

ON THE CORDS OF THE ARTS

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The CORDS of the ARTS are a tool often neglected in the training of the modern witch. The purpose of this ancient tool is primarily to bind, and the operations of binding are called ligatures.

To properly make the cords, take three pieces of twine, hemp, rope, cord, or ribbon, depending on your sense of what is appropriate for the occasion in question. Cut them to any convenient length, but all three should be equal.

In a properly warded workplace, asperge the cords with the water of purification, saying words to the effect of I cleanse ye, oh creature of (whatever you decided to make them of).

Then pass the cords through the smoke of the incense, saying:

"I consecrate ye with fire, oh Cords of the Arts."

In other words, make them in the same way that you would make any other of your tools.

After they have been made, the cords should be kept in a small cloth bag.

Binding with the cords may be done in any number of diverse ways.

Let us take the example of wishing to bind an enemy so that they can take no action against you. In a proper place and time, take out the cords and a poppet or personal object of your adversary.

For this example, we will assume that the poppet is the item being used, since it is the easiest for the beginner to deal with for this operation. The poppet should have been made beforehand, and purified, consecrated and named in the usual fashion.

Take the cords in your cupped hands and breathe on them while visualizing the witch-light glowing on and through them to wake them unto life, just as you would do with any of the tools.

Unlike the other tools of the Arts, the cords must be replaced whenever we use them, though a cunning witch will keep one set for her altar, and make sets to use whenever the need arises.

Select one of the cords, and bind the feet of the poppet, saying:

(name), You shall *not* go where you can harm me. I BIND YOU!

And draw your knot tight on the last words.

Take another cord and bind the hands of the poppet, saying:

(name), You shall *not* work harm against me, I BIND YOU!

Again pulling the knot tight with the last words.

Take the last cord and gag the poppet, saying:

(name), You shall not speak against me, I BIND YOU!

Again drawing the knot tight while you forcefully intone the last words.

Take up the bound poppet, and present it to the four quarters, saying:

Behold! Here is (name), bound from harming me in any way!

Take the poppet and lay it at the place where the four winds meet (at the center of your circle, that is) and, forming the sign of the Horned God with your left hand (this is a magick of limiting or taking away, so the left hand should be used), trace the pentangle starting from the lower-left point saying:

You (name), no longer have any power to harm me or mine.
May no harm come to you, but you will offend us no more.
By all the powers, it is so!

You should then put the poppet into a bag, or wrap it in cloth, and bury it in a secret place known only to yourself.

To undo this spell, undo the knots saying things like:
Speak however you will,

THE BINDING IS UN-DONE!

and so on until all the knots are undone. Then present the poppet to the four winds, telling them that (name) is now free. Make the sign of the fig with your right hand and trace the pentangle starting at the top and moving to the lower-left, saying:

(name), I give you back your freedom, do as you will.

When the binding is no more, un-name the poppet and destroy it by fire.

A word of warning:

When we bind someone, we also bind ourselves in similar fashion.

That is, if we bind someone from harming us, the binding will last only so long as we do not attempt to harm them.

Binding may be used as a defensive measure, but not as a way of restraining an opponent to deliver a blow, magickal or otherwise.

If you bind someone from harming you, you must be willing to be harmless to them in return.

Bindings may be used for many purposes. One may bind a friend to good fortune, or away from destructive habits. As always, one must consider the ethics of the situation.

One may bind a magickal item or weapon with the cords to restrain the power it contains. A bound item is usually undetectable by scrying or other magickal means, which can be useful at times.

The ceremony of handfasting, when properly done, is a binding that is in effect for as long as love shall last. Still, the purpose of the hand-fast rite is to bind the lovers to walk, act, and speak as one. At least, this is how it was done in times past.

The cords are usually wrapped around the foot of a new initiate, but *not* knotted, since the initiate must be neither bound nor free. A binding in the sense the word is used here is not permissible in the case of initiation, since one must follow the path of their own free will, which must always remain free.

Other than these special cases, ligature may be used wherever the witch feels it is called for.

As always, And it harm none, do what ye will.

Q&A

[Q] So, we bind a person to not harm us, but then this doesn't bind them from striking us?

[A] The purpose of the binding is to END aggression on *both* sides. it binds BOTH the target and the caster.

[Q] What happens if the poppet is found? Nothing of a dire nature?

[A] The usual.. both sides are freed.. the spell would be broken..no, nothing drastic.. BUT if a powerful and baneful magickal item were bound to keep it from working it's bane.. I wouldn't care to be the one undoing those cords...

[Q] Does it work with fire and flood, or just with people?

[A] Weather-working takes a LOT more juice than a person... and affects thousands more lives.. I wouldn't dare.. and I DON'T say that very often...:)

[Q] What about binding ourselves to good fortune - can it work like that?

[A] Certainly! bindings work best of all when we do them on ourselves..binding ourselves away from destructive habits, for example...

[Q] Do you have to unbind things? Could you not just leave them?

[A] in that case.. bury it in damp soil, and ask the deity to drain off the power.. or throw it into running water.... DEEP running water...

[Q] How much kick-back would there be in something like that? Would it effect the stream or river?

[A]If it is bound first.. should be gradual enough that a stream could handle it.. REALLY powerful artifacts are rather rare..

[Q] What has been the most powerful binding that you have worked with, or witnessed?

[A] Tough question... I would say that the most *serious* binding I ever was involved in was some personal tools of a High Priestess.. she had ordered them buried with her..with modern burial methods, earth and water couldn't be counted on to 'earth' the power... so the bags they [the tools] were bound in were filled with salt and pine needles, and the binding was done with iron wire rather than cord...

[Q] Serious as in a final rite - but that had no effect that you could witness?

[A] ahh... but it DEFINITELY had an effect that you could feel....

[Q] What was it like?

[A] Like shutting a thing away.... like when the power goes off in your house.. a feeling of quiet.. not quite peace.. more like just quiet.

[Q] Why is the pine used?

[A] She [the High Priestess] had ordered it done because she feared that evil forces would try to obtain the items to gain their power.. evil shuns even the scent of pine.. and salt causes pain to non-physical entities.. as does cold iron. They were her combat tools.. she was a warrior..

but wished to take them from the light of the sun when she went..

[Q] Is a pine forest one of the most sacred, then?

[A] Yes!! pine and human beings share a sort of symbiotic relationship..

