

3rd Circle Portfolio

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Clergy Training Program

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Senior Priest Vocation Statement

What calls you to become an ADF Senior Priest? How does this step fit with your calling as an ADF Priest and a Consecrated Priest?

When I made the decision to begin working through the Clergy Training Program, I said that it felt like a natural progression of my path within ADF. When I applied for Consecration, I said that it felt like the next step in my journey. As I write this course, I know that this work will be a part of the rest of my life. Doing the work for the third circle was a natural progression in my personal practice, but it definitely will not be the end of my studies.

I wrote of it before in my prior portfolios, but where I live, Pagans can be a challenge to find, and Pagan clergy, nearly impossible. Those who are ordained regularly have little to no training to go with their title. Becoming a priest allowed me to serve a need in my community that continues to be greatly unfulfilled. Being ordained as an ADF Priest gave me a set of tools to serve the community. Becoming a Consecrated Priest allowed me to deepen my personal practice and become a more effective clergy person. The work I have done toward becoming a Senior Priest has lead me to explore a wider variety theology, and gain a deeper understanding of my path and how it relates both to the ancient cultures we base our practices on, but also other modern religions. I think it has allowed me to gain a more rounded knowledge-base to better serve my local community and ADF as an organization. I also know this continued work is vitally important to my personal practice.

In both my ordination and consecration portfolios I said that becoming a member of clergy is not the end of the journey for me, but is instead a very important crossroad along the very long path. I continue to feel that way as I evolve and grow in this work. Each step along

this path allows me to better learn who I am in the world, and what role I hope to play in the lives of those around me.

How have the specializations you chose within the CTP prepared you for the deeper work of an ADF Senior Priest?

When I applied for ordination, I stated that my vocation as Clergy would be that of a community builder. Following that expectation, I chose to begin my specializations with Leadership Development, which I have continued to build upon in my work toward becoming a Senior Priest. The Leadership Development courses allowed me to explore different styles of leadership and better familiarize myself with my strengths and weaknesses. It also gave me the opportunity to consider ways to promote growth and community building within ADF. It helped me gain tools for better time management and efficiency, as well as overcoming barriers. It also allowed me to dive into methods of effective communication and consider ways that I could improve my own approaches. This specialization has a deep connection for me as someone who truly enjoys doing the “leadership” type work within ADF. I currently serve on the Mother Grove, while also acting as an officer for several of the ADF Subgroups. This course has allowed me to be more effective and successful in those roles, as well as those I have in my life as a Priest. I feel like this specialization plays directly into my strengths as a priest.

I also chose to complete the Ritualist specialization. While I feel like Leadership Development builds upon my strengths, Ritualization is something that I do not feel as confident in. I began with Using Indo-European Language in the 2nd circle, which allowed me to gain familiarity with the language of my hearth culture. It allowed me to build a basic skillset that can be a powerful tool in magical and ritual practices. I then completed Comparative Ritual Theory which allowed me to learn of different methods to evaluate and compare rituals and the theories behind them. I find this tool very useful in both understanding our rituals, and in

comparing them to the rituals practices of others. Sitting in the religious services of two practices that were not my own and noting the similarities and differences was a fascinating exercise. The energies and emotions in them were different, but I appreciate the experiences nonetheless. As someone who lives where Pagans are few and far between, this insight has expanded my ability to understand the perspective of others and relate to their religious practices, even if they are not my own. This level of interfaith work has become important to me in my Priest life.

What work have you done for your community? How do you support them ritually and spiritually? What community services do you provide, and how does that reflect the values of Our Druidry?

As I have found is standard for many priests, I do provide services such as weddings, funerals, and baby blessings. These rites of passage are something that are very important for my local community, and often they appreciate having someone who shares their path available to perform these rituals for them. This is something that the members of my community do find spiritually fulfilling. For several years during my time as Clergy, I also hosted High Day rituals as part of a grove. Unfortunately, my local grove disbanded a year ago, so that has become less present in my practice.

I am also fortunate enough to get to participate with one of our local universities as a Pagan priest and resource for them. I participate in their annual “Busy Person’s Retreat Day” where I meet with staff and students as a spiritual director. In this event, I meet with individuals and allow them to discuss their spiritual path, ask questions, and explore their own faith in whatever way they choose. I have also had the opportunity to work with the Interfaith team on campus and act as a guest lecturer for the comparative religion class. Not only does this opportunity help young Pagans find a resource for them, it also lets me introduce new people to

ADF and the many things that we have to offer. Participating in the spiritual practices at a university also aligns with ADF's emphasis on the importance of scholarship.

Additionally, I have also developed a consistent online practice to help foster communication and community with our membership who may only have a connection to other members through the internet, especially our Solitary members. I post weekly discussion topics, both on our social media and our mailing lists to get people to share their practices and learn about each other. I also organize and facilitate online rituals for each of the High Days by asking for volunteers to submit videos of them doing specific parts of the Core Order of Ritual. This allows people to help build their comfort with performing rituals, and the videos themselves act as a resource for our members and for outreach. I also act as our social media manager, posting prayers, articles, and information across our social media for general outreach to those who may not be members but could be interested in our practices.

Within ADF I also wear several other hats, including a position of Regional Druid and Chief of the CoRD, which allows me to sit on the Mother Grove. I am a Preceptor of two separate study programs, and Scribe for two other subgroups. I also stay active as a mentor and reviewer for multiple study programs. All of this work is intended to help aid others in their spiritual practices and make ADF as an organization work as smoothly as possible. I have also personally taken the time to complete many of the available study programs, and courses in several others. I've become an Initiate and a Seer, I've learned new artistic and liturgical skills. I have learned so much about myself and my practice in these study programs. They also give me the opportunity to connect with the members of our organization on different levels. I do this work, not only to learn about myself, but to promote the idea of scholarship within ADF. I find

this practice to be very important and aligned with both the vision of ADF and my own personal goals and expectations.

Discipline 3

Your answer to the exit standard for Discipline 3.

- 1. Describe your discipline practice as an ADF Priest. Explain what you have learned from this practice, describe how your connection with the spirits who support our Consecrated Priests has grown and changed over the time you have worked with them, and reflect on your journals and omens over the period. (min. 600 words)**

I completed the first circle of the Clergy Training Program in February 2015, and the second circle in May 2017. It's hard to believe that I have already been clergy for nearly five years. This work has been emotional, educational, and transformational in so many different ways that it is hard to put into words how much this means to me, and how grateful I am for this journey. As I have worked through the third circle of the CTP, my practice has continued to change and grow. Each step I have taken in the past five years has allowed me to deepen my own experiences and understanding, and given me the opportunity to know myself on a more intimate level. Yet even through the hours of research, rituals, and exploration, I still know that there are still worlds worth of knowledge to gain. As I approach elevation and the end of the Clergy Training Program, I truly believe that this is not the end of the work. I am looking at this step as the beginning of another new and exciting adventure with a multitude of opportunities.

My current practice currently involves several rituals that are practiced at different times of the week or month. I have continued performing monthly retreat days during the first week of every month, which includes both a full COoR rite and day filled with prayers and offerings to my spirit allies. Taking this time allows me to refocus and has become a form of self-care. The rituals in this day help me further foster my relationship with the Earth Mother and Gatekeeper, while also helping to remind myself of my goals and responsibilities as an ADF Consecrated Priest.

I have also maintained the practice of participating in monthly mound journeys. This work allows me continue to visit and explore the mound, which seems to be continually changing and growing. It also allows me to meet and work with the ancient wise, and the allies I have made among them

In addition to these monthly mound journeys and retreat days, I have continued to do other workings on a weekly basis. I have some form of ritual that I do four days a week, with other days available for different monthly practices. Through the years, these weekly practices have changed time and time again as I worked through different study programs, or directed my practice in new directions. Through the past five years I have experienced the entire tale of the Odyssey through an in depth trance experience that I wrote and performed. I met with Demeter and Persephone and the other theoi involved with the Eleusinian Mysteries as I worked through the DEO study program. I've spent time devoted to Athena as the goddess of crafts to learn to weave as a form of devotion to her as part of my Artisans Guild study program work. I have spent a lot of time exploring and learning about myself, and the path that I hope my spirituality will take. The schedule that I have in place today isn't the same as it was a year ago, and probably won't be the same next year, but that adaptability and dynamic flow is what I love about our work in general. My practice is continually changing and evolving as I learn more about my spirituality and the world around me, but I feel that is important to me to have both the flexibility to grow, and to continue to keep the practice interesting and involved.

So, what does my current week look like? Mondays I do my monthly mound journeys, and pull an omen for the week ahead. Often those omens tell me that good work brings good returns, or that there is still work to do. Over time, the anxiety of receiving a "negative" omen has dwindled. It still brings a level of concern with it, but it isn't world stopping like it was

when I first began this practice. I've developed a relationship with my Greek Alphabet Oracle set, and it's interesting to see what insight they have to offer me each week. It's a very simple practice, but I like to keep it open for the other ADF work, such as reaching out to my mentees and posting a question of the week for Solitary members.

My more intensive personal discipline work begins on Tuesdays with a Seidh practice that I'm trying to develop as part of my work in the Order of Raven and Falcon. It's completely different than any of the work I have done in the past, so it feels expansive and innovative. Wednesdays I try to keep things simple and focus on meditations with nature. Sometimes it's sitting outside and enjoying the weather. Other times I go more in depth and try to connect with a specific nature spirit to foster my relationships there. It's a much more grounded practice than what I'm doing with the Raven & Falcon study program, but I appreciate the balance that it brings to my practice.

Fridays are the day reserved for various ritual practices including trance work, healing, and other magical efforts that I feel is important at that time. Those rituals are the ones that change the most depending on where life is at that moment and what work I feel I need to be doing. I like having the flexibility to do a specific work if I need to, and a specific time set aside to make that happen.

My last weekly practice takes place on Sunday when I wake in the morning and have tea or coffee with my ancestors. This gives me the opportunity to further my relationship with them and reconnect with those I have lost. It dives into my work with the Order of the Dead, and reaffirms my relationship both with my personal ancestors and the Ancient Wise.

In the two years since I was Consecrated, I have taken the opportunity to complete a few other study programs, including: the Artisans Guild Study Program, the second and third circles

of the Liturgists Guild Study Program, and all three circles of the Demeter and Eleusinian Order study program, as well as submitting individual courses in several other programs. Each of these study programs have allowed me to explore my own path, delve into my relationship with the Kindreds, and establish or build skills that I would have otherwise not been as comfortable using. I am so thankful for these study programs, and am ecstatic that these are freely available for me to dive into as an ADF member.

My journaling process has changed repeatedly in the last five years. Currently, I use an app on my tablet and an electronic pencil to write my journals. Utilizing the technology in this way allows me to better search and organize my journals than paper did for me. I understand the importance of journaling my practice, even if it isn't always the easiest thing to maintain. It allows me to review rituals that I didn't feel went smoothly, or felt like total disasters to try to figure out where things went wrong, or if the message I gained from it is different in retrospect. It also allows me to fondly remember those successes I've encountered. It also helps me to remember small details or moments that may have seemed insignificant at the time, but grew to hold a much more important meaning. It has continued to be an overview of my personal spiritual life, and shows me in hardships and victories.

Ultimately, when I began on this journey in 2015, simply obtaining ordination seemed far-fetched, and this journey seemed daunting and nearly impossible. Today, I stand on the other side of it wondering where the last five years have gone. Even now, I know I still have so much to learn and hope to continue growing and expanding my knowledge beyond the CTP. However, I know that all of my practices, my hard work, and the relationships I have built have helped to reaffirm my path and to establish a stronger sense of my own spirituality. I also think that they

have allowed me to develop into a better person who is now more comfortable and prepared to continue doing the work of an ADF Senior Priest.

Pagan Theology 1 – Calling Upon the Divine

Your answer to Pagan Theology 1, exit standard 6.

- 6. By what mechanism does an ADF Priest call upon the divine in ritual? Is this different than the mechanism used by any other ADF Member (i.e. non-priests) or other Pagans at large? Provide at least two examples from the lore or philosophy that support the mechanism described, as well as any differences in the way clergy and lay members deal with the divine. (Minimum 400 words)**

The phrase “call upon the divine in ritual” is a one that I don’t know I have ever used as an ADF priest. I’ll admit that I spent probably too much time researching what the term “divine” meant and trying to decide how to interpret it as an ADF priest. The word divine is defined as “relating to or proceeding directly from god” or “being a deity” (Merriam-Webster). This definition feels like it is aimed at a monotheistic religion, so I am going to adapt it a little bit and say that calling upon the divine is calling on the energies of the universe. So how does an ADF Priest call upon the energies of the universe within ritual? Essentially, we call upon the divine by inviting them to our rituals. In the Core Order of Ritual, we invite the Earth Mother, Gatekeeper, Three Kindred, and Beings of Occasion to join us in our ritual. We make offerings to them, we show them they are welcome, and we thank them for their aid in our workings. This relationship is one built upon hospitality.

Ancient Greece had a concept called “xenia” which described the reciprocal relationship between guest and host, or a “guest-friendship,” and the importance of hospitality (Biggs, Joseph and Bennet). It’s very similar to the term *ghosti that we utilize regularly within ADF. This type of call to the divine was regularly seen in the interactions between ancient Greek mortals and deities, and in those interactions. In the Odyssey, we see this expectation of reciprocity

described when Odysseus approaches Eumaeus, the swineherd. Eumaeus welcomes Odysseus, even though he doesn't recognize him, saying that it would be wrong to turn a guest away and that every stranger is sent from Zeus and a gift is expected. Odysseus shows his gratitude by calling upon Zeus directly "May Zeus and the other gods give you your heart's desire, sir, since you welcome me so warmly" (Homer).

The importance of the guest-host relationship, and the divine can also be found in the Eleusinian Mysteries. The Pheneatian sanctuary to Demeter is where the Mysteries first began. The myth tied to this temple indicated that Demeter had visited the temple, and was shown hospitality by Trisaules and Damithales. In return for that hospitality, she showed them the wisdom of the mysteries and how to grow many crops. They built the temple in her honor and to share those Mysteries with others. By building a relationship on *xenia*, Trisaules and Damithales were able to call upon the divine and receive blessings in the form of much wisdom.

We can also call upon the divine through our prayers. These prayers can take many different forms, allowing us to speak to the universe through words, gestures, movement, song, dance, and posture (Serith 17-27). Prayer is found regularly throughout Greek lore. In Aesop's fables, we see the myth of Hercules and the Wagoner. The wagoner was driving a heavy cart and it got stuck in the mud. He prayed to Hercules, asking for his aid. Hercules appeared to the wagoner and said he would help, but only if the wagoner also pushed beside him. The wagoner prayed for Hercules aid, and aid was given (Aesop).

In the Illiad, we see several examples of prayer used to call upon the divine. In one scene, Odysseus finds himself in trouble, and calls out to Athena for aid. He prays "Hear me, daughter of aegis bearing Zeus, you who spy out all my ways and who are with me in all my

hardships, befriend me in this mine hour”. Athena heard his prayer, and put courage into their hearts to aid them with the battle at hand (Homer, The Illiad).

I don’t believe that the methods that ADF priests use to call upon the divine are any different than those that are utilized by other ADF members or Pagans. Prayer and hospitality are essential parts of many practices, and are not exclusive to clergy. Rev. Ian Corrigan states that we are able to perceive and call upon the divine because they exist within us. Humans have the divine powers of creation, destruction, vision, and shaping inside of us (Corrigan). This is not something granted upon us because we’ve gained the title of Priest. He also states that divinity is a part of nature and not something that is supernatural (Corrigan), so all humans have the ability to call upon those powers.

Liturgy Practicum 3

One entry from your Liturgy Practicum 3 journal or critique of a ritual (exit standards 2 or 3) that you feel represents your public ritual work best.

- 3. Write and lead a ritual with an attendance of more than 20 at a non-ADF function, such as a Pagan Pride Day, a non-ADF Pagan festival, or other function. Submit c) an evaluation of the ritual in terms of structure (how the ritual flowed) and function (what was accomplished).**

We start the ritual this time with the song “Come to the Grove.” Hearing Birgit sing always puts a smile on my face, and this is such a beautiful way to start the ritual. It definitely sets a positive tone for the rite. I love including music in these rituals, even if they are songs that I have never heard before. Jeffrey then chose to do purification via the wind to clean and purify us. I would have never considered this as a method of purification, yet it works so very well. The sound is definitely even present in the video, which helps bring the feeling of the purification to those who are not there in person. However, I did try to tone the blowing sound down a little bit to not be too harsh to listeners. Personally, I feel like my parts seem a bit silly

but I wanted them to be aimed at children. We don't provide much for youths at this point, so I wanted to include them in at least part of the rite. This is the type of opening I would do with my own kids, so it was fun (and scary) to share that with others.

Re-watching the ritual, the Omen definitely took me by surprise. It spoke of prosperity in our actions, but having the need to walk away from what we're doing, and sometimes what we love can be painful. Seeing this omen performed back in September, and then knowing what the fall season brought for our organization, it was definitely a bit astounding to me to see how directly on point that omen truly was. Retrospect always brings such interesting clarity to uncertain messages.

In general, some of the videos have audio that is not as smooth as others with too much background noise, etc. but I think those are things that we would also have to work against during an in person ritual. However, I am proud of the diversity that we are starting to show in these videos. Not only do we have German included in a song, but we also see another participant using the native language of their Hearth. We see indoor spaces and outdoor spaces, kneeling and standing, veiled and not. This diversity makes me happy and I hope to continue to promote these differences. I'd love to see them be even more diverse, but I think we're heading in the right direction. I'm also happy that some of my fellow clergy have asked to be a part of these videos. I think it's important to see leadership take part in these types of activities. Overall, I'm proud of this video. People look like they're enjoying themselves, and the feedback has been very positive. I know it isn't perfect, but I also feel that giving people the opportunity to participate will help them grow more comfortable in their own ritual skills (myself included) and in time that will lead to even better rituals.

Special Occasion Rituals

Two out of the six rituals written for Special Occasion Rituals, exit standards 4 through 7.

Roman House Blessing for New Home

Purification

Before beginning the rite, purify yourself in your preferred manner.

Initiate the Rite

Begin by standing outside the threshold of your home. If you have a doorbell, you can ring it to indicate the start of the rite. Otherwise, you can simply knock on the door frame.

Earth Mother

Tellus Mater, primal goddess of the earth, great mother of all. You nourish and sustain us and from you all life has formed. I stand here, both my feet and my home firmly planted upon you. I ask that you come forth and uphold both this home and this rite.

Offer water to Tellus Mater

Statement of Purpose

I stand at the entrance to the place that I now call home, my porta, gateway to my hearth. May the Lares guard this boundary and protect our shared space.

Anoint door frame with oils and/or incense.

Recreating the Cosmos

Step through the doorway into your home. Move to the space that you'd like to build your hearth shrine and continue the ritual.

Sacred Fire, you who warm our homes and light our way. You inspire us and bring us passion and excitement. Sacred Focus, flame of our hearth.

Give alcohol to fire

Sacred Fire, may your warmth and light bless this home. May this hearth be welcoming and hospitable to all who join us here.

Sacred Well, you who bring wisdom to our lives, and the nurturing waters of the depth. You teach us and guide us. Sacred Mundus, waters of the ancestors.

Give silver to the well

Sacred Well, may your knowledge and wisdom flow through all who reside in this home. May your waters be gentle to all who join us here.

Sacred Tree, you who span the realms and connect us to the universe. Your roots firmly planted in the ground below, and your branches stretching high above. Sacred portus, mighty gateway.

Give water to the tree

Sacred Tree, may your strength help us to be grounded and stable. May you continue to help us grow together and connect us to all who join us here.

Opening the Gates

Janus, god of beginnings, gates, and doorways, I call to you now and ask that you act as my Gatekeeper today. Janus, opener of doors, Guardian of the household, step through your door and dwell in this space.

Offers wine to Janus.

Janus, through you, may our hearts be open. Through you, may this home be safe. Through you, may all who join be welcomed. And through you may our words travel past the gates.

I ask that you join your magic with mine.

Mundus, portus and flaming focus, as you open up before us, grant us guidance beyond your gates, and allow us access to our Fates. This sacred space is pure and open.

Three Kindreds

I call now to my Ancestors. You who walked this land before me. You who share my blood and my story. You who live in my heart and in my thoughts. You are welcome in my home and at my hearth. Welcome, Ancestors.

Offering of coffee given

Step outside of your home, preferably into the back yard.

I call now to the Nature Spirits. You who share this land with me. Creatures of fur, feather, and scales. You who lived on this land before me and will continue to share this space after I am gone. I will nurture you as we live in harmony. Welcome, Nature Spirits.

Offering of birdseed given

Step back inside of your home and to your hearth shrine

I call now to the Shining Ones. You who are worthy of recognition. Divine beings of my hearth and others. You who were worshipped by the ancestors. You are welcome in my home and at my hearth. Welcome, Shining Ones.

Key Offerings

Vesta Mater, virgin goddess of the hearth, you who embody the purifying flame, and guide us with your warmth. We ask you to join us in this rite as we bless and purify this home. Through you, may our home warm. Through you, may our home be cleansed. And through you, may all who join us at our hearth be purified. Vesta Mater, magnificent goddess, come forth and encounter this rite. Welcome, Vesta!

Prayer of Sacrifice

Pour final offering into the hearth fire

We give these gifts with an open heart and hope that they please the Kindreds. We welcome you into our home, as we make this a safe space for all who come to join in our hospitality.

Omen

I will give a brief reading at this point to make sure everything has been accepted.

Blessing:

Life glass of water

Let the blessings of the Kindreds shine into this cup. Let it be filled with joy and cleansed from negativity. Let our home and our family be blessed in this new beginning. Behold, the waters of life.

Drink from the waters and then sprinkle them over your hearth shrine and throughout the house.

Working

Light candle

A flame is lit, to bring light and warmth to this home, mighty Vesta, glorious goddess of the hearth, we ask that you bless our home and all who dwell here. You who embody home and harmonious community, guide our family with your light. Let your hospitality be shown through us. Through this flame, let our hearts be warmed. Through this flame, let our home be bright. Mighty Vesta, bless this house.

Thanking the Beings

This home has been blessed and purified, as have all who reside here. Let us thank those who joined us in this rite who will help bring peace to our lives in this transition.

Mighty Vesta, thank you for your blessings upon this home. Let your hospitality be shown through our actions. Go if you must, stay if you will. Vesta, we thank you.

Shining Ones, thank you for the gifts you give to this family. Let your shining light be shown in our lives. Go if you must, stay if you will. Shining ones, we thank you.

Nature Spirits, thank you for sharing this space with us. Let your curiosity and gentle nature be shown through our interactions. Go if you must, stay if you will. Nature Spirits, we thank you.

Ancestors, thank you for sharing your wisdom with us. Let your knowledge and experience continue to influence our path. Go if you must, stay if you will. Ancestors, we thank you.

Closing the Gates

Janus, mighty guardian of the household, thank you for opening the gates and guiding our way tonight. May your protection keep our home safe. Janus, we thank you.

Janus, I ask that you now aid me in closing the gates between the realms. Let the portus, growing between the worlds be once again just a plant. Let the mundus flowing deep to the underworld be just water. Let the focus burning brightly to the heavens be once again just flame. Janus, join your magic with mine, and let the gates be closed.

Thanking the Earth Mother

Tellus Mater, thank you for upholding this rite, this home, and this family. Let our work both inside this home and out continue to honor you. Tellus Mater, we thank you.

Closing the Rite

This house is pure, blessed, and filled with joy and hospitality. Let all reside here know peace and positivity. This rite has ended.

Hittite Ritual for a Child's First Day of School

Purification

Once the child is ready for the day, take a moment to wash their hands and face, helping them feel fresh and ready for the new day.

Initiate the Rite

Let the child ring a bell or hit a drum to start the rite.

Earth Mother

(sung to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle little star)

Hannahanna, mother earth,
You were here before our birth
You uphold our lives, it's true,
You give gifts and blessings too.
Hannahanna, mother earth,
Please, please join us at our hearth.

Statement of Purpose

Today starts a brand new adventure for <name>, with a new school, new friends, and exciting experiences.

Recreating the Cosmos

(sung to the tune of Frere Jacques)

Light the fire, light the fire,
Glowing bright, glowing bright.
Fill us with your shining, fill us with your shining.
Please join us. Please join us.

Sacred waters, sacred waters,
Flowing deep, flowing deep,
Fill us with your knowledge, fill us with your knowledge.
Please join us. Please join us.

Growing tree, growing tree
Tall and strong, tall and strong.
Fill us with your strength, fill us with your strength.
Please join us. Please join us.

Opening the Gates

We call now to our friend Arinniti, Goddess of the Sun, who watches from high above. We ask you to join us here today and open the gates.

(sung to the tune of Farmer in the Dell)

We're opening the gates,
We're opening the gates.
Arinniti shine on us, we're opening the gates.

The waters flow down deep,
The waters flow down deep,
Connect us to the ancestors,
The waters flow down deep.

The fire burns up high,
The fire burns up high.
Connect us to the shining ones,
The fire burns up high.

The tree connects it all.
The tree connects it all,
Mighty tree open the gates,
The tree connects it all.

Three Kindreds

Now it's time for us to invite our friends to our little party.

We call on our ancestors, those people we loved who passed away, and the heroes that lived before us. Welcome, Ancestors!

Give offering of tea.

We call to the nature spirits, the plants and animals all across the world. Welcome, Nature Spirits!

Give offering of birdseed

We call to the Gods and goddess, both known and unknown, who give us many gifts. Welcome, Gods and goddesses.

Give offering of oil.

Key Offering

We call one final guest, A'as, the Hittite god of wisdom! A'as gave advice to other gods and goddesses and figured out how to solve problems. A'as, we call to you. Welcome, A'as.

Give offering of bread

Prayer of Sacrifice

We give gifts to the Kindreds and ask them to teach us and guide us. Mighty Kindreds, please accept these gifts.

Omen

Let <name> grab a single stone and interpret it for them.

Blessing:

(Sung to the tune of Itsy Bitsy Spider)

The waters in this cup are filled with the blessings.
Ancestors, shining ones, nature spirits too.
Fill them with wisdom, kindness and love.
Oh, the waters in this cup are filled with the blessings.

Have <name> drink from the waters and then sprinkle their backpack and school supplies.

Working

Prayer from a mother:

Mighty Kindred,
Today my child steps into the world,
Starting the foundation for their future.
Arinitti, bright sun shining above,
I ask that you watch over them and guide them,
And fill their heart with warmth and love.
A'as, wise one, I ask that you bless this child,
And fill the minds with clear thoughts.
Grant them patience and perseverance
For those times where school is hard.
Grant them joy and laughter
To spread to those around them.
Mighty Kindreds, thank you for standing by their side
When I cannot be there to hold their hand.

(Sung to Row, Row, Row Your Boat)

Off, off, off to school,
Step into the world
Make new friends and learn so much
Enjoy these moments too.

Thanking the Beings

It's time now for <name> to go to school, so we have to say thank you and farewell to our friends.

A'as, thank you for bringing us your wisdom. A'as, we thank you!

Gods and goddesses, we thank you!

Nature spirits, we thank you!

Ancestors, we thank you!

Closing the Gates

We call once more to our friend Arinniti, Goddess of the Sun, who watches from high above. We ask you help us close the gates.

(sung to the tune of Farmer in the Dell)

The gates are closing now,
The gates are closing now,
Waters, fire, and sacred tree,
Please close the gates right now.

Thanking the Earth Mother

And finally, we thank the Earth Mother. Hannahannah, we thank you!

Closing the Rite

Now is the time for <name> to go to school. I hope you have an amazing day filled with love, laughter, and so much learning.

Comparative Ancient Ritual Styles – IE Rituals vs COoR

Your answer to Comparative Ancient Ritual Styles, Exit Standard 2

2. Compare and contrast ancient IE ritual elements and the elements of the ADF Core Order of Ritual. Explain why you believe the differences exist and the impact the differences may have on our modern work. (minimum 300 words)

I believe that the ADF Core Order of Ritual had a lot of inspiration from ancient ritual styles, so there are many similarities between what we do today, and the ancient rituals we are discussing. Many of the differences are because of cultural adaptations that have been undertaken by ADF to bring these rituals into the modern era. I think the easiest way to compare and contrast the ancient Indo-European ritual elements with the Core Order of Ritual is to break it down, step by step, through the COoR found on the ADF website (Ár nDraíocht Féin).

Initiating the Rite

The beginning of a ritual in ADF can occur through a specific sound, prayer, or meditation. However, it can also begin with a procession into the ritual space. The Vedic ritual describes the Soma being taken to the sacred space with a procession (Drury 32). The Romans also led their sacrificial animal from the market to the altar in their own type of processional (Ogilvie 47).

Purification

Purification is an important step in the ADF Core Order of Ritual, and must be performed prior to opening the gates. It is also described as an important part of both the Vedic and Roman rituals. They utilize hand washing and ritual bathing, both of which are purification methods that we also see within ADF.

Honoring the Earth Mother

Honoring the Earth Mother does not appear to be a step in either of these two ritual formats. However, the Vedic rite does acknowledge that the Earth is divine (Drury 25), so an appreciation of the earth was present at the very least, even if it did not have a specific role in these specific rituals.

Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is what explains we use to explain why we are performing a ritual. The Roman Sacrificial Ritual included a time prior to the sacrifice to speak a “carefully written and rehearsed prayer” toward the temple where the statue of a deity resided (Drury 47). The prayer itself isn’t explicitly described, but I can imagine that it would praise the deity, and potentially explain to them why a sacrifice is being made on that day. This sounds very similar to our Statement of Purpose. There does not seem to be anything similar in the Vedic rite. However, with it being a public event it’s quite possible that it’s something that was done but not necessarily documented.

(Re)Creating the Cosmos

Recreating the cosmos and creating a sacred center is a very important piece of our COoR rites, but I wasn’t sure if I would find any correlation in these ancient cultures. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that I was wrong. I knew the Roman rituals were most often held in or around a temple, and that in itself considered a sacred space. Vedic Agnistoma Rite makes it a much more important piece of the ritual. In these rituals, the sacrificer had an entire ceremony for establishing a sacred space, including exact measurements and directions for their actions (Drury 26). While it looks quite different from what we would see in most of our rituals, it was interesting to see. There was no three realm motif that I could distinguish. However, both

cultures utilized fire as part of their sacred ritual space, which is the one element that we require in our rituals and the (re)creation of the cosmos.

Opening the Gate(s) - Must include a Gatekeeper

Opening the gates and working with a gatekeeper is one element of the Core Order of Ritual that I could not find any correlation in these ancient rites. However, I wasn't terribly surprised that this element did not exist considering that we have acknowledged that this practice was adopted from Afro-Caribbean ritual forms and not Indo-European roots (Corrigan).

Inviting the Three Kindreds

In ADF, the Three Kindred are the Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Shining Ones. While ancestor worship was often found in Indo-European practices, I do not see anything about including them in these sacrificial rites. Specific deities were called in both cultures, but there wasn't a grand gesture to invite all the gods and goddesses to be involved. I also didn't see a specific invitation to the Nature Spirits. However, in the description of the Vedic rite, they describe the use of a tree to create the stake for the sacrificed animal. This tree is viewed as a living organism which "participated in a spiritual life shared by all creation" (Drury 28). They made offerings to the tree before cutting it down and honored the life that it held. It's not quite the same as our practices, but it does show an acknowledgement for spirits of nature at the very least.

Key Offerings

Key Offerings were another item that I didn't really expect to see in the ancient ritual formats. However, in the Vedic ritual, there is a long description of purchasing Soma and taking it to the hall in a procession, where the sacrificer takes on the role of the god by the same name (Drury 31). Between the bartering with the vendor and the libations given, this seems quite

similar to a Key Offering in our rituals, even though it isn't exactly the same. With the Roman, the same prayer that I described in the statement of purpose could also have been part of the Key Offering, inviting a specific deity (or deities) to attend the ritual and take part in the sacrifice (Ogilvie 48).

Prayer of Sacrifice

Both rituals I researched were sacrificial rites. Animals were sacrificed in each ritual to the deity of occasion. This would be replicated in our modern Prayer of Sacrifice. The biggest difference between their practices and ours is that ADF forbids blood sacrifices, which obviously would include sacrificing animals.

Omen

The Omen is an important part of ADF rituals, acting as the way that we learn if our offerings were accepted and asking what gifts we will receive. I did not see any form of omen in this specific Vedic ritual. However, in the Roman ritual, they explained that they wanted a "clean kill" for their animal sacrifice. If the animal was not killed or escaped, this was a bad sign for the ritual. Additionally, the internal organs of the animal were also examined for perfection and any faults in those organs indicated that the sacrifice was not successful (Ogilvie 49-50). It's very different than us utilizing runes, etc. but ultimately the purpose was the same.

Calling, Hallowing, and Affirming the Blessings

From what I could see, there was no calling or hallowing of the blessings in either of these rituals. Instead both rituals concluded around sacred feast, consuming the meat from the animal sacrifice that was not given to the deities. This meat would have been blessed and shared among the participants, which is similar to our blessings.

Thanking the Beings, Closing the Gates, Thanking the Earth Mother, and Closing the Rite

While our Core Order has an intentional method of thanking everyone who has attended, closing the gates, and ending the ritual, neither of these rituals describe anything like that. Both of these rituals essentially end with festivities, with the Vedic rite ended with libations and offering to the gods (Drury 32) and the Roman ritual seeming to end in a feast (Ogilvie 48). The gates were not opened, so they don't need to be closed. The Earth Mother wasn't specifically mentioned, so she doesn't need to be thanked. The same goes for the Three Kindred.

Outdwellers

The one final element that I found interesting was the Outdwellers. Acknowledging the outdwellers is an optional step of the ADF Core Order of Ritual. However, some sort of outdweller acknowledgement was included in each of these rituals. In the Vedic Agnistoma rite, a part of the ceremony is described where the sacrificer is purified and handed a staff "to ward off evil spirits" (Drury 27). I've not seen a staff used for as part of the Outdwellers acknowledgement, but I found it a very interesting concept. The Roman Sacrificial rite includes a description of ensuring that there were not "intruders" present that could potentially "contaminate" the ritual (Ogilvie 47). There is no specific direction given on how this was done, but this mention does at least indicate some sort of process for dealing with Outdwellers.

Pagan Theology 2 – The Nature of Evil

Your long essay from Pagan Theology 2

Using examples from the lore and philosophy of any Indo-European culture, describe the nature of evil in the ancient world, and how ill deeds affect the relationship between human and divine. To what extent are these concepts reflected in ADF's work, and how do they fit with ADF's mission and values?

Introduction

Evil: 1. morally reprehensible: sinful, wicked. 2. Causing discomfort or repulsion: disagreeable. 3. Causing harm: unlucky (Merriam-Webster).

Evil is a topic that I had never really put a lot of time or research into prior to this course. My spiritual practices as a Neopagan have never given me a need or desire to dig into evil or the causes of it. I've also never really had a reason to consider the role it played in my religious beliefs. Essentially, evil is a concept that I haven't invested much thought or concern. When I look at my roles within ADF where I act as both a priest and initiate, the idea of evil still doesn't seem to have an impact on those roles or the duties tied to them. The founder of ADF even de-emphasized the presence of evil in our practice by indicating that there is "no figure of ultimate evil" in the beliefs of Neopagan Druids (Bonewits, What Do Neopagan Druids Believe?). I don't regularly perform rituals against evil, or concern myself with evil beings or people. However, despite the lack of thought I have put into evil historically, I do still believe that evil exists and can have an impact on the world. It has just never been something that I felt carried importance in my personal path. Therefore, as I began to research this topic, I was a little surprised at how prevalent the idea of "evil" was in ancient Indo-European societies.

When researching the presence of evil in Indo-European cultures, the one thing that I quickly recognized was that there are some resources that may have a strong bias against the ancient Pagan beliefs. Many of myths and rites were destroyed or changed by practitioners of

monotheistic religions, including Christianity, in an effort to convert Pagans to their faith. This has limited our knowledge of some ancient Indo-European cultures and mythology to a few sources, and tainted the information found in others. For example, Karl Mortensen refers to Loki as the “originator of all evil” (Mortensen 36). However, he was also a devout Christian, so did the ancient Norse culture truly believe that Loki was evil, or has his writing been predisposed to promote his own spiritual beliefs?

Despite the presence of these biases, there are still numerous references to evil within the lore and philosophy that seem legitimate. There are also numerous historic records of activities and rituals that were focused on the removal or prevention of evil in the lives of these ancient people. Each culture viewed evil in a slightly different way, as seen in their ritual practices and the mythology they were based upon. I didn’t come across a single culture in my research that did not hold some belief or practice related to the concept of evil. Again, that doesn’t mean that a culture with no concept of evil doesn’t exist, but simply that my limited scope has not found one yet.

Mythology

To begin my exploration into the idea of evil, I want to take the time to consider the mythology from several different Indo-European cultures. These myths had many different variations while simultaneously bearing striking similarities. Many of the Indo-European societies that I researched had descriptions of entities or beings that were considered evil. In some cases, these creatures were the cause of illness and death. Other times they simply had a negative influence on humankind. Sometimes the myth focuses instead on a god or hero overcoming an evil being. No matter the approach that is taken in the myths, evil seems to have been a widely popular concept in Indo-European societies. With that information in mind, let’s

begin looking at some specific cultures to see the role that evil played within them. I'll begin with my primary hearth culture, the Hellenes.

Hellenic Mythology

Evil was a subject matter that was frequently expressed in Hellenic mythology. Some of the references are brief, such as the plaque at the base of the statue of Heracles in Ephesus which refers to him as the “avertter of evil” (Luck 145). Other references are much more in depth and include elaborate stories with numerous involved characters. I found it intriguing that there was no overall primary source of all the evil in the Hellenic world. There were many different types of evil described and many different beings who were considered evil, but no primary evil figure. This seems to align appropriately both with me personally, and within the practices of ADF.

Despite the lack of a primary evil figure, there were still numerous other opportunities for evil beings to exist. One of the most common descriptions of evil beings was a group of spirits called daemons. Daemons are a group of minor deities or nature spirits that were recognized regularly in ancient Hellenic practices. Daemons in general not considered evil despite their name and the implications that it holds. However, there was a subgroup of daemons known as “kakodaimones,” or evil-spirits, that were inherently evil. One example of a kakodaimones was the daemon known as Eidolon Ephesios. Eidolon was credited with bringing a deadly plague to the city of Ephesos. This kakodaimono caused mischief in the city until it was finally banished by Apollonios (Atsma).

Another myth in Greek history actually dealt directly with the origins of evil. This was the well-known myth of Pandora. In this story, Pandora was the first human woman. She was created by Hephaestus and granted many gifts by the Olympians, including a mysterious jar. She was then given to Epimetheus by Zeus to be his bride. Prometheus, the brother of Epimetheus,

had given a that gifts should not be accepted from Zeus, but Epimetheus did not listen.

Epimetheus accepted Pandora as his bride, and after their wedding ceremony she then scattered the contents of her jar into the world, filling the earth and sea with evils, toils, and sickness, leaving only hope inside (Hesiod, Works and Days). This myth acts as a type of theodicy which works to explain the origins of evil in the world.

Vedic Mythology

Vedic mythology is another example of a culture that has numerous accounts of evil expressed in their mythology. They have myths which include a variety of deities who were said to work directly against evil. One example is Ashvins, the deity of the morning. Ashvins was said to rise early in the day and push out the darkness of night, while chasing away the evil spirits that walked the land (Macdonell 50-51). Another example would be Parjanya, the deity of thunder and production. He was believed to “strike down trees, demons, and evil doers” with his thunder (Macdonell 84).

Of course, if you have a set of deities that are able to combat evil, you have to have some sort of evil being for them to fight against. As expected, Vedic mythology had a race of evil terrestrial demons called Raksases. These beings are mentioned in the Rg Veda most often in the context of a deity being invoked to destroy them. However, in the descriptions that do exist, these goblins were said to have a hunger for flesh and blood. They were believed to attack humans by entering them through their mouths and eating them from the inside out. The Raksases would only come out of hiding at night, as the Vedic people believed that the dark time of the new moon belonged to the evil spirits (Macdonell 162-163). Agni, the god of fire, was said to protect his followers from these evil spirits by bringing light to the darkness.

Norse Mythology

Norse mythology also has a few references to evil, most often in the descriptions of specific entities. This includes the monstrous wolves, Fenrir and Garm, who were both locked away from the world and would only be freed during Ragnarok (Lindow 83). However, the one disclaimer that I do want to give here is that much of the Norse mythology was translated by Christian authors, including Snorri. It is quite possible that these creatures were not necessarily viewed as evil in the original myths when they were told, and that this is an outcome of the author's influence. Nonetheless, I still wanted to include these types of myths as well to show some examples of the biases found within translations.

Slavic Mythology

While the examples I have listed so far seemed to have a wealth of options to refer to, Slavic mythology does not seem to dive quite as deeply into the realm of evil quite as deeply. However, that doesn't mean that evil isn't present in their mythology. There is a description I found in the reference to the deity named Chernobog. Chernobog was believed to be the personification of evil, darkness, and death. He was a god that was viewed as the cause of all humankind's misfortune (Dixon-Kennedy). However, I will point out that the idea that Chernobog is an evil deity may be another area where mythology was adapted by a writer's personal religious influences. It's really difficult in some instances to know what was truly believed, and what has been influenced by the author.

Avestan Mythology

Avestan mythology is a little bit more difficult to dig into in general as it quickly crosses the line into Zoroastrian practices. However, there is one reference to an evil demon that I did find intriguing. This was a reference to a sensual demon named Akem Manah. This demon's

name is directly translated to mean evil mind, purpose, or thought. This demon was said to trick or manipulate the minds of humans. Humans who were disobedient or deceitful were thought to be influenced by this spirit, so their actions were also referred to as “akem manah” (Ebrahimi and Bakhshayesh). I found this influence to be a very interesting concept, and it seems different from the mythology in many of the other cultures.

Persian Mythology

Persian mythology is something that I was not very familiar with when I began researching their beliefs on evil. However, I learned that one of their resources has numerous accounts of evil beings. These references are found in the longest epic poem ever written by a single author titled Shahnameh, the Epic of the Kings. The poem describes the history of many different Persian rulers. Throughout the poem there are several references to evil beings who are often striving to attain more power. The first reference is to a ruler named Ahriman “the evil”. Ahriman is overwhelmed by jealousy when he learns of Kaiumer, the king of the world. Ahriman sends his son, to gather an army and fight against Kaiumer’s army. During this battle, Kaiumer’s son is killed. After many years of mourning, Kaiumer kills Ahriman’s son and then dies himself (Ferdowsi). The poem tells us right out the gate that Ahriman is evil, and his actions reinforce this idea. However, as the story continues, we see that his evil actions are the direct cause of more evil occurring in the world.

Later in the poem, a man named Husheng becomes king. He is a wonderful ruler, giving men the power of fire, tilling, and reaping their crops. When he passed away, his son Tahumer became the ruler. This time, someone named Deevs is filled with jealousy and tries to fight Tahumer. However, Deevs is defeated, and instead of killing him Tahumer allowed the man to live. The poem says “the evil Deevs became a boon upon mankind” by teaching art to Tahumer

and his followers (Ferdowsi). Again, the evil here begins with envy, but this time we see someone overcoming the evil inside of them and making a positive change for the good of humankind.

This poem contains multiple other references to evil, including the quote “desire turned toward evil and heart was steeped in greed” which gives us a glimpse into the beliefs and views of the Persian people. These brief examples seem to point to the idea that the Persians saw greed and envy as evil actions.

Welsh Mythology

Welsh mythology refers to a group of wizards called “dyn hysbys” or “cunning man.” These wizards were said to be able to see the future, help find lost items, heal, and create magical charms. However, one of their other skills was the ability to dissolve curses and spells by “undoing the evil perpetrated by witches and others” (Oxford University Press). This brief description shows the belief that some magic users were evil, while others were benevolent.

Baltic Mythology

In Baltic mythology, Velnias is the closest being that I found to something that they believed was evil. Velnias was the god of the underworld and protector of the dead. It was believed that, while he did sometimes help humans, he also tempted them frequently to perform evil acts. He was one-eyed and could see the future. He also enjoyed performing terrible tricks, including kidnapping brides (Larson, Littleton and Puhvel). Yet again, I’m unsure how much of this mythology can truly show an ancient belief that Velnias was evil because after Christianity was introduced to Lithuania, Velnias was converted to be seen as the equivalent to the devil in Christian mythos. It could be the influence of Christian writers that made this change (O'Connor).

Celtic Mythology

Celtic mythology contains the tale of King Cormac mac Airt. In this myth, it is said that the king turned away from Druidry and joined the Christian church. The druids were so angered by this action that they sent a “malediction” which led to him choking on a salmon bone (Byrne). This myth shows us again that there was a general belief in evil spirits being present in the world, and that the Celtic people believed that these spirits could be convinced to work with humans if you had the appropriate knowledge. This context seems very different than many other cultures. In most cultures, working with evil beings made the person evil as well. That does not seem to be what is being expressed in this myth.

The Evil Eye

Celtic mythology also describes a race of beings called “Fomorians” who represented the “powers of evil” (Rolleston). Balor was the king of the Fomorian race, and he is most well-known for his “evil eye.” Balor was in Ireland and was walking past a house when he heard some mysterious chanting. He approached the house and looked through a window, where smoke from inside blew into his face and blinded him. One of the druids who had been in the house came out and found Balor writhing in pain. The druid told Balor that the spell that hit him was a spell of death, and anyone looking upon his eye would be killed. Essentially, Balor was given the gift of the “evil eye.” The evil eye was a belief that someone has the ability to cause harm to someone else simply by looking at them (Dundes 258). With just a look, a person can become cursed, and this curse may go on to harm either the person directly, or it may instead affect their property or belongings. Some of the symptoms of this curse included “loss of appetite, excessive yawning, vomiting, and fever” (Dundes 258) which admittedly are quite generic. The evil eye may also present itself in a cow whose milk has dried up, or a plant that

has died. Ultimately, the mythology tells us that Balor ended up using this evil eye as a weapon against his enemies (Heaney).

The myth of Balor and his evil eye is actually not unique to the Celtic culture. While each culture seemed to have their own take on evil and what exactly that constituted, the idea of an “evil eye” was a topic that I found repeated across many different societies. The first is this concept of the “evil eye.” The Greek people know the evil eye as the word “baskanos” (Burkert 73). The epic poem *Argonautica*, tells the tale of Jason and the Argonauts as they travel to try to retrieve the golden fleece. Along this voyage, Jason and his crew land in Crete where they encounter a giant bronze creature named Talos. This creature tries to stop their journey, but the sorceress Medea puts baskanos on him, causing the creature to scrape his ankle on a rock and bleed to death (Rhodius).

In the cultures who had this belief of the “evil eye” there were preventative measures that people could take in order to prevent its harm, including wearing specific amulets around their necks, or performing certain actions, such as hand gestures or spitting (Dundes 258). There is evidence of different charms being used throughout Wales with the intention of protecting against the evil eye (Withey). In ancient Greece, amulets were worn as protection against curses, the evil eye, and evil powers in general. (Luck 49).

Gods vs Serpents

Another mythological theme that I found repeatedly when researching the role of evil in Indo-European societies was the myth of a hero or deity defeating an evil serpent. In Hittite mythology, we find this theme in the myth of the storm god Teshub’s victory over Illuyanka. Illuyanka was a serpent that represented the forces of evil and darkness. While fighting against the serpent, Teshub was aided by his daughter, a mortal human. The Hittites believed that

Illuyanka had been overpowered in this fight, but the serpent was not slain, so he could rise again. They also expressed the idea it was humanity's duty to continue that fight against evil and maintain balance in the Cosmos to prevent the serpent's return. They believe this responsibility was present because of the involvement of a mortal in the original fight between the gods and evil.

In Vedic mythology we see this myth repeated in the battle of Indra and Vritra. Vritra was a serpent who embodied sin, hunger, and great evil (O'Flaherty 150). Interestingly, Indra is the god of thunder and storms, just as Teshub was to the Hittites. In this myth, Vritra was blocking the rivers and streams with his giant body, and causing a major drought. The world had dried up, and people could no longer grow their crops so they were starving. Teshub saw their struggle and decided to fight against Vritra. Eventually Vritra was destroyed and water was returned to the lands and ending the drought.

We can also find this theme of deity fighting against an evil serpent in Greek mythology in Hesiod's Theogony. Within this book, we can learn of the fight between Typhon and Zeus. Typhon was the terrible serpent son of Gaia and Tartarus who lived in the heart of a volcano. Zeus, once again, is the god of thunder and the king of the Olympians. Typhon rose out of his home in the volcano and challenged Zeus for rule over the Cosmos. However, Zeus quickly struck him down with lightning, securing his reign once more (Hesiod, Theogony).

In Persian mythology the evil serpent is Zohak who sits upon a throne. He is filled with evil until he is overflowing and his people try to push back against him. However, the serpent doesn't listen. In this moment "vice stalked in daylight but virtue was hidden" from mankind (Ferdowsi). The people were filled with fear and despair as two humans were sacrificed to the serpent each day. Zohak showed his people no mercy and the land became dark because of the

evil ruler. Zohak had a dream that he would be defeated by someone named Feridoun, so he had all humans with that name killed. However, one mother heard of these actions and hid her son away to be raised by others. Feridoun spent time being raised by a cow, and a hermit until reaching adulthood and returning to his mother. During this time, Zohak had left his throne to search for the one who would overtake him. Feridoun approached the castle, and as he did the people began to follow him to the Zohak's domain. When they reached the castle, Feridoun took the throne for himself. Zohak returned to find Feridoun in his place, but when Zohak tried to attack he was defeated by the people. The people then carried Zohak to a rock outside of the city where he was bound and left to die (Ferdowsi).

Beliefs

Hittite Beliefs

The Hittite culture put a lot of emphasis on living life in a way that was pleasing to the gods. They had a concept called “para handantatar” which encouraged people to life in harmony with each other and to obey the wishes of the gods, all while discouraging evil actions. Following para handantatar would ensure that a person would receive “protection and blessings of divine favor” (Bryce 139-140). They specifically called out specific actions that they considered evil, which included: murder, theft, violating oaths, and other crimes committed against “fellow creatures.” If these actions were taken, not only would the person be punished by their fellow humans, but it was also believed that they would be punished by the gods.

One of the primary celebrations of the Hittite people was the Purulli festival. In this festival, they celebrated the triumph of the storm god Teshub over Illuyanka, a serpent that represented the forces of evil and darkness. As I discussed previously, the Hittites believed that Illuyanka had been overpowered but that he could rise again. Because of the role Teshub's

daughter played in the fight, the Hittites saw this as a statement that mortals needed to work directly with the gods to ensure that the cosmos “functioned properly” and that evil was kept away (Bryce 216-218). Fulfilling this duty was the purpose of the Purulli festival.

Hellenic Beliefs

When it comes to researching and understanding the lives of the Hellenic people, we are very lucky to have a wealth of resources available. One such resource is the Delphic Maxims, which is a group of sayings that were carved into the walls at the temple of Delphi. These phrases acted as a set of rules that people were expected to follow. Evil is directly mentioned in these maxims on two different occasions, one indicating that people should “shun evil” and another stating that they should “despise evil” (Silvanus). These maxims show that, not only did the Hellenic people believe in evil, but that humans should avoid contact with it and hate its existence. While these maxims don’t tell us how evil was defined in their culture, it does at least validate the belief in the concept of evil itself at the very least.

Hellenic people held a strong belief in the afterlife, and the possibility of ghosts in the mortal realm. In this culture, it was believed that most ghosts indicated the presence of evil. A ghost in a specific location would indicate that the victim was murdered or suffered some other violent death (Luck 238-239). Additionally, while priests and seers were honored and respected in ancient Greece, magic itself was often feared. Some of the beings who regularly practiced magic were perceived as evil and dangerous, such as the mythological witches Circe and Medea (Luck 35).

Vedic Beliefs

The Vedic people held very interesting beliefs when it came to the concept of evil. They believed that the gods wanted humans to be virtuous and wholesome. To promote this positive

lifestyle the people would make sacrifices to the gods, which aided the deities, who in turn helped the people. This created a mutual dependence between mortals and gods (O'Flaherty 82). We see this concept repeatedly in many different cultures as well. Previously I had never considered this type of relationship to be something that was done to help prevent evil in the world, so this approach was very interesting to me.

Slavic Beliefs

The Slavic people also had a unique set of beliefs about evil, specifically as it pertained to the dead. The Slavics were a society that was comfortable preparing their dead for funerals by dressing and caring for the bodies. Some people even went so far as to make their own coffins. However, there was a certain subset of people that were viewed as being “unclean” after they died. This would include anyone who had contact with “evil spirits” during their lives. Evil spirits were defined as witches, sorcerers, and people with a “double soul” (Vinogradova). This brief passage shows that at least some of the people believed that magic, or at least those who practiced it, was evil.

Baltic Beliefs

In Estonia, a lot of emphasis was put on building a home in a place that was not touched by evil. If a house burned, they would never rebuild a house on that site out of fear that it was now filled with evil. When they did choose a place to build a new home, they would trace specific furrow patterns into the ground before building in an effort to protect the house and those who lived within (Lecouteaux).

Rituals & Practices

As I have explored, there was a vast set of myths and beliefs tied to the idea of evil. There were also numerous rituals and practices in Indo-European cultures that were intended to

either prevent evil from effecting someone, or to purify an evil that had already been encountered. There were rituals to purify homes of evil forces, sympathetic magic to purify individuals, festivals to purify the entire community, and even marriage rites to prevent evil from effecting the couple's offspring. Just as we saw in the mythology and beliefs, each culture approached these rites in slightly different ways, but the practices were present consistently.

Hittite Rituals & Practices

While we have limited resources about the Hittite people, there are still references to practices related to evil. For example, they had a form of sympathetic magic that was used to purge their community of those who may have done evil things. They would place a small boat into a river or other body of water, and as the river would carry the boat away, they would say "just as the river carried away the boat, whoever has committed evil word, oath, curse, and uncleanness in the presence of the gods, let the river carry them away" (Bryce 200-201).

They also had another sympathetic ritual that was intended to bring harmony to a household that had been filled with conflict. They would bring in an animal, and would transfer the evil forces that had been influencing the family into that creature. The animal would then be sacrificed and disposed by burning or burial to destroy the evil inside of it (Bryce 205). This sympathetic magic was commonly done as a way to turn away illnesses that were thought to be brought on by evil beings. They would sacrifice the animal and tell the evil "behold, here is an animal, well fed. May human meat be avoided by you" (Burkert). These types of rituals were also popular in Greek and Babylonian societies.

Within the Hittite practices, homes were also purified and protected from evil in another magical ritual. They would create a small dog out of tallow. The dog would then be left at the entry of the home with the words "just by day you do not let other men into the courtyard, so do

not let in the Evil Thing during the night” (Bryce 208-209). This type of rite shows us that the Hittites were just as dedicated to protecting against evil as they were to expelling it once it was encountered.

Vedic Rituals & Practices

The Vedic people believed evil was so exceedingly present in their world that they even incorporated a working against evil in their marriage rituals. During the ceremony, a wand was shot into the air and the priest would say “I pierce through the eye of the Raksasas who are running around the bride, stepping toward the fire” (Oldenberg 134). The marriage ceremony was only completed after this precaution had been taken, but even then the couple were required to remain abstinent for several days following the celebration as another method of evil prevention. They believed that this abstinence would keep evil spirits from entering into the body of the bride and ultimately cause harm to their offspring.

How is Evil Reflected in ADF Work?

With evil taking so many different forms within the ancient Indo-European cultures, it’s hard to believe that we wouldn’t incorporate at least some of those practices into our work within ADF. Despite that fact, reading through the many articles on our website, the idea of evil is something that is rarely discussed or explored, at least in any direct way. However, it doesn’t mean that we do not have practices that could be viewed as ways to eliminate or prevent evil for our members and participants in our public rituals. The first example of this would be the simple act of purification. While we typically do not say that we are looking to remove evil specifically, purification is described as a way to “remove or temporarily suspend undesirables, like negative energies, disruptive thoughts, or other items that may be productive in a ritual environment”

(Newberg). To me, this would logically include the removal of any evil energies or beings that may be attached to a participant or ritual space.

Another way that we work against evil in our rituals and practices are apotropaic offerings. Apotropaic sacrifices a type of ritual offering that is given as a way to specifically avert evil (Thomas). This type of offering is not found in all of our public rites, but they may be done in times where an omen indicates that offerings were not accepted, or in personal practices if someone feels the need for deeper work.

Yet another part of our Core Order of Ritual that could be viewed as having a relationship to evil is the (re)creation of the cosmos. The Hittites believed that it was important for humans to be an active participant in the balance of the Cosmos in order to keep evil away. While we may not put quite as much emphasis on the idea that it is a working against evil, ADF does create and recreate the Cosmos in each of our rituals.

Additionally, many different cultures had an idea of the reciprocal relationship with the deities as a way to bring balance and prevent evil in the Cosmos. We've incorporated this reciprocity into our own practices to build our relationships with the Kindreds. This type of reciprocal relationship is another theme that is repeated across many cultures, including the ancient Greek concept of "xenia" (Biggs, Joseph and Bennet), the Vedic practice of making sacrifices to deities for protection and to prevent these evils from interfering with their lives, and the term *ghosti that we regularly utilize within ADF. I had never considered this relationship as a way to prevent evil, but when looking at the historic context it does make sense.

Overall, I was surprised at how many different practices we have could be viewed as ways to prevent evils in the lives of our members, or to work against the evil forces that may

exist in the world. Maybe I shouldn't have been though, especially considering how heavily our influence pulls our practices from each of these cultures.

Philosophy

There are several different philosophies that can relate directly to the concept of evil, but I think the most obvious example of this is theodicy. Theodicy is a philosophical study that explains the presence of evil if an all-knowing, all powerful deity exists. It has several possible arguments to justify this evil ranging arguments that evil is caused by free will, to the idea that god permits evil things to happen. There are four major types of theodicy throughout the ages. The first is the thought that evil is caused by the inappropriate use of free will. The second is that god allows bad things to happen because it allows humans to gain an understanding of morality. The third type of theodicy indicates that god actually causes bad things to happen, which eliminates the idea that "god is good" the way it's traditionally perceived. The final type of theodicy is the idea that god has a reason for allowing evil that humans may not understand (Greer).

The Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus wrote about his theory of evil in a couple of different contexts. He described evil as a "psychic event" experienced by souls, but also believed that it is not a "meaningless plague" upon humans (Moore). Instead he believed that evil is something that can allow a person to grow and change. Plotinus expanded on this idea, stating that a soul was capable of weakness, and therefore easily manipulated or tricked by an influential force. He indicated that when evil is done by someone, it is because they were overtaken by the "baser side," such as desire or rage, or some other evil (Plotinus). However, despite believing that evil came from an outside source, he did not see evil as something caused by a deity. Instead he believed that it existed purely because souls were fallible and could be

weak and make the wrong decisions. He described disease as an evil caused by a lack of health, and sin as an evil caused by a lack of virtue (Calder). He said that evil was a necessary part of the world, and that it was the “soul’s design” to get away from these evils by gaining likeness to God (Plotinus). One of the ways those evils could be escaped was by the soul experiencing love in a pure form (Moore).

Another philosopher who explored the idea of evil was Democritus. Democritus was a pre-Socratic philosopher in ancient Greece. He believed that the concept of evil came from “external” goods, such as the food that was eaten by a person. It is from these external forces that people either received or escaped evil (Gale Research Inc. 261). He didn’t express any belief that there was divine interference, or even demons or spirits that were involved, but only these “external” goods. However, he didn’t necessarily believe that the external forces themselves were inherently evil. He believed that the soul could turn good things into evil if they didn’t know how to handle it appropriately. Democritus described this belief in his explanation of naturalistic ethics, saying that nature is “necessity not justice”, and not good or evil by itself (Gale Research Inc.).

ADF Mission & Values

At first glance the ADF Mission and Values do not seem to show any concern about the possible existence of evil in the world. However, some of the practices against evil that we described previously are referenced, including the reciprocity with the Kindred. Additionally, there is an emphasis put on the idea of living with virtue. Virtue is an idea that seems to counter-balance the idea of evil. Virtue is mentioned twice previously in this essay, both indicating that evil was present when virtue was lacking. By living with virtue, we are working directly against evil as well.

Conclusion

When I started this essay, I indicated that evil is something that I don't really concern myself with. While I'd love to say that this course changed my opinion, I don't know that it really did. I understand the practice of the ancients, and I do believe that there are evil beings, humans, and energies in the universe. However, I also don't know that there can be much benefit to putting a lot of focus into the idea of counteracting those measures. I appreciate that the work we do within ADF already addresses evil, but I also appreciate that it does so as a side-effect, not as the direct focus. The idea of evil feels like something that is deeply tied into the concept of "sin." While this may be a personal hang-up, I don't feel the need for my spiritual practice to focus that on a daily basis.

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