**Compass Round or Ring of Art**

Throughout the years of magic a circle inscribed upon the floor of the working area has always been central to the work and lore of the magician. What is this circle for? Is it necessary? How is it constructed? There are many answers to these questions and each of them from different practitioners. I am going to tell you my way and formula for creating the compass round or ring of art.

First of all what is a compass round? The compass round is the brainchild of the late **Robert Cochrane** and truly I believe it to be his creation, or at least the wording. There is an article explaining why he uses this term but for the life of me I can not find it. In essence, however, one is laying down a compass of the world and the directions correspond to the lands of the gods. This is reminiscent of the magic circle used in ceremonial workings. But before this the circle of power (as I will call it) was really just sacred space used by the magician, shamans really, to have a place of focus whilst they worked their sorcery.

In the book *Way of the Weird* the shaman-master is first seen in the novel exorcising a woman of an evil spirit which is causing her sickness. The monk who is assisting the shaman explains the circle of rods of wood that are tied to a ring of rope. This circle creates the shaman’s sacred space and the microcosm to the macrocosm. He becomes the axis mundi, the center of the world and from there he moves the world to his will. Of course, he is a bit more polite about it than many modern magicians.

The circle is the boundary that divides the world of the living from the world of the spirits, the gods, et cetera. Many say that a circle or sacred space is not necessary for all of nature is sacred, and I quite agree, but at the same time it is nice to know that the spirits in the area are aware of what you are doing. For me the compass represents a little meeting place of souls and a separate place from the world of the living in which to communicate with those spirits and to work my magic and such things. For inside purposes this makes much more sense as it is nice to clear away stuff that is not necessary for the working at hand.

For others the circle represents a place in which to store energy so it can fly out unto the universe in one great burst. I disagree with this and for me I create a circle around that which I wish to protect. For some a **compass** does not have to have circumambulations. I have known some to simply tap the ground a few times and say something to the affect of calling up the spirits and that is their compass rite. I myself, when I just want to give a simple offering, will sing or hum whilst making internal invocations to the spirits.

However many practitioners have a longer version of the compass rite. Mine is as follows and it is simply in five steps, because I like the number five.

1. Declaration of Intent
2. Create the **Crooked Path** to **Elphame**
3. Cleanse the Body and the Spirit
4. Create the Portal and the **River of Souls**
5. Declaration of Arrival

To begin I have a few objects that I would always have with me and these are my **Stang** or a rod of wood; I have heard that the left foot can also be used in a pinch. A bottle of water or cauldron of water. And finally an open flame or a heat source of some sort. I will usually also have a lantern to light my way as I usually practice at night when the living are asleep and spiritual activity is heightened.

So I begin. I come to my working area with a pile of wood or an unlit candle in front of me and a cauldron of water to my left. In my left hand is my **stang** and in my right my lit lantern. I center myself and connect to the source of All, that dark place within me which echos in all things. Then I make my Statement of Intent which might to the effect of this: “Master of Sorcery, Goat-Footed Angel with the Staring Eye. Queen Elfin of the Hollow Hills, Flaming Mistress of Creation. I ask that you open the way to the Unseen. Open the way to **Elphame** in your names, Devil and Dame! Open the Door to the Unseen!”

I begin to walk counterclockwise, dragging my **stang** behind me to make a furrow in the ground. My goal is go around at least three times, but sometimes I will go more if I need to focus more. These are words that I might say: “I create a furrow in the Land reaching into the Deepest Depths. I build a **Hedge** reaching to the highest heavens. I create a **Crooked Path** to **Elphame**. I take this **Crooked Path** going down and in around around, taking this hellish road to **Elphame**. I forsake Heaven for Hell and arrive upon a crooked path in **Elphame**!”

I plant my **stang** before me and turn now to the water. “Creature of the Waters!” I say “From you I purge all that is unclean. I remove from you all evil and purify you with the Word. By the Master’s Name! Be you prepared!” I would then wash myself in the Devil’s name by cleansing my hands, face and the back of my neck. I turn to the unlit fire and light it with the lantern’s flame. “Creature of the mortal Flame!” I intone “From you I purge all that is unclean. I remove from you all evil and purify you with the Word. By the Lady’s Name! Be you prepared!” and then I will cleanse my spirit by taking the warmth and breathing it inward in the Lady’s name.

I take up the cauldron and take it around the rim of the compass and lay down a path of water. At each cardinal point I lay down a “road” for which spirits to come by. I instruct the water to become a medium of spirits and spell work, to become the River of Souls in the Master’s name! Then I would return to the flame and instruct it to become a doorway, a window into the unseen to become a kindly light and a welcoming light for spirits and gods. So shall it be.

I would rise and stare determinedly at the **stang**, which has become the **axis mundi**, the center of all things, the world tree. Then I would say something to this effect: “Master! Mistress! I have reversed myself! I stand here by a seat of Flame, surrounded by the **River of Souls**! The ground is consecrated by your most Holy names! I have gone down and within and have come to **Elphame**. I come before you as a servant! So Shall it Be!” And then I go into my working.

By doing this I have made myself aware of the spirits and have connected into the Land. I have reversed myself and turned away from what is mundane and have opened a way to the ancestral lands and the undying lands of the gods. I have come TO the gods rather than calling them forth. If I wished to go deeper I would **“tread the mill”** by going around the stand and focus upon it and focus on bringing myself deeper into the Unseen. Also by now I am in a good altered state of consciousness which is oh so helpful so good spellwork.

The compass does not need steps three and four, indeed I have done it without them to great effect when I was hiking and decided to have a meal with the Land spirits in the area. I had gone hiking for this purpose so I did have my **stang** as well as some bread and wine. It did beautifully.

This is, of course, my way of creating the compass. It is greatly inspired by the works of **Robin Artisson** whose writings I use as a skeleton for my own poetry. I took out a lot of the symbolism that he uses for my own symbolism and it still works. Witchcraft is a personal practice, so always do your own thing in the name of the gods and spirits that you adore.