a large number of other spirits would be bound to obey.

Finally, there is a fairly compelling body of work that ties the origins of the demon Astaroth to the pagan goddesses Astarte, Ishtar, and Inanna. We can therefore look to myths and legends surrounding these goddesses. These reveal a figure associated with Venus — specifically in her appearance as the morning and evening star. A figure associated with sex (but not childbirth or motherhood) and battle; one ferocious in both passions and ambitions. It would be reasonable to approach Astaroth with petitions in any of these domains.

It is worth noting, however, that we shouldn't be bound too tightly by the listed office of a spirit. There are many ways to solve a problem, and often we are better served by approaching a spirit with whom we already have a relationship — even on things that are only tenuously related to their listed offices — than we are cold-calling a spirit who might, on paper, be better suited. Some of my most dramatic results, in terms of effects on the material world, have come through workings with spirits whose offices had nothing to do with the task at hand.¹⁶

¹⁵Alongside Lucifer, who rules in Europe and Asia, and Beelzebub, who rules in Africa.

¹⁶This is where your [divination](#) skills serve you in good stead.

So we've chosen a spirit we want to call. What information about them do we need? The classical pieces are their name and seal, both of which should be listed in the spirit catalog. Name is pretty self-explanatory. Seal in this case means a graphical depiction of their sign or character.¹⁷ If we have the name and seal of a spirit, we should be able to conjure them successfully.

What if we don't? What if we're missing one or both of these pieces of information? There are a number of systems for taking a name and attempting to turn it into a seal. Mostly these involve laying out symbols in space (for example Hebrew letters in the Golden Dawn's rose-cross diagram, or numbers in a planetary *kamea*) and then using transformations on the name to generate a sequence of points in that symbol space. Playing connect-the-dots with those points gives a shape, derived from the name itself, to be used as a seal of the spirit.

That's a very erudite approach. In his Renaissance work *The Devil's Scourge*, exorcist Girolamo Menghi gives the alternate suggestion of using a picture of the demon in the similar way to a seal, treating its image as a concrete earthly representation of its powers. This suggests some interesting possibilities around the intersection of seals and devotional art.

What if we don't even have a name for the spirit we're attempting to contact? Here we can look to *The Arbatel of Magick*, aphorism 18:

... Therefore it is most safe for the young practisers of Art, that they work by the offices of the Spirits alone, without their names; and if they are pre-ordained to attain the Art of Magick, the other parts of the Art will offer themselves unto them of their own accord. . .

Here it is not only possible but encouraged to conjure a spirit by its office alone, without referencing a specific name. In this way one might conjure the angel of a minor celestial body, or the *genius loci* of a particular place, without knowing the name of this spirit beforehand. Such local spirits may actually be more influential in your own life than a famous spirit named in a traditional grimoire.

But generally, we should be using the name and seal of a spirit in our conjurations. In instances where we are missing these, we can attempt to derive them or omit them entirely. In either case, after successfully making

¹⁷Think signet ring, rather than binding glyph.

contact with a spirit, we should ask if there is a name or seal we can use in the future to more easily make contact with them again.

Thus, with the spirit we are attempting to summon firmly in our minds, with their name on our lips and their seal displayed before us, we are ready to begin our Solomonic evocations.

8 Making Contact

So far we've talked about the steps that need to be taken before summoning a spirit. This chapter we're going to explore a slightly different facet: when to stop.

One of the biggest objections to Solomonic conjuration among modern practitioners is its dominating tone. Threatening a spirit with hellfire and damnation unless it appears before you and does what you want just *feels* wrong to people raised in a post-enlightenment society. Why would we go to those lengths, the argument runs, when chanting or meditating on a spirit's seal works just as well?

The question then becomes: *does* it work just as well? And in order to figure that out we need to decide what the actual goal of our conjuration is.

Fundamentally, the goal of a spirit conjuration is to establish some communication channel with a spirit. The challenge being that spirits in their natural state are wildly different from human beings, in both cognition and form. Bridging that gap enough for communication to occur is hard, and not all bridges are created equal.

We may only care about establishing a one-way link, where the spirit can get communication from us but cannot respond. This is often sufficient for something like a petition; we ask for a result, the spirit either grants this or it doesn't. Case closed. But sometimes we want to establish a two-way link with a spirit. We want the spirit to be able to convey information *to* us in addition to getting information from us. Even in this case, there are differences on *how* the spirit shares information with us.

The easiest way to establish a spirit contact is mentally. With the spirit sharing words or thoughts into our own minds. For a contact like this, chanting and meditating on a spirit's seal *can* be sufficient. The issue with these types of contact, however, is that they are most prone to pollution from your own mind.

Try an exercise briefly. Close your eyes and picture in your mind the spirit you would like to contact. Visualize them in the room with you. Speak to them, mentally or aloud, and hear in your mind what they say in response. They will probably respond. And when they do it will probably be in a voice and tone appropriate to them. Now do the same thing with a person you know well — a family member, friend, or a romantic partner. Now do the same thing with a fictional character. Chances are you will be able to easily have a mental conversation with all of them. This is (almost certainly) *not* a

spirit contact, it's just an imaginative exercise engaging the creative facilities of your own subconscious mind. After all, there was no preparation here. No meditation, no shift in consciousness.

Unless you are very closely in tune with your own thought patterns, it can be hard to differentiate a real-but-mental spirit contact from an illusion thrown up by your own subconscious mind. If you achieve mental contact with a spirit through a ritual, the result will almost certainly be a combination of both, some real spirit communication remixed by and filtered through the lens of your own mind. Mental spirit contact is the easiest to establish, but also the most unreliable.

On the other end of the spectrum are conjurations that seek a full sensory engagement with the spirit. The spirit appears before you in the room, visible to your eyes in the same way that physical objects are. You can hear it, you can smell it, you can (if you want) touch it. It can interact with other objects in the room (say, knocking over a cup of water). Conversing with the spirit is as straightforward as conversing with a person. Communication in this form is exceptionally clear; you are unlikely to mistake your own thoughts for the voice of the spirit. But such communication is *incredibly* hard to establish. A lot of the reason the Solomonic approach to conjuration feels extreme is because this is the standard that it was striving for. The process is extreme because the desired result is extreme. Breaking yourself and/or reality to the point where you can have a normal conversation with a non-physical being is hard.

Most conjuration (even Solomonic conjuration) falls somewhere in the middle. You aren't trying to submerge yourself entirely into the spirit's reality, or pull them entirely into your own. Some middle ground is achieved. One of the most common ways this is done is by scrying: including a darkly reflective surface — a crystal, a black mirror, water in a dark vessel or mixed with ink — in which the spirit can appear. It's a physical focus to facilitate more subtle vision. Sometimes a triangle, a shape frequently associated with manifestation, is used as well. Some sources use both.¹⁸

Since it can be hard to switch between the active, commanding mode of a conjuror and the passive, receptive mode of a scryer, many grimoiric texts imply (more or less explicitly) two people working together: a magician to perform the conjuration and a scryer to perceive the spirit when it appears.¹⁹

¹⁸Pseudo-Trithemius's *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals*, for example, uses a crystal mounted inside a triangle that forms part of a "table of practice."

¹⁹Traditionally this latter role was filled by a young child, or in some cases a pregnant

If you are performing the ritual on your own, be aware that it takes a moment to shift gears, and allow a few minutes space in the ritual for this to occur.

Which brings us back to the question of when to stop conjuring a spirit. If the goal is a petition, or to establish a purely mental communication with the spirit, then you can stop pretty quickly. After a couple repetitions of a friendly conjuration prayer, you might notice a change in sensations of space. A growing sense of being watched or of not being alone, a sudden outbreak of gooseflesh, the atmosphere in the room feeling warmer or cooler or weightier. Even without any of these sensations, you can assume that the spirit is present but you aren't sensing it, and proceed with the remainder of the ritual. In doing so, you can neatly sidestep most of the heavy-handed, oppressive tone of Solomonian rituals.

In contrast, if you're attempting a full-on "physical" evocation of a spirit, you're going to be at it a while. You should be mentally prepared for the ritual to last hours, with dozens of repetitions of various conjurations, threatening the spirit with increasingly dire and improbable punishments should it fail to appear.²⁰

So there are a range of possible ritual outcomes that can be classed as "successful" spirit communication. Different outcomes will be suited to different purposes. You may gravitate towards one, or find yourself engaging in different modes at different points. Regardless, your desired end goal dramatically influences how you conjure a spirit and how long you continue before moving on with the ritual or giving up.

woman.

²⁰To what extent these conjurations are necessary to coerce the spirit into appearing (versus being necessary to psych yourself up to a point where you can perceive it) is left as an exercise for the reader to determine.

9 Calling the Spirits

We're now through all the preparatory phases in our deep dive on Solomonic conjuration. We've talked about setting the stage, consecrating our tools and completing the requisite purifications. We've talked about spirit names and seals, and the various different ways a spirit may show up when called. We've invoked various divinities, patrons, and gatekeepers for authority. The circle is set, the candles are burning, and we are ready to begin the actual evocation of the spirit we wish to contact. Um, how? What do we say?

It depends a lot on the tone you're trying to strike in your ritual. For a light and friendly conjuration requesting the spirit's presence, your evocation need not be much different from your initial invocations: a prayer addressed to the desired spirit that asks it to join you. To quote *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals* "... the most pure and simple way of calling the spirits or spirit is by a short oration to the spirit himself, which is more effectual and easy to perform. . ." It then goes on to provide the following conjuration:

In the name of the blessed and holy Trinity, I do desire thee, thou strong mighty angel, Michael, [Or any other angel or spirit] that if it be the divine will of him who is called Tetragrammaton &c. the Holy God, the Father, that thou take upon thee some shape as best becometh thy celestial nature, and appear to us visibly here in this crystal, and answer our demands in as far as we shall not transgress the bounds of the divine mercy and goodness, by requesting unlawful knowledge; but that thou wilt graciously shew us what things are most profitable for us to know and do, to the glory and honour of his divine Majesty, who liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen

The *Arbatel* gives a very similar conjuration in aphorism 21:

Omnipotent and eternal God, who hast ordained the whole creation for thy praise and glory, and for the salvation of man, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send thy Spirit N.N. of the solar order, who shall inform and teach me those things which I shall ask of him; or, that he may bring me medicine against the drop-sie, &c. Nevertheless not my will be done, but thine, through Jesus Christ thy onely begotten Son, our Lord. Amen.

Both these sources are piously Christian, but your conjurations need not follow this format. Rufus Opus in *Seven Spheres* uses Orphic hymns addressed to Greek gods for the conjuration of planetary powers. Jason Miller's *Consorting with Spirits* uses custom conjurations that commemorate the deeds, powers, or appearance of the spirit itself. In any case, the general consensus seems to be that for spirits that are a) generally beneficent, and b) don't mind being conjured, the conjuration itself can be fairly lightweight. Request the spirit's presence, and if it's willing it will come.

What about for spirits that don't meet both those conditions? Either spirits that are viewed as dangerous and malignant, or spirits that don't *want* to be called up to work with you. This is where you, as the operator, have some options.

One easy option is to just not. There are a large number of spirits in the world; some of them may not be eager to work with you and that's fine. Just like with people, you can respect that choice and move on. Solomonic conjuration rituals are not *inherently* confrontational.

However, the legend of Solomon-as-magician is very much the story of commanding reluctant spirits by the power of God. There was a lot of crossover, historically, between practitioners of Solomonic magic and Catholic exorcists — both are seeking to constrain and compel an unwilling spirit, and drive it to a particular course of action.²¹

If you repeat the friendly conjuration of a spirit a number of times and it doesn't appear, you may instead opt to ratchet up the pressure. This is where we get into forceful evocations that conjure spirits to appear by long strings of divine or barbarous names. These can become increasingly fanatical and threatening if the spirit continues to be absent.²² A good example where we can see this escalation in tone is the [Lemegeton's Goetia](#), which includes a long series of conjurations of increasing ferocity. This one appears in the latter half of the list:

O thou wicked and disobedient spirit [N.], because thou hast rebelled and not obeyed nor regarded my words which I have rehearsed They being all most glorious and Incomprehensible names of ye true god Maker and creator of you and me and all the world,

²¹Appearing, in the case of a conjuration; leaving, in the case of an exorcism.

²²One source to look to for inspiration is exorcism rituals themselves; I know of a couple of occultists who have adapted Girolamo Menghi's sixth exorcism into conjurations to great effect.

I by the power of those names which no creature is able to resist doe curse you into the depths of ye Bottomless Pitt, There to remaine untill ye day of doome in chaines of fire and Brimstone unquenchable, unless you dost forthwith appear before this circle in This Triangle To doe my will; Therefore com peaceably and quietly in & by these names — **Adonai**, **Zebaoth**, **Adonay**, **Amioram**; come come why stay you, **Adonay** comandeth you.

If the spirit *still* does not appear, you can opt to take it even further, with actions intended to curse or punish the spirit for its disobedience. The *Goetia* suggests placing the spirit's seal in a box with sulfur and stinking herbs, and roasting this over hot coals. *An Excellent Booke of the Art of Magicke* suggests various punishments based on the nature of the spirit:

...then punish him very straightly. As, if he be of the fire, then punish him with stinking water [urine], either of a man or woman, and put stinking things into it; and then put the stone into it and straightly command him to come forth out of the stone into the water that you did put him in, and there to tarry until you command him to come into the stone again. And if he be of the water, then take brimstone and burn it, and command him first to go into some stone for the purpose, and then put him into the burning brimstone; and that is for the punishment of them [of fire and water], reading a curse over them. And if he be of the air, then you must command him to go forth of the stone into some vile stinking mud, and to tarry in it, until you do command him to go in the stone again.²³

I'm going to be honest, I've never taken a conjuration this far. I have my doubts about the effectiveness of roasting seals over brimstone or dunking shewstones in pee. But if a spirit is being recalcitrant, then such punishments are available as historically-attested options.

Personally, I like to start out with an assumption of mutual goodwill. I'll begin with a friendly conjuration. If I don't get my desired results with that I'll repeat it a few times, with breaks in between to give the spirit some time to appear (and myself some time to sense them if they do). If at that point

²³Legard, P. and Cummins, A. (2020). *An Excellent Booke of the Arte of Magicke*. Scarlet Imprint.

I'm still not seeing results, I might go up to a more forceful conjuration. If after a couple repetitions of that I'm *still* not seeing results, I'll bail. Either the spirit is not at all interested in working with me, or it is and it's already there and I'm just not able to sense it. In either case, you can state your request of the spirit and give it the license to depart.²⁴ Worst case scenario, nothing comes of it. Sometimes rituals fail.

But let's assume for now that's not the case. You made your calls and got an answer. A wild spirit has appeared! Then we can proceed to the next step in our Solomonic framework: *Constrictio*.

²⁴It's worth noting that if you decide the spirit isn't coming and bail on the ritual, you shouldn't skip the license to depart. If for some reason the spirit is present but you can't sense them, this would leave them hanging in a way that is at best rude and at worst dangerous.

10 Defining the Boundaries

We've now made it up to step four in our Solomonic conjuration framework: *Constrictio*. We've performed all our invocations and evocations, and made contact with the spirit. From here on out the ritual will proceed quickly; the main hurdle has already been overcome.

The *constrictio* step is a reiteration of the boundaries you wish to place on the interaction with the spirit, stated after the spirit has appeared. It generally includes such limitations as the spirit appearing before the circle in a fair and visible form, speaking to you clearly and truthfully, not departing before you have given them license to, and doing no harm to person or property as they arrive or depart.

Such a step is not, strictly speaking, necessary. If you are performing a friendly conjuration of generally beneficent spirits, as discussed in the last chapter, it is usually assumed that the spirit is operating with your best interests in mind. Layering on additional parameters and restrictions is unnecessary. Similarly, you may opt to bake these restrictions into the conjurations used in the previous step — summoning the spirit to appear and fulfill all those requirements by whatever spiritual authority you are using. In this case too, a further limitation on the spirit is unneeded.

For both of these reasons, the number of grimoires lacking an explicit *constrictio* step is far greater than the number of grimoires containing one. However, in cases where you are forcefully conjuring a spirit who is reluctant to appear, it may be helpful to make such expectations explicit. The assumption in the grimoires apparently being that spirits might otherwise attempt to trick the operator or nullify the conjuration: remaining invisible even when present,²⁵ appearing in a terrifying way, speaking unintelligibly or giving false information, etc.²⁶ If you're worried about such outcomes, an explicit clarification of your expectations around the communication is a historically attested option.

The two most popular sources that contain explicit examples of this step

²⁵As depicted in Susanna Clarke's excellent novel *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*.

²⁶It is not clear to me how much this is a real concern, versus something grounded in Christian superstition around "demonic" entities and the way they interact with the world. Most western grimoires were written in a period in which the assumption was any earthly spirit was a demon bent solely on the temptation and corruption of humanity. This seems to me to ignore a tremendous amount of variety and nuance found among sub-celestial spirits.

are the [Lemegeton's Goetia](#), and pseudo-Peter of Abano's [Heptameron](#). The conjurations are very similar between the two, and I will quote those of the latter as they are older and somewhat more detailed:

Behold the Pentacle of Solomon, which I have brought before your presence. Behold the person of the Exorcist in the middle of the Exorcism, who is armed by God, and without fear, and well provided, who potently invocateth and calleth you by exorcising; come therefore with speed, in the virtue of these names, **Aye, Seraye, Aye, Seraye**; defer not to come by the eternal Names of the living and true God, **Eloy, Archima, Rabur**, and by the Pentacle here present, which powerfully reigns over you, and by virtue of the Celestial Spirits your Lords, and by the person of the Exorcist, being conjured, make haste to come and yield obedience to your Master, who is called **Octinomos**.

Welcome Spirits, or most noble Kings, because I have called you through him to whom every knee doth bow, both of things in Heaven and things in Earth, and things under the Earth, in whose hands are all the Kingdoms of Kings, neither is there any that can contradict his Majesty. Wherefore I bind you, that you remain affable and visible before this Circle, so long and so constant; neither shall you depart without my licence, until you have truly and without any fallacy performed my will, by virtue of his power who hath set the Sea her bounds, beyond which these cannot pass, nor go beyond the Law of his Power, to wit, of the most high God, Lord and King, who hath created all things. Amen.

In both sources, the first paragraph is paired with the revealing of a glyph of power known as the *Pentacle of Solomon*, at whose appearance the spirits are purported to become obedient to the magician. The exact depiction of this figure varies by source, but by comparison the themes can become apparent.

In each case the figure is primarily composed of a six-pointed star, reinforced with divine names (most notably **Tetragrammaton** and **Agla**).

For a friendly conjuration, or the conjuration of a beneficent spirit, this step can be omitted entirely. If you are treating the conjuration more in the vein of an exorcism, where spirits are compelled to appear and obey against their will, then you may opt to include an explicit constriction step after the

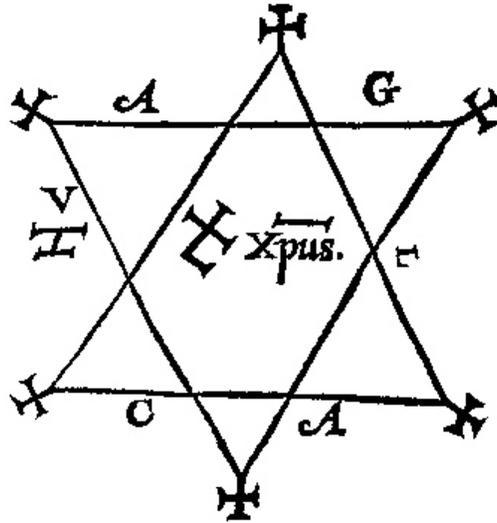


Figure 1: The Pentacle of Solomon as it appears in a manuscript of the *Heptameron*.

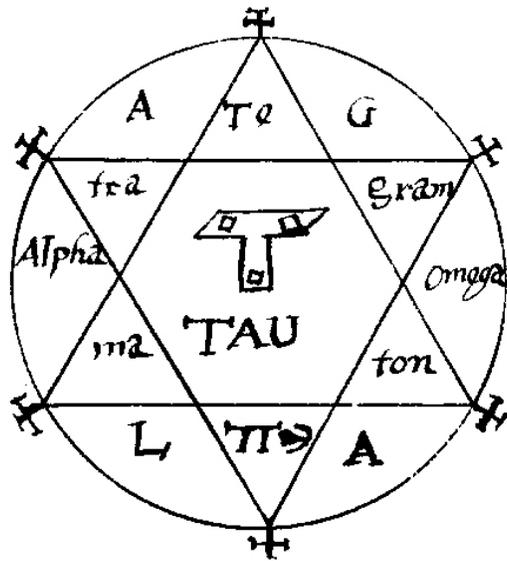


Figure 2: A figure of similar form and function — “Salomon’s sextangle figure” — appearing in a manuscript of the *Goetia*.

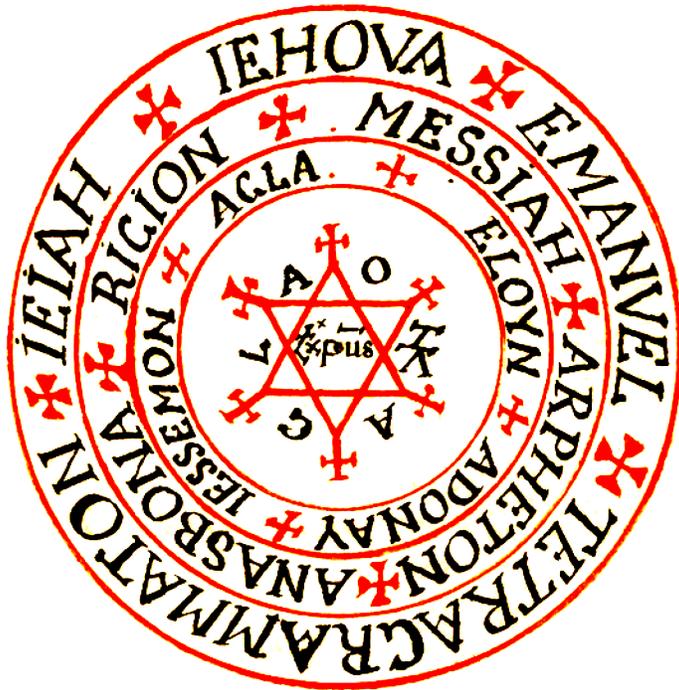


Figure 3: A figure of similar form and function — the “Pentacle or Three Rings of Solomon” — appearing in a manuscript of the *Grimorium Verum*.

conjurations when the spirit has appeared. In this case, using the Pentacle of Solomon figure and the conjuration from either the *Heptameron* or the *Goetia* seems like an excellent option.

11 The Spirit's Reply

In previous chapters we've covered all the elements that go into summoning a spirit. We've now made it up to the penultimate stage in our Solomonic conjuration framework: *Ligatio*. In this phase, all the preliminaries are complete, the spirit has appeared, and the terms of the engagement (if any) have been set. The main thing left to do is communicate with the spirit now that it has appeared.

This phase is both very straightforward, and hard to prescribe any sort of process for. At this point in the ritual you leave behind the prepared script, and engage in a two-way dialog with the spirit. Like any dialog, it will evolve based on the interactions of the participants involved. If you conjured a spirit to carry out some task on your behalf, then this is the point to give them the details of your request. If you conjured the spirit to obtain some information, this is the point to ask for (and hopefully receive) that information. As we've established, conjuring a spirit is a lot of work; this is the place where that work pays off.

While there is not much of a script to follow here, there are a couple of points worth discussing. First the tone taken during the interaction, and second the use of offerings.

On the first point, that of tone, you see a wide range of recommendations. Classical grimoires primarily recommend that the magician take a forceful, commanding tone — ordering the spirits to carry out their desires swiftly, lest they face divine retribution. In contrast, some modern practitioners take the entirely opposite approach. In their view, since spirits are ancient and primordial consciousnesses, ordering them around like an errant butler is inappropriate. Instead they take a supplicatory tone, beseeching the spirit for aid if it deems them worthy. I find both these extremes somewhat distasteful.

My recommendation would be to match whatever tone you used for the conjurations themselves. If you performed a friendly conjuration requesting the spirit's presence, then converse with it warmly and respectfully when it shows up. If your conjurations went full-on fire and brimstone, then it will seem natural to continue in a forceful and commanding tone. Treat it like you would an interaction with a potential business partner: be respectful but not meek, direct but not abrasive.

If you're opting to interact with the spirit on more-or-less equal footing, you may choose to make the spirit an offering. Incense, food, and drink are

traditional, but this can be anything that fits in well within your practice.²⁷ You may choose to make an offering up front, as a thank you to the spirit for showing up; after the ritual completes as an advance on any work you've asked them to perform; or upon the successful completion of a request. Perhaps more than one of these are appropriate for a particular ritual.

If, however, you promise an offering at some point in the future or when certain conditions are met, you need to actually follow through on that. Not because there will be some dire outcome if you don't (the spirit is unlikely to curse or punish you), but because paying your debts is good manners and shows that you are a reliable partner for future interactions. Nobody likes a flake.

This is one of several reasons it's a good idea to be moderate in your offerings. It's easy to overpromise — vowing to make offerings every week for the rest of your life, set up a permanent altar in their name, or perform particularly grueling acts of devotion. You're much more likely to follow through on an inexpensive, one-time offering.

And nothing more is really needed. It's tempting, when making offerings to spirits, to feel the need to provide “equivalent value.” If we are asking for a big, life-changing outcome, it feels appropriate to make a big, life-changing offering. But this presupposes spirits assign value in the same way we do. Spirits have a nature that is very different from ours, the ways they conceive of and interact with the world are not human ways. Something that may seem like a huge deal to us might be trivial to them, or vice versa. Start small, and build from there if it seems warranted.

It's also worth noting that offerings should be mutually agreeable. You retain sovereignty in your own life. Sometimes a spirit will ask for something unreasonable, and you're entitled to say no. You can counteroffer something more suitable, or just walk away from the interaction. Similarly, sometimes you will offer up something the spirit has absolutely no interest in. That's also fine. Negotiation is a two-way street.

²⁷There's an idea making the rounds that spirits experience food and drink through you, and therefore the appropriate way to make such offerings is to consume them yourself. This idea has only a tenuous historical basis. There are instances where cultures made *shared* offerings (offering a portion of communal food, or offering the blood of an animal and consuming the meat). There are also a few instances where food offered to a deity became hallowed, and was then consumed by clergy or congregation. But by and large, the spirit's portion is their own. Making an offering and then consuming it is like having a dinner guest and then eating the food off their plate.

The *Ligatio* stage of the ritual is the culmination of what all our ritual preparation was working up to: a genuine interaction with a spirit. After all our preparations, prayers, and conjurations, the result is a conversation that is both mundane and transcendent. Because there is no script to follow, this is a stage that requires discernment. Discernment of the appropriate tone to take, the appropriate offerings to make, and how to evolve the conversation based on the responses you get. You've left the edge of the map, now you find your own way.

Ritual Innovation

We've nearly wrapped up our examination of Solomonic methods of spirit conjuration. At this point we should have a working knowledge of how to make contact with a spirit, set the terms of engagement, and participate in the resulting communication. There's one more element, often overlooked, that's worth covering in our discussion of the *Ligatio* phase of our ritual: ritual revision.

The reason the Solomonic method is so complicated is that it proceeds from the assumption that making genuine spirit contact is *hard*. All the fasting, purification, and complex circles and prayers are used to bridge the gap between entities who experience the universe in wildly different ways. It's intended to clarify the channels needed to bring you into first contact with an alien being.

But the fact that it's intended to accomplish *first contact* is important. Grimoires are often called "Keys of Solomon" because they contain the requisite methods to open the door. Once the door is open, once spirit contact has been made, the key is no longer needed. There is no expectation that you spend days fasting and hours in ritual every time you want to connect with a spirit. Once that relationship has been established, communication gets easier.

During the communication phase of the ritual — in *Ligatio* — one of the things I'd recommend is asking the spirit how you should modify your ritual to make contact easier the next time around. We can see this very explicitly in *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals*, which includes an interrogatory section immediately after communication has been established:

Interrog. 1. In the name of the holy and undefiled Spirit, the Father, the begotten Son, and Holy Ghost, proceeding from both, what is thy true name?

If the spirit answers, *Michael*, then proceed.

Quest. 2. What is thy office? 3. What is thy true sign or character? 4. When are the times most agreeable to thy nature to hold conference with us?

This is framed in terms of confirming that the spirit called is the one who actually showed up, but it accomplishes another purpose as well. It also asks the spirit to provide any alternate name, or seal, or time of day that

might make the ritual more effective. Perhaps you conducted the ritual in the morning, but the spirit would actually be more responsive in the afternoon. Perhaps there is a different seal the spirit would find more compelling.²⁸ If you're making offerings, this is a good time to ask about the spirit's tastes — perhaps they prefer sandalwood to frankincense, or tequila over wine. All of these tweaks can be made in future conjurations to establish contact more quickly and clearly.

And these are all fairly minor changes. You might instead be given a dramatically simplified ritual to contact the spirit in the future. Perhaps the spirit will now respond to you any time you place their seal under a glass of water and recite a conjuration facing east. Or chant their name a hundred times. Or speak to a talisman you have consecrated to be an anchor for them on the physical plane. The only limits here are creativity — you and the spirit can work out something that fits well with your existing practice.

And that only covers changes for your own practice. In the past I've discussed Solomonic conjuration rituals through the lens of communication protocols; one of the reasons there's a benefit to using an established grimoire over just making up your own thing is that it has a track record of success. The spirits know how to listen for it.

But the only fundamental requirement of a communication protocol is that both parties agree to it. A grimoire is a lever on the universe, but there's nothing magical (ha) about these particular levers. If you've been practicing for a while, you will likely have diverged somewhat from established sources. You may wish to write your own grimoire, to share those innovations with others. In this case when you conjure a spirit you might ask them to honor your revised ritual, both in future interactions with you and for anyone else using the same ritual. This has the effect of carving a new lever, one that gets stronger the more it is used.

Once you've gone through the trouble of making contact with a spirit, it's worthwhile to do what you can to lessen the effort in the future. Some magicians go so far as to have an introductory conjuration where they *only* establish contact, without any other specific ask of the spirit. But that's by no means a requirement. Even just a few questions on the spirit's preferences will set you up well for success in future conjurations.

²⁸This is especially useful if you were using a derived name or seal, or operating without one, as discussed in chapter 7.

12 The License to Depart

We've now made it all the way through our examination of Solomonic conjuration rituals. The spirit has appeared and any desired requests or exchanges have taken place. The only thing left to do is close down the ritual. This is where our final step comes in: *Licensia*, the license to depart.

In the *Constrictio* step, we established the terms of engagement with the spirit, including directing it not to depart before we'd given it leave. This final step is where we give that leave. Fundamentally, the license to depart is just a statement that the ritual is concluded and the spirit is free to return to whatever it was doing before it was conjured. I'll include a couple of examples, but my general philosophy here is simpler is better. From the *Goetia*:

O Thou spirit N. Because thou hast very dilligently answered my demands and was ready and willing to come at my first call I doe hear licence thee to depart unto thy proper place without doing any Injury or danger to any man or beast. Depart I say and be ever reddey to come at my call being duly Exorcised and conjured by ye sacred rites of Magicke. I charge thee to withdraw peaceably and quietly, and the peace of God be ever continued between me and thee. Amen.

And another example, drawn from *The Art of Drawing Spirits into Crystals*:

Thou great and mighty spirit, inasmuch as thou camest in peace and in the name of the ever blessed and righteous Trinity, so in this name thou mayest depart, and return to us when we call thee in his name to whom every knee doth bow down. Fare thee well, [spirit's name]; peace be between us, through our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Despite the slight differences in wording and powers invoked, these two licenses are nearly identical. They express some level of gratitude that the spirit came quickly and willingly. They give it permission to leave. They charge it to go and abide peaceably. And they ask it to be ready to return promptly if called in the future — which should facilitate future contact if you want to summon them again.

In the vast majority of cases, the spirit didn't particularly want to be conjured to begin with, so giving them permission to depart is all that's required to get them to leave. But if you're going to be conjuring spirits, it's worth at least considering the case where they don't. What happens if you give the license to depart and the spirit chooses not to?

The right course here depends on the kind of spirit you're working with, and your relationship to them. If they are a generally beneficent spirit, or they're a patron you have an established working relationship with, then perhaps you continue the engagement. They're not leaving because — from their perspective — there is unfinished work. There is some further information they feel needs to be imparted, or something further to do. If you trust the spirit has your best interests at heart, then you can just go along with them until they are satisfied with the conclusion that has been reached.

If it's a spirit you *don't* trust to have your best interests at heart, then you're right back in the world of conjurations. Since many of our original conjurations are based around Catholic exorcism formulas, it takes very little tweaking to put them back to that purpose. You're simply using the conjurations to bind a spirit to depart, rather than binding it to appear. The same prayers, invocations, and threats of dire consequences can be used in both directions. To pull or to push.

Whether it happens naturally as soon as the license to depart is given, or takes some further encouragement, at some point the spirit's presence will dissipate. Here you can shut down the ritual, clean up, and return to your normal modes of consciousness.

Some practitioners like to stay in the circle for a bit, to meditate on the communication that has occurred, or take notes on their experiences while it is still fresh in their mind, but this is very much a personal preference. It's not uncommon to feel some lingering effects from a big ritual working, to come away from it feeling a little unmoored or "floaty." You can help that pass by doing activities that ground you back into your physical body: performing some light exercise, or eating a meal. Or you might choose to just let it ride, to bask in the afterglow of heavy magical work.

The ritual is finished. The spirit contact was successful (or it was not). The cycle has returned to its original starting point. Solomonic conjuration is not intended to be a lifestyle. It is the culmination of a grand, arduous, meticulous effort. It's something extraordinary you do before coming back and grounding yourself in the mundane.

But maybe — just perhaps — when you return to your regular life, you bring a little bit of the extraordinary back with you.