

LESSON NINE: HOW TO HOLD A BLOT

Now that you have learned about the Gods, you should learn how to perform a *blot* (pronounced “bloat”), which can be translated as “sacrifice.” A blot can be performed by yourself as an individual or by a group of people. It can be long or take only a few minutes. The purpose of the blot is to honor the Gods and establish a personal link between them and yourself or your kindred. When a group of people perform a blot, it can be done either inside or outside, though the latter is more traditional. In ancient times our ancestors might have slaughtered a sacrificial animal, and some kindreds still perform this ritual. Most people raised their own livestock and animals were vitally necessary for their survival. To slaughter an animal was a major sacrifice. But today this is unnecessary. Unless you are a farmer and grow livestock, an animal is not necessary for your blot. It would make more sense to burn an automobile because most people today depend on cars for their well-being. But if you wish to make an animal blot and cannot actually slaughter an animal, you can simply buy some meat (high grade of course) at the supermarket. An animal sacrifice was more like a ritualistic barbecue. The animal was cooked and the attendees shared in the feast. They simply took what they considered the best part of the animal and burned it as an offering to the Gods.

The blot has about eight specific parts to it that we will lay out for you in this lesson. You are free to make changes, as you will have to when you perform blots for specific holidays. What we will provide is the basic outline of a traditional blot.

1) THE GATHERING

The Participants usually enter the room or area set aside for the blot in single file, moving clockwise, and form a circle. For indoor rituals, the altar is usually made of wood with carvings in it. For outdoor rituals the altar is usually made of blocks of stone piled on each other and is known as a *horg*. The altar usually faces north and the needed instruments are set on it. The Gothi would then lead everyone in some kind of chant, welcoming the required deities to come and join them. Some simply chant, “Odin! Vili! Ve!” while others would call to the deity such as, “O Mighty Thor! Join with us in this circle!” The start of the ritual is signaled by either blowing a horn three times or ringing a bell three times.

2) THE HALLOWING

If the ritual is held indoors you can decorate the hof or room in such a way as to create a sacred area. One way is to decorate all the walls with the twenty-four Runes of the Elder Futhark so that the four walls create a “Rune circle,” or a “Rune square.” If the ritual is held outdoors you can create a circle of torches standing about five or six feet high, or construct a circle of stones.

Once you have established the sacred area you can use the Hammer Rite to Hallow it.

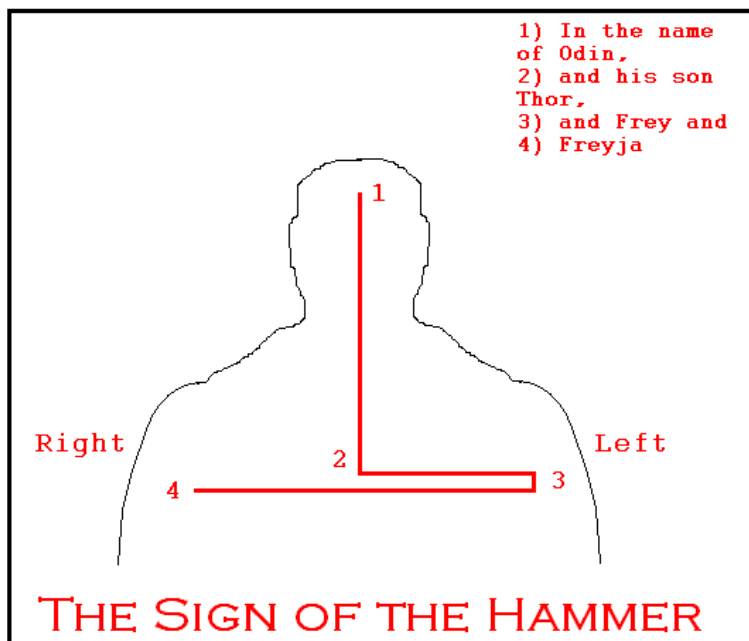
The only thing you need is a hammer. You can use a wooden mallet, a small sledge hammer or any type of hammer. It is better to have a hammer with a metal head and wooden handle, but a mallet with a wooden head will serve. The hammer you do use should be consecrated to Thor. This can be done by carving the entire Futhark on the handle and then sprinkling the hammer with a little mead and asking Thor to bless the hammer. Then hold the head of the hammer over a small flame (this is why it is better to have a metal head on the hammer) and say, "By the powers of fire and ice that created the universe, I ask Mighty Thor, Protector of the Gods and mankind, to fill this hammer with his power."

Once you have done this, consider this hammer a tool to be used in all your rituals. Use the same hammer every time you want to perform the Hammer Rite. The purpose of this rite is to protect your group against all forces that might be detrimental to your work. This will be important as you progress to the following set of lessons. The forces that the rite will protect you from are not "evil," just disharmonious to the work that you will be performing. They are the uncontrolled forces of Chaos that are personified by the Giants and controlled by Loki. In the future, you will learn to harness the Life Force of the Gods (the Vril). This force can just as easily be used to serve the gigantic forces of chaos as that of the Gods. Since Thor is the protector against the Giants, the Hammer Rite will be very effective in protecting you from these disharmonious forces. Most Giants are cumbersome and obvious, but remember the Trickster—Loki—the Fire Imp? He is cunning and will trip you up if you let him. Here are the steps you should do when performing the Hammer Rite:

1) As Gothi, you should stand with the hammer in your hand, facing east or north, depending on the ceremony.

2) Pick up the hammer and touch it to your breast, and then point it straight out before you once more.

3) Make the Sign of the Hammer over the altar. Then touch the hammer to your forehead while saying, "In the name of Odin." Then touch the hammer to your heart and say, "In the name of Thor." Next, touch the hammer



to your left shoulder and say, "In the name of Frey." Finally, touch the hammer to your right shoulder and say, "And in the name of Freyja." This is the Sign of the Hammer, and the entire group should make the sign as you are doing it.

4) Then hold the hammer out before you once more, making sure the hammer is eye level and you are facing north. Say, while making the Sign of the Hammer once again, over the altar, "Hammer in the north, hallow and hold this holy stead."

5) Turn to the east, still holding the hammer before you at eye level and say, "Hammer in the east, hallow and hold this holy stead."

6) Turn to the south, still holding the hammer before you at eye level and say, "Hammer in the south, hallow and hold this holy stead."

7) Turn to the west, still holding the hammer before you at eye level and say, "Hammer in the west, hallow and hold this holy stead."

8) Turn to the north once more, raising the hammer over your head so that it is pointing straight up, and say: "Hammer over me, hallow and hold this holy stead."

9) Lower the hammer now straight down toward the floor and say, "Hammer below me, hallow and hold this holy stead."

10) Still facing the altar, gently tap the hammer on the altar three times and say, "Hammer, hallow and hold this holy stead."

11) Place the hammer on the altar, assume the Elhaz stadha, and say, "Hammer of Thor, great protector, protect us, the children of the Gods, in all that we do, in all our lives."

This completes the Hammer Rite. This rite can be used at any time, by yourself or with a group, to call on Thor for protection when performing rituals or ceremonies, or just holding a meeting.

Once you have sanctified the stead, you should go on to the next step.

3) THE REDE

Here you should explain the purpose of the ritual, and go into its meaning and importance. You can read from poetry, the sagas, or something you wrote specifically for this ritual.

4) THE SIGNALING

This is a call to the God, Gods, or other entities such as the Light Elves or Land Wights, whose honor the ritual is held for, or to thank them for their assistance. The Gothi usually stands in the Elhaz form with arms spread out and evokes the designated deity. The incantation should be something like this:

*Hail Odin! All-father,
Lord of the Runes,
Boverker, Lord of the Dead.
Mount your steed and ride across Midgard
and join us here!*

5) THE HALLOWING OF THE MEAD

As Gothi, you will take up the horn and fill it with mead and then carry it around the fire three times. You can take the ritual hammer and make the Sign of the Hammer over the horn. Then recite an invocation as the you hold the horn overhead. Then pour some of it into the fire, or on the ground if celebrating the Land Wights.

6)THE SHARING

The Gothi drinks from the horn of mead, which has been imbued with the power of the life force of the Gods. The horn is then passed around the circle of participants. Each participant either drinks from or kisses the horn, and then hails a God or other deity associated with the ritual. After it is returned to the Gothi, he then pours some of the mead into the fire. The rest of the mead is poured into the blessing bowl.

7)THE BLESSING

The Gothi and an assistant, who holds the bowl, walk around the circle. The Gothi dips a twig from an evergreen tree into the bowl and sprinkles the mead from the evergreen twig on each person taking part in the ritual, and says something like, "In the name of Odin, Vili, Ve," or "In the name of Odin, Thor and Balder." The names of the deities depend on the ritual.

8) THE GIVING

What is left of the mead is poured on the ground. If participants desire to give offerings to the Gods or other deities, this is the time for them to throw the offerings into the fire. Everyone watches as the fire burns and the Gothi calls on the deities to accept their offerings and renew the bonds between the deities and the participants.

9) CLOSING

The Gothi then makes some kind of declaration that the ritual is at a close and thanks both the participants and the deities for their participation. He might then strike the Hammer on the altar three times and shout:

Hail Odin! All-father!

Hail Odin!

Hail! Hail!