

# The Magic Circle

By Franz Bardon (Extracted from "The Practice of Magical Evocation")

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All authors of books dealing with ceremonial magic and giving reports about conjuration and invocation of beings of any kind point out that the magic circle plays the most important role in this.

Hundreds of instructions can be found on how to make magic circles to attain various goals, for instance with Albertus Magnus, in the Clavicula Salomonis, in the Goetia, in Agrippa, in Magia Naturalis, in the Faust-Magia-Naturalis and in the oldest Grimoires. It is told everywhere that when invoking or calling a being, one must stand within the magic circle. But an explanation of the esoteric symbolism of the magic circle is hardly ever given.

Therefore I intend to give the studious and eager magician a completely satisfactory description of the magic circle according the Universal Laws and Analogies.

A true magic circle represents the symbolic lay-out of the macrocosm and the microcosm, that is, of the perfect man. It stands for the Beginning and the Ending for the Alpha and the Omega, as well as for Eternity, which has no beginning and no end.

The magic circle, therefore, is a symbolic diagram of the Infinite, of Divinity in all its aspects, as can be comprehended by the microcosm, i. e. by the true adept, the perfect magician.

To draw a magic circle means to symbolize the Divine in His perfection, to get into contact with Him. This happens, above all, at the moment the magician is standing in the centre of the magic circle, for it is by this act that the contact with the Divinity is demonstrated graphically. It is the magician's contact with the macrocosm in his highest step of consciousness. Therefore, from the point of view of true magic, it is quite logical that standing in the centre of the magic circle is equivalent to being, in one's consciousness, a unity with the Universal Divinity.

From this one can see clearly that a magic circle is not only a diagram for protection from unwanted negative influences, but security and inviolability are brought about by this conscious and spiritual contact with the Highest.

The magician who stands in the centre of the magic circle is protected from any influence, no matter, whether good or evil, for himself is, in fact, symbolizing the Divine in the universe. Furthermore, by standing in the centre of the magic circle, the magician also represents the Divinity in the microcosm and controls and rules the beings of the universe in a totalitarian manner.

The esoteric essence of the magician's standing in the centre of the magic circle is, therefore, quite different from that which the books on evocations usually maintain.

If a magician standing in the centre of the magic circle were not conscious of the fact that he is, at that moment, symbolizing God the Divine and Infinite, he would not be able to practice any influence on any being whatsoever.

The magician is, at that instant, a perfect magic authority whom all powers and beings must absolutely obey. His will and the orders he gives to beings or powers are equivalent to the will and orders of the Infinite, the Divine, and must therefore be unconditionally respected by the beings and powers the magician has conjured up.

If the magician, during such an operation, has not the right attitude towards his doings, he degrades himself to a sorcerer, a charlatan, who simply mimics and has no true contact with the Highest. The magician's authority would, in such a case, be rather doubtful.

Moreover, he would be in danger of losing his control over such beings and powers, or, what would even be worse, he could be mocked by them, not to speak of other unwanted and unforeseen surprises and accompanying phenomena that he would be exposed, especially if negative forces were involved.

The way in which a magic circle has to be formed depends on the grade of maturity and the individual attitude of the magician. The diagram, that is the drawing by which the Divinity is expressed within the circle, is subject to the religious concepts of the magician.

The procedure followed by an oriental magician when forming a magic circle is of no use to an occidental magician, because his ideas of the Divine and the Infinite are quite different from those of the magician from the East. If an occidental initiate drew a magic circle according to oriental instructions, with all divine names appertaining to it, it would be ineffective and completely fall short of its purpose. A Christian magician must therefore never draw a magic circle according to an Indian or any other religion if he wants to save himself from an unnecessary effort.

The construction of the magic circle depends, from the beginning, on one's individual ideas and beliefs and one's individual conception of the qualities of the Divine, who is to be symbolized graphically by this circle. This is the reason why a genuine magician will never draw a circle, carry out rituals, or follow instructions concerning ceremonial magic to which he himself is not identified in his individual practice. For this would be similar to wearing oriental clothes in the occident. Bearing these facts in mind, it comes natural that the magic circle has to be drawn in complete accordance with the views of life and maturity of the magician.

The initiate who is conscious about the Harmony of the Universe and its exact hierarchy will, of course, make use of his knowledge when drawing the magic circle. Such a magician may, if he likes, and if the circumstances permit it, draw into his magic circle diagrams representing the whole hierarchy of the universe and thus come into contact with, and awake his consciousness of, the universe much more rapidly.

He is free to draw, if necessary, several circles at a certain distance from each other in order to use them for representing the hierarchy of the universe in the form of divine names, genii, princes, angels and other powers. One must, of course, meditate appropriately and take the concept of the divine aspects in question into consideration when drawing the circle.

The true magician must know that divine names are symbolic designations of divine qualities and powers. It stands to reason that while drawing the circle and entering the divine names the magician must also consider the analogies corresponding to the power in question, such as colour, number and direction, if he does not want to allow a breach in his consciousness to come into existence because he has not presented the universe in its complete analogy.

Each magic circle, no matter whether a simple drawing or a complicated one, will always serve its purpose, depending, of course, on the magician's faculty to bring his individual consciousness into full accordance with the universal, the cosmic consciousness. Even a large barrel-hoop will do the job, providing the magician is capable of finding the relevant state of mind and is completely convinced that the circle in the centre of which he is standing represents the universe, to which is to react, as a representation of God.

The magician will realize the more extensive his reading, the greater his intellectual capacity and the larger his store of knowledge happens to be, the more complicated his ritual and magic circle will be in order to furnish sufficient support for his spiritual consciousness, which then will make possible an easier connection of the microcosm and the macrocosm in the centre of the circle.

As for the circles themselves, they may be drawn in various ways to suit the circumstances, the prevailing situation, the purpose, the possibilities, no matter whether they are simple ones or whether they follow a complicated hierarchical system. When working in the open air, a magic weapon, dagger or sword has to be used for drawing the circle on the ground. When working in a room, the circle may be drawn on the floor with a piece of chalk. A large sheet of paper can also be used for the circle.

The most ideal circle, however, is the one sewn or embroidered into a piece of cloth, flannel or silk, for such a circle can be laid out in a room as well as outside of the house.

The circles drawn on paper have the disadvantage that the paper will soon wear out and fall to pieces. In any case, the circle must be large enough to enable the magician to move about in it freely.

When drawing the circle, the appropriate state of mind and full concentration are most essential. If a circle were drawn without the necessary concentration, a circle would undoubtedly be the result, but it would not be a magic one. The magic circle that has been worked into a piece of cloth or silk has to be re-drawn symbolically with one's finger or magic wand, or with some other magic weapon; not to forget the necessary concentration, meditation and state of mind.

The magician must, in such a case, be fully aware of the fact that it is not the magical weapon in use that draws the circle, but the divine faculties symbolized by that magical instrument.

Furthermore, he must realize that it is not he that is drawing the magic circle at the moment of concentration, but that the Divine Spirit is actually guiding his hand and instrument to draw the circle. Therefore, before drawing the magic circle, a conscious contact with the Almighty, with the Infinite, has to be brought about by the help of meditation and identification.

The trained magician, having a thorough command of the practical exercises of the first tarot-card, as explained in my first work "Initiation into Hermetics" , has learned during one of the steps of that book how to become fully conscious of the spirit and how to act consciously as a spirit. It is not difficult for him to imagine that not he, but the Divine Spirit in all its high aspects is actually drawing the magic circle he wishes to have.

The magician has thus learned also that in the world of the Invisible it is not the same although two persons might physically be doing the same, for a sorcerer, who does not possess the necessary maturity, will never be able to draw a true magic circle.

The magician who is also acquainted with Quabbalah can draw another snake-like circle within the inner circle and divide it into 72 fields, giving each of these fields the name of a genius. These names of genii, together with their analogies, must be drawn magically by pronouncing them correctly. If working with a circle embroidered into a piece of cloth, the names inserted into the various fields must either be in Latin or in Hebrew.

I shall give exact details about the genii and their analogies, use and effect in my next work called "The Key to the True Quabbalah". An embroidered circle has the advantage that it can easily be laid out and folded -together again without having to be drawn and charged anew each time it is to be used.

The snake presented in the centre is not only the copy of an inner circle, but, above that, it is the symbol of wisdom. Besides this, other meanings may be attributed to this snake-symbol, for example the snake's strength, the power of imagination, etc.

It is not possible to give a full description of all this, for this would go far beyond the aim of this book. - A Buddhist magician drawing his Mandala, putting his five deities in the form of figures or diagrams on top of the relevant emanation, is, at that moment, meditating about each single deity whose influence he is trying to evoke.

This magical ceremony, too, is, in our opinion, equivalent to the drawing of a magic circle, although it actually is a genuine prayer to the Buddhist deities. To say more about this matter in this book is quite unnecessary for enough material has already been published in Eastern literature about this kind of magical practice, either in exoteric or in secret manuscripts.

A magic circle. may serve many purposes. It may be used for evocation of beings or as a protective means against invisible influences. It need not in all cases be drawn or placed on the ground. It can also be drawn in the air with a magical weapon, like the magic sword or the magic wand, under the condition that the magician is fully conscious of the universal quality of protection, etc.

If no magical weapon is at hand, the circle can also be described with the finger or with the hand alone, providing this is done in the right spirit, in agreement with God. It is even possible to form a magic circle by one's mere imagination.

The effect of such a circle on the mental or astral plane, indirectly also on this material world, depends, in this case, on the grade and strength of such an imagination. The binding force of the circle is generally known in magnetic magic.

Moreover, a magic circle may be produced by the accumulation of elements or the condensation of light. When practising evocations or invocation of beings, it is desirable to draw within the centre of the circle in which one is to stand another smaller circle or a pentagram with one of its points upwards, the symbol representing man. This is then the symbolization of the small world, of man as genuine magician.

The books dealing with the construction of the magic circle clearly state that during the act of invocation the magician must not leave the circle, which, in its magic sense, means nothing else but that the consciousness of, or contact with, the Absolute, (i. e. the macrocosm), must not be interrupted.

Needless to say that the magician, during his magic operation with the help of a magic circle and with the being standing in front of him, must not step out of the circle with his physical body, unless he has finished his experiment and dismissed the relevant being.

All this clearly shows that a true magic circle is really the best means to practice ceremonial magic. The magician will always find that the magic circle is, in every respect, the highest symbol in his hand.

It is hardly necessary to mention the specimen of a magic circle, since every magician will now know from what I have said above how he has to proceed, and it is now up to him to make use of the instructions given here. Yet he must never forget the main thing, that is the orientation he needs when working with a magic circle, for only if he has reached the necessary cosmic contact by means of meditation and imagination, i. e. the personal connection with his God, will he be qualified for entering the circle and starting work inside it.