

# THE MAGICIAN'S WORKBOOK



Practicing the Rituals of the Western Tradition

**DONALD TYSON**

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## Magic: The Yoga of the West

Although they differ in methods, magic and yoga share a common goal—to transform the individual’s consciousness and life through an inner union with Divine forces. Donald Tyson, a practicing magician as well as a prolific writer, designed this magical curriculum based on the premise that we learn best by doing rather than simply by reading and theorizing. The impetus for engaging in magic is the desire for results—and this book gives the aspiring magician a clear path to that end.

*The Magician’s Workbook* presents a progressive, integrated series of practical exercises in the Western tradition, designed to create proficiency in the essentials of ritual magic quickly and effectively. These are exercises that do not merely teach—they transform. When regularly practiced, they will result in changes to the body and mind that provide the inner foundation for all magical success

You will find much that is unique in this approach, including:

- A complete and integrated system, combined with a forty-week schedule of daily study
- A primary focus on the training and conditioning of the mind and the will, which is far more important than physical actions or material instruments for successful ritual work
- Complete details of each exercise, encompassing internal as well as external activity

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## About the Author

Donald Tyson (Nova Scotia, Canada) was drawn to science early in life by an intense fascination with astronomy. He began university seeking a science degree, but became disillusioned with the aridity and futility of a mechanistic view of the universe, and shifted his major to English. After graduating with honors he has pursued a writing career. Now he devotes his life to the attainment of a complete gnosis of the art of magic in theory and practice. His purpose is to formulate an accessible system of personal training composed of East and West, past and present, that will help others discover the reason for their existence and the way to fulfill it.

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*Practicing the Rituals  
of the Western Tradition*

**DONALD TYSON**

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## *Introduction*

### **Benefits of the Exercises Automatic**

The forty exercises in this book are designed to develop the practical skills necessary to work ritual magic in the Western tradition. Their value lies in the doing. They are not meant to be studied or analyzed, but repeatedly performed on a regular basis. When integrated into a daily routine of practice and done consistently over a period of months, the benefits they confer are automatic and universal. They strengthen the will, focus concentration, enhance creative visualization, and awaken the perception of esoteric forces and spiritual creatures.

Anyone who follows the routine of practice set forth in the appendix will experience profound changes of mind and body. The degree of benefit will vary depending on the latent gifts within each individual, but just as no one can lift weights for months without enlarging their biceps, it is impossible to work these exercises of practical magic without expanding and strengthening the occult faculties.

You will become more aware of the processes of your own mind, and increasingly conscious of your dreams. You will sense subtle currents of force moving within your body and through the world around you, and learn to control them. Your intuition will grow keener and more reliable. You will perceive the presence of spiritual intelligences and interact with them. You will be able to project the power

of your will as a tangible force to influence spirits and human beings. You will cleanse buildings and places of destructive atmospheres, charge objects with subtle energies, open gateways to higher spiritual realms, awaken the energy centers of your body, and call forth angels and elementals to serve your needs.

All exercises are completely practical. A brief commentary has been added to each, but these commentaries contain no theories or moral cautions or history lessons, only instructions essential to avoid confusion and insure accurate performance. Countless books explain, justify, and analyze various aspects and systems of magic, past and present, in exhaustive detail. These works have their place, but they often suffer from a deficiency of simple directions on how to actually do the magic they describe. Readers are forced to distill procedures from hundreds of pages of general discussion, or must translate abstract references into practical steps.

### **Exercises Progressive and Modular**

This crystallization of the practical from the abstract can prove difficult even for those with prior experience in ritual magic. Beginners find it impossible. They do not know where to start, and are bewildered by the sheer mass of information that confronts them. They are told to draw a pentagram, or project a circle, or raise a cone of power, or ground and center themselves, or charge an object, or open their chakras, or invoke the Light, but are seldom instructed in simple steps how to do these things. The practical directions found in most texts on magic, even in the very best, are woefully inadequate. Rituals are set forth in the form of skeletal outlines. While these outlines may serve as useful reminders to those who already know the rituals, they are insufficient for the larger percentage of readers who come upon the rituals for the first time, never having worked a ritual before.

Even when a ritual is described in detail, it is not enough for the practitioner to know all of the required physical actions and gestures. Much more important are the inner actions—visualization of astral forms, manipulation of energy centers and esoteric currents, vibration of words of power, transformation of the aura and the astral body. In those extremely rare instances where both the outer and inner actions of a ritual are described in precise and exhaustive detail, it is still not enough. The ritual will prove ineffective unless the practitioner has trained and strengthened his or her occult faculties.

You can study the theory of how to ride a bicycle for months, and receive advice from hundreds of expert cyclists, but unless you actually practice on a bike to improve your balance, when you try to ride you are certain to fail. It is the same with ritual magic. You must know in complete detail the physical actions needed for a ritual. You must also know how to visualize subtle forces involved in the ritual, and how to manipulate them both within your body and in the greater world. Even this is not enough, however, unless you also have trained in ritual techniques and conditioned your mind and body through repeated practice in the skills that ritual magic requires.

Each exercise in this book is written out in exhaustive detail. Both the external physical actions and the internal mental actions that are required are completely explained. There is no presumption that the reader already knows any of the steps. This degree of detail may seem excessive to those already skilled in ritual magic, but beginners will find it not only helpful but essential, if they are to perform the exercises accurately. Even those who have worked magic for years may discover in this book aspects of practice that they had not previously considered.

A deficiency of most practical texts on magic is the tendency to present rituals toward the end of the book in a kind of shorthand outline, under the assumption that everything written previously is fresh in the memory. This is fine if the reader has read the book from front to back just prior to attempting the rituals, but not if the reader takes up the book six months after reading it with the intention of working one of its procedures. Once the initial explanatory material has left the memory, these shorthand rituals become incomprehensible, and the reader must reread the entire book before they can be enacted. To avoid this difficulty, all the exercises in the present work are written so that they can be understood without the need to refer back to previous instructions.

The exercises are progressive and modular. The early exercises are simpler than those that come later. The complex rituals toward the end of the book are built up of components previously practiced and perfected, so that the reader is not overwhelmed by them, as happens too often in ritual texts, but recognizes in them known procedures. Because these exercises are intended to develop skills and teach techniques rather than achieve results, they are general rather than specific, and may be adapted to a wide variety of purposes.

## Essential Role of the Golden Dawn

Some are training exercises and ritual methods developed independently in my own practice. Others are standard techniques and rituals of Western occultism that were first used by the original Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret lodge of English magicians that flourished at the end of the nineteenth century. Still others are original rituals, but based on Golden Dawn components. The single thread connecting the exercises is their utility. I have used them all at various times and have found them effective in advancing my skills and awakening sleeping perceptions and abilities. They work, or I would not have included them.

Readers of my other works will know that I do not agree with every aspect of Golden Dawn symbolism. These disagreements are described and justified at length in my book *New Millennium Magic*, where my personal system of magic is presented. To avoid confusing beginners, all of the exercises in the present work adhere to the Golden Dawn system of occult correspondences. Golden Dawn associations are used by the majority of ritual magicians and pagans practicing magic today, even though many of them have no idea where these symbolic relationships originated. The most important of these correspondences is the assignment of the four philosophical elements, spirits, angels and names of power to the four points of the compass. Also important is the relationship between the twenty-two Tarot trumps and the twelve zodiac signs, seven astrological planets, and three simple elements.

It is essential that beginners learn both the occult correspondences and the basic ritual techniques taught by the original Golden Dawn, even if they have no special interest in the Order and no intention of studying its complex ceremonies and system of magic as a whole. The Golden Dawn correspondences are the nearest thing to a standard that exists in modern Western magic. As for the basic rituals of the Order, no techniques are more effective in awakening latent magical ability. They form the backbone of modern magic, and must be thoroughly understood in a practical way by every serious magician.

The Golden Dawn material in the present work includes the invocation and banishing of elemental forces by pentagram, the technique of centering by the Kabbalistic Cross, the technique for vibrating words of power, the way of charging objects with elemental force, both the Lesser Ritual and the Greater Ritual of the Pentagram, the Middle Pillar Exercise, the Rose Cross Ritual, the invocation of the guardians of the quarters, the use of the tattwas in scrying, and other essential

techniques. In presenting the Golden Dawn rituals, I have kept closely to the original structures, but have expanded their descriptions, rendering the rituals much more accessible and effective for the average user. Even those who have been doing magic for years and know the Golden Dawn system may find this presentation of the essential Golden Dawn rituals illuminating.

## Arrangement of the Exercises

The exercises fall into five groups. The first group involves mental exercises done during the course of the day while engaged in ordinary activities. The second consists of visualization exercises performed in a reclining posture. The third group is done while sitting in a chair, and combines visualization with physical actions or objects for the purpose of developing increased concentration, strengthening the will, astral projection, and other basic skills. The fourth group of exercises is done standing in place, with at least one foot stationary, and introduces ritual techniques. The fifth group involves more complex ritual techniques, and is done while moving or walking around the practice area.

The earliest exercises have no formal structure or associated body posture. They are practiced entirely in the mind. The final exercises are complex rituals that involve many physical movements and gestures. The rest are roughly graded between these extremes. Those in the first half of the work are predominately mental in their focus, those in the second half physical (though always with a vital mental component). The early exercises tend to be directed inward, while the later exercises tend to be directed outward. There is no rigid adherence to these general rules, but they reveal a gradation to the exercises in which skills gained inwardly are used in outer ritual forms.

I have as much as possible avoided the use of tools and materials. Beginners often have difficulty making or procuring instruments. When employed in rituals, instruments distract beginners from the real work of creative visualization and inner concentration. The tools I have described are simple and inexpensive, and will be available to everyone. They consist of a knife, the tattwa symbols cut from cardboard, various receptacles to hold common substances such as water and salt, candles, regular coins, a deck of Tarot cards, incense sticks and cones, a dowsing pendulum that can be made from a piece of thread and a ring, and simple objects such as a watch and a kettle. No ritual clothing is needed, nor is it necessary to create magic talismans, pentacles, or sigils.



## Exercises Complete and Practical

This book was written in direct response to numerous letters received over the years, in which readers have asked for a manual of simple instructions that would allow them to actually begin to practice magic rather than merely reading about it. The exercises will be of greatest help to anyone seriously interested in learning magic, but bewildered by the abundance of texts either too complex and abstract to apply to their own situation, or too simplistic to be of any practical value.

Complexity is inevitable in some areas of magic. It is impossible to write a simple book on Enochian magic without leaving out 95 percent of the subject. Similarly, there is no way to explain the Kabbalah in a handful of paragraphs. These subjects are complex and require complex treatments. Israel Regardie's great work *The Golden Dawn* is over 800 pages of fine print, and needs every page to cover the full system of magic used by the Golden Dawn. However, once the beginner has acquired practical knowledge of the basic techniques of ritual magic, these challenging texts become much easier to understand.

At the other extreme of the scale, there is a distressing abundance of books on magical topics that simplify their subject to such a degree, nothing of practical value remains. These works advocate a sort of "shake-and-bake" instant magic. It is assumed by their authors that no preparation and no inner development is required, merely the mechanical execution of a few physical actions, the utterance of a dozen words memorized by rote, and usually, the lighting of a candle. Add water and stir—miracle follows after fifteen minutes. It is quite obvious that those who write such books have no knowledge of magic. The tragedy is that their books mislead many serious beginners into believing that magic requires no effort—or worse, that magic is an obvious fraud and a waste of time.

It is hoped that the present work finds a middle ground between overwhelming the beginner with detail, and simplifying the subject to such a degree that nothing of practical worth remains. Contained in these forty exercises is all that is needed to acquire the basic skills and techniques of ritual magic. A suggested schedule of study is set forth in the appendix to progressively introduce the material over a forty week period. However, the practice of these exercises does not cease after forty weeks, but continues for a lifetime. Also included in the appendix is a four-week maintenance cycle designed to sustain the level of skill achieved during the forty weeks.

## Considerations When Doing the Exercises

All of the exercises should be done when the body is in good health, and the mind tranquil. More than one exercise may be done in a day, but they should be spaced apart from each other. It is best to do the three exercises suggested for each day of the practice schedule separately in the morning, early afternoon, and evening, when this is possible. The exceptions to this rule are the life exercises at the beginning of the book, which are completely internal and extend over the full term of the day. These may be done in conjunction with the daily three external exercises.

Never do two exercises back to back. Also, avoid performing two or more similar exercises in the same day, even when they are divided by several hours. For example, you should not do two major rituals, such as “Cleansing a Space” (exercise 38) and “Evoking Into the Triangle” (exercise 40), in the same day because the first will deplete a portion of the energy required to successfully perform the second. It is safe to do exercises from different categories in the same twenty-four-hour period—a reclining exercise may be combined with a sitting exercise, a standing exercise and a moving exercise.

Always wear loose, comfortable clothing during practice, and be sure to remove anything that irritates your skin or restricts your circulation, such as jewelry, a watch, shoes, a tight belt, or a hat. This is particularly important for those articles of clothing that distract your attention. Someone who has worn a wedding band for years will not need to remove it because the ring has become a part of the perceived self, an extension of the personal identity. Whenever possible, bathe before practice. It is enough to only wash your hands and face for the simpler exercises, but before major rituals it is better to shower or take a bath. Physical cleansing of the body symbolically washes away the clutter of daily concerns and purifies the purpose.

Nothing in this book should be considered unalterable. This applies not only to the suggested schedule of practice, but to the rituals themselves, even those created by the Golden Dawn. When magic ceases to change and grow, it petrifies. Magic only lives within the mind and heart of the human being who works it. I have done my best to distill the essence of my daily practice of ritual magic over many years. These are the techniques that have proved most fruitful. They suit me, and it is my belief that they will be useful to many others. But if there are exercises in this book

that you find unhelpful, by all means change them to meet your needs. There is no such thing as teaching, there is only learning. I can describe the basics of practical magic, but only you have the power to make magic a reality in your own life.

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## *Preface*

### **Yoga of the West**

In the first chapter of her book *The Mystical Qabalah*, Dion Fortune referred to the European esoteric tradition as the “yoga of the West.” She had in mind specifically the magical Kabbalah, as taught by the original Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and its offshoot members and occult lodges, but also intended this description to embrace the discipline of ceremonial magic as a whole.

In order to understand her intention, it is necessary to know that yoga is far more than merely a form of physical exercise. There are numerous types of yoga, some predominantly physical and others mainly mental in their approach. For example, Hatha yoga employs physical postures of the body. Bakti yoga involves the exercise of love and devotion. Mantra yoga relies on chanting. Laya yoga focuses on activating the chakras and the sexual power of kundalini in the body.

All types of yoga have as their common goal the attainment of mastery over both the mind and body, for the purpose of transforming consciousness and achieving personal power. The control the yogi seeks is not power over other human beings, but power over the self, because the yogi recognizes that command of the self results in control over the environment in which the self functions. A human being who has mastered the self cannot be dominated by any other person; to the contrary, there is a strong tendency for others to seek to emulate and follow such a master, because they intuitively recognize the value of self-control.

Western ritual magic at its higher level involves an intense mental and physical discipline that is every bit as rigorous as that imposed by Eastern yoga. The yogi tends to work inwardly, focusing on the body, whereas the magus directs the will outwardly upon the objects of the greater world. This apparent distinction is misleading, since inner world and outer world have no dividing boundary, but are an indivisible universe perceived by a single human mind. The ultimate goal is similar in both practices—to master the personal universe and yoke it to the higher aspirations. Power over the environment is a byproduct of skilled magic, but even more significant is the command of the self attained by the magus.

On the physical level, magic relies on tools such as the wand, the chalice, and the altar to divide space and energize objects. On the sensory level, it uses scents, colors, textures, and sounds to focus and direct the attention. On the emotional level, feelings such as enthusiasm, joy, devotion, love, and desire are employed as engines of the ritual purpose. On the mental level, creative visualization shapes and manipulates the substance of the imagination so that they appear to be materially present before the sight. On the spiritual level words and symbols of power constrain spiritual intelligences to fulfill the will of the magus as faithful servants.

None of these aspects is less important than any other. They all work together to accomplish the higher purpose of self-mastery. The magus not only makes his body and mind his ritual tools, he makes the entire universe his instrument of transformation. The serious student of Western magic soon finds that life itself is a ritual working that must be completed—it is merely of question of doing it well or doing it poorly.

No one would expect to build up their body without daily exercise, or to get through university without regular study, but those who approach magic for the first time often have the childish notion that magic will work independently, without any effort required on their part. This naive expectation stems from the mistaken belief that magic is something external and separate from the self, that its incantations, sigils, and pentacles function by themselves, in much the same way that a car engine runs by itself with a turn of the key. This is false. There is no such thing as a word or a symbol that has power inherent in itself. These things are tools, nothing more, and must be skillful manipulated. Learning how to use them properly takes practice, determination, and most of all, plain old hard work.

The tools of magic must be employed on all levels simultaneously. It is not enough to wave a wand about in the air, it must be actualized and visualized on the

astral level. During use, the magus remains keenly aware of its responsiveness and tactile feel. Energy is projected along its length with the force of the will. The words of power that are written on its sides are sustained in the depths of the mind, where they act most effectively. Emotional energy is heightened at the moment of projection, then allowed to fall completely quiescent to prevent a backlash. The magic is not in the wand, it is in the magician. The ritual is not worked in the external environment with physical objects, it is worked in the unity of the personal universe that embraces both inside and outside without division.

Most basic texts of Western ritual magic focus on externals. They describe which physical tools should be used, how to dress, what to say, how to move, which symbols and sigils must be employed, the best color for a given purpose, the most appropriate incense, which zodiac sign or planet to invoke, and so on. There is nothing wrong with this approach, as far as it goes. This information is necessary for the practice of magic. However, it is not enough by itself. Without the ability to focus and sustain the will, to channel the energy of the emotions, to visualize in a concrete way astral forms, to vibrate both inwardly and outwardly words of power, the ritual will fail.

Magic, like yoga, is a total mind-body experience that embraces both the self and the world. In yoga, it is difficult to forget the importance of the self because yoga is directed inwardly at controlling the thoughts and disciplining the flesh. In magic, which appears on superficial inspection to involve only external objects and symbols, it is much easier to fall into the error of supposing that mental discipline and focus are unimportant, or at least are less important than external movements, gestures, and symbols.

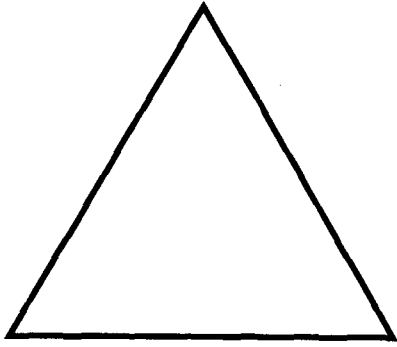
This workbook redresses the imbalance so common to basic ritual texts, by emphasizing equally both the external aspects of ritual and the internal aspects that must accompany them. Each exercise describes in detail what to do with your body and hands, but also what you must do with your emotions, will, and imagination. These inner requirements of ritual, so well-known to every skilled Western practitioner, are hidden from those seeking to learn magic, simply because internal requirements of ritual magic are not examined in most instructions books. The way the fundamental rituals of Western magic are described in this workbook is the way they are actually performed by knowledgeable practitioners.

Even a detailed description of the actual manner in which rituals are done is not enough to do successful ritual magic. The mind must be conditioned and trained

before the inner aspects of ritual can be successfully worked. It is not enough to know how to do magic, you must build up your skills until you attain a level of competence that allows you to actually work rituals effectively. A thin and unconditioned man may know, in very precise detail, how to lift a bar with three hundred pounds of weight attached to it, but unless he has trained his body he will never be able to actually raise the weight. Similarly, even with the detailed description set forth in this book of what must be willed and projected and visualized during ritual, the beginner will not be able to do magic successfully until he or she has strengthened the will, gained control over thoughts and emotions, and attained proficiency in visualization of astral forms.

Many of the exercises in the workbook are designed to build up the mental and physical abilities essential for ritual magic. Among them are exercises for sustaining concentration on a single point for prolonged periods, for projecting the will at a distance, and for visualizing complex astral forms both inside and outside the body. Controlled breathing exercises are prominent since mastery of the breath is essential for controlling the subtle forces of the mind and body, particularly the fiery energy of kundalini. Also vital to success is the skilled vibration of words of power, both inwardly and outwardly, a technique that is often mentioned but seldom taught in detail.

Ceremonial magic truly is the yoga of the West. It has not been accorded the importance it deserves because its virtue as a serious discipline of self-transformation has remained overshadowed by the flash and glamour of its outward show, and by the false expectations and erroneous beliefs of cynics who reject it without even trying to understand it. It is only a matter of time before it is recognized as a precious legacy of our European heritage, able to liberate and transform human consciousness to an unparalleled degree and give complete mastery over both the self and the world. As an instrument of personal empowerment, Western magic has no equal.



*LIFE*  
*EXERCISES*



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