

Sigils in Theory and Practice

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Introduction

This paper, the first of the ‘talks@templum’ series, examines the use of sigils for causing changes in the individual and their environment, according to their will. The approach of chaos magick is taken, where experiment and results are encouraged over beliefs about the mechanism by which the change is effected.

Theory

The word ‘sigil’ is derived from the Latin, *signum*, a sign, and is also the root of *sigillum*, a seal. It is part of our common English words signature, sign and signal. It’s meaning can be seen in three ways;

- ✧ A thing by which something is made known or represented
- ✧ Anything visible that indicates the existence or approach of something else
- ✧ Evidence of confirming, authorising (or shutting and securing) something

Sigils are commonplace. In mundane terms, we use our name as a representation of ourselves, we use a signature as authorisation, and we see traffic lights or signals as evidence that a train is coming! A sigil is hence a visible symbol, representing something else. In esoteric terms, we have the signs of the Zodiac as representing abstract qualities given to each sign. For example, the sign ♌ represents qualities of balance, harmony, justice, and so forth.

Magical literature is littered with seals, symbols and sigils used for various purposes. These are often drawn on talismans, staves, wands, pendants, or inscribed on robes during ritual. They can also be drawn on the ground to act as magical circles of protection. However, a sigil has a far more specific use to the practical magician, and this is as a tool to effect changes in accordance with will.

Working Definition

The esoteric artist, Austin Osman Spare (1888-1956) defined sigils as “the means of guiding and uniting the partially free belief.” By ‘partially free belief’ he meant anything desired that was not yet an obsession. This reminds us of Aleister Crowley’s injunction to work “without lust of result.” That is to say, if the change you require to take place is bigger than you, and you are not in control of it, then you are unlikely to succeed in bringing it about. Fanatical love or revenge spells rarely work if the person is consumed by the desire. It is far easier to bring change through already available channels in small ways than it is to change the entire universe to suit you! It is easier to work for promotion if you are already in a job; if you cast a luck sigil, start playing games of chance; and if you do decide on a love sigil, get out of the house more!

Working Models

There are many ways of describing or explaining exactly how a sigil – or any magick – works. These are fairly irrelevant to the chance of the spell working. You do not have to believe anything to perform the activities of sigil magick. Here are a few of the general beliefs that can be adopted :

- ✧ Higher Powers

When you cast a sigil you are calling upon unseen beings who can interact with the visible universe and bring about the changes you require. These beings have certain characteristics that you must know to work with them.

✧ Magical

The universe is connected by occult links, which can be mapped by correspondences. Thus, by burning a red candle one can cause anger on the part of another person without there being a visible connecting agent.

✧ Unconscious

Our unconscious mind is tied to the rest of our species. By focusing on the desired aim we alert the racial mind to our need and it responds accordingly, usually through the actions of others.

✧ Morphic Field

An invisible field is generated or forms our species and that of other species. By casting a sigil we link to this field and cause resonant changes in our environment.

✧ Retro-Temporal Engineering

Time does not work in a linear fashion as we perceive it. All events have and are happening at the same moment. By casting a sigil we place ourselves in the universe where the desired event is taking place, even if this means that events in the apparent past must have happened to make the future event transpire. The sigil affects both apparent past and future.

Practice

The creation of a sigil has two phases; construction and casting. In the first part, the sigil is planned, designed and created as a physical item (although it can be created as a visualised sigil with the same process), and in the second part, it is empowered to make it live.

Construction Phase

Begin by stating your aim in one sentence. If it is more complex, simplify it. As in business, if you cannot state what you are aiming for in a single sentence, you are making too much of a hard job of it. Start the sentence with “My aim is ...” or “My will is ...”

For example, **My will is to meet someone who can advise me about my health problem.**

Another useful rule is that “You have to know it when you see it.” That is to say, avoid vague statements such as “My will is to be happy when my parents visit.” You must be able to recognise immediately the result which has been aimed for. In such a case, you might wish to redefine your aim as “My will is to be able to stop drinking alcohol whilst my parents visit.” Which will be far more easier to judge – either you are or you aren’t.

We can construct the sigil from a number of symbolic systems. In rune-lore, this is known as *loading*. The basic rule is that all elements of the sigil must be harmonious to both the aim in mind and each other. Do not overload your design with the symbols of three hundred traditions! The final result should feel right to you, whether it is artistically pleasing or not. Use components from :

- ✧ Art
- ✧ Alphabets
- ✧ Correspondence
- ✧ Spoken Language (mantra) (In rune-lore known as Galdyr)
- ✧ Gestures (mudras)
- ✧ Numerology

For example, you could take the 1st, 20th and 40th letter from the sentence and turn it into a design, like

MNT

Drawn into a sigil form might look like this :



You could further stylise the design, adding other components to it. You could perhaps paint it on a certain type of wood suited to healing, in a healthy golden colour.

The next stage is to devise a mantra to repeat in order to charge the sigil, which will be covered later. This mantra can be derived from your basic sentence, but must not remind you of your aim. The trick is to bypass your conscious mind which can cloud the will by creating imaginary views of success which then limit the nature by which the spell can actually work. Thus, our health advisor spell could have a mantra created for it like so :

Choose relevant key words : -health-advice-meet-

Reversing the words gives us : teemecivdahtlaeh

Which could be pronounced as a mantra : TEEM EKI VAD LAAH

Casting Phase

There are a number of methods by which a sigil – or any other spellform – can be cast. Strangely enough, these boil down to variations of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll! The common element to these methods, as with ritual, is a repetitive nature, and the all-consuming manner by which their success takes over the conscious mind. In a sense, they all **tend to unity**. As we saw in our models of magick, if Unity is the natural state of the universe, methods by which we achieve recognition of that unity are likely to be closer to the mechanics of the universe so that we can cause change.

✧ Sex

The use of sex to charge the ritual can be done alone or with partner(s) depending on your resources and preferences! The point of orgasm is often used as the charging moment, but prolonged sexual activity without orgasm can lead to a trance-like state which also can be used.

✧ Drugs

Mind-altering chemicals such as coffee can be used, but as with all techniques mentioned here, seek advice if you use anything whose effects are unknown to you.

✧ Rock n Roll

The use of drums, white noise or repetitive synth-like sounds can lead to the required state in which to cast a sigil. Clapping also generates a rhythm and there are many tapes and CDs which contain suitable music. Ensure that it is fairly distinct music rather than merely background music.

❖ Ritual

The example which follows ensures that the point at which the sigil should be cast is easily recognised, whereas the methods above require some fine-tuning, experiment and experience to get just right. The advantage of ritual is that it formats such methods into easily accessible techniques.

Sigil Ritual

Required : Paper, Marker Pen, one large candle, one small candle per participant.

Time Required : 10-15 minutes.

- ❖ Sigil : Design the sigil on the paper according to the methods described above. Don't be too worried if it doesn't look right – as long as it feels right it will be fine. If you have to redraw it more than three times, abort the ritual and try it again another day when your mind is clearer.
- ❖ Mantra : Derive a suitable mantra as described above. This should be fairly comfortable to say and have a basic rhythmic pattern.
- ❖ Exchange : If you are working with others, exchange your sigils. This assists the process by which you become disassociated with the aim. If you are doing it for someone else, you have less attachment to the desired result.
- ❖ Repetition : Light the candles and arrange them in a circle around the larger candle, or in front if you are working solitary. Ensure that you can see your sigil and mantra. Start to chant out your mantra as clearly and loudly as you can. After a few moments, began to increase the speed of your repetition, breathing faster as you do so.
- ❖ Clapping : As you increase the speed of the chant, begin to clap, slowly at first, then as fast as the chant, and then increase the speed of both until you have an almost continuous nonsensical sound.
- ❖ Release : When you reach the point where you feel as if you cannot speed the chant up, clap loudly once and blow out your candle(s). Visualise the sigil being engulfed by the flame of the candle and vanishing as you extinguish it.
- ❖ Disposal : Dispose of the sigil by burning or simply throw it away, as it is merely a focus and not a consecrated object.

Record the ritual in your diary or magical journal and record the results when they take place. Review the ritual and the results after a month to make any further observations that were not apparent at the time.

Conclusion

As an example of results magick, when this talk was given and the above ritual carried out, one participant stated "It is my will to receive a gift from someone within the week." The very next day they received a surprise free gift certificate from Amazon on-line bookstore in the UK for £5, and an electronic equivalent from Amazon in the USA for \$10. This was used to buy a book and a CD for the next set of talks!