

## THE OCCULT

Aldean philosophers and scholars theorize that arcane power ultimately flows from the soul, and that the Souls of the Eternal Dance all possess at least the potential power wielded by the Primordials themselves, who created and shaped the world from the Sea of Possibility. Of course, those selfsame souls are now embodied and have forgotten much of their divine nature, but a spark of that still remains within every soul, and some find and draw upon it to wield magic in the world.

Also, like the god Anwaren, the souls of the Dance are vulnerable to the lure and temptation of Shadow, particularly when wielding the power to influence and transform. When the arcane arts are used to usurp the sovereignty of another soul, there is a resistance, a backlash from that soul's divine nature. In essence, when the arcane is used to alter another person's body, mind, or soul without their consent, it is a corrupt act (see **Corruption in Chapter I**).

Aldeans refer to magic that does these things as *occult*, for such things are obscured by Shadow. Various spells and effects that alter the mind, body, or spirit of a person call for a Wisdom saving throw against corruption, whether the caster is in a Shadow-touched place or in contact with a Shadow-touched item or not—the power of another soul recoiling in violation is sufficient cause.

### OCCULT SPELLS

The following spells are considered occult when cast on an unwilling person:

*antipathy/sympathy, calm emotions, command, compulsion, confusion, detect thoughts, dominate person, enlarge/reduce, enthrall, eyebite, fear, feeblemind, geas, hideous laughter, hypnotic pattern, imprisonment, irresistible dance, magic jar, modify memory, phantasmal killer, polymorph, suggestion, symbol, true polymorph, vampiric touch, and weird.*

Note that a few of these spells are not considered occult if they are used on a *willing* subject, such as *calm emotions*,

### CHARMING, FRIGHTENING, AND THE OCCULT

Of particular concern regarding corruption are spells and effects that cause the charmed and frightened conditions, which can involve some fine lines.

Generally speaking, effects that cause the charmed condition are not automatically corrupt if they merely improve a character's Charisma and ability to make Charisma checks. Corruption comes into play when an effect includes language like "issue commands" or "required to obey" or similar things making it clear the charmed person loses their free will entirely. Thus *dominate person* and *command* (when cast on a person) are occult, while *dominate monster* or *command* cast on another creature are not. *Charm person* and *friends* are not occult, as they enhance the spellcaster's Charisma, although unwilling subjects of those spells may not necessarily view them favorably.

On the other hand, there are few instances where a frightening spell would not be considered occult when cast on a person. Fear is almost solely a weapon of Shadow, although effects that cause fear in other creatures are acceptable.

*modify memory, or polymorph*, for examples. Others are always occult, usually because they cannot have a willing subject by definition. Likewise, many of these spells are not considered occult if they are used on creatures other than people: *dominate monster*, for example, is not occult.

Also any spells that summon fiends or undead creatures, or that create undead creatures, are occult by definition including *animate dead* and *create undead*, and *planar ally* and *gate* (involving fiends).

The guidelines for occult magic are in addition to those given for **Corruption in Chapter I**. Spellcasters are also subject to Corruption for actions they take with Shadow-touched places or items, regardless of what spells they are using.

## TELEPATHY

A number of people and creatures on Aldea are capable of mentally communicating with other creatures within a certain range. This is commonly referred to as *psychic contact, mind touch, or telepathy*. The telepathic creature is referred to as the **sender** while the creature communicated with is called the **receiver**.

### THE RECEIVER

The **receiver** does not need to be telepathic or share a language with the sender, but it must be able to understand at least one language. A creature without telepathy can receive and respond to telepathic messages but can't initiate a telepathic conversation. A receiver can terminate an unwanted telepathic conversation with a Wisdom saving throw against a DC of 8 + the sender's Charisma bonus + their proficiency bonus. This "locks" the sender

out of their mind for telepathic communication until the sender completes a short or long rest.

### THE SENDER

The **sender** does not have to see the receiver and may end the psychic contact at any time. The contact is broken as soon as the receiver is out of the sender's telepathy range. A sender can initiate or terminate a telepathic conversation without using an action but cannot initiate telepathic contact while incapacitated, and any current contact is terminated.

### PSYCHIC RAPPORT

Telepathic communication normally occurs at the speed of ordinary speech and can share words, concepts, and even

simple images, whether the sender and receiver share a language or not.

Two or more telepathic senders can enter into a state of *psychic rapport*, a deeper form of mental communication. All of the participants must be willing, able to communicate telepathically, and within their telepathic range. You can enter into rapport with others as an action, but you are normally stunned while you are in rapport, focused on your inner experience.

Creatures in rapport can communicate at ten times the speed of speech and share memories and complex images. They have advantage on all Wisdom saving throws due to the support of the other minds in their connection. They also cannot deliberately lie to each other, although they can choose not to share information. Any participant can drop out of the rapport at any time. If another sender attempts to join a rapport after it is formed, all participants must consent, otherwise the attempt fails.

## MAGIC ITEMS

Old Aldis created many arcane wonders long ago, and the Shadow Lords who followed it often used their powers to create terrible and powerful items, some of them cursed. Some of these objects from both eras of Aldean history still exist, although the secrets of their making have been lost.

Generally speaking, any very rare or legendary magic item on Aldea is likely a centuries-old relic, something the adepts of the modern world cannot yet duplicate. Other magic items are still made, with rare items as the rarest works of the finest modern adepts.

### ANCESTRAL MAGIC ITEMS

Generally, any magic items linked to ancestries not found on Aldea, such as a *cloak of elvenkind* or *dwarven plate*, do not exist here, except perhaps as unique items brought through a shadow-gate from elsewhere (and then potentially limited in effect if lacking anyone of their associated ancestry).

In some cases, there are equivalent or similar magic items to some ancestral items on Aldea, such as the *boots of the finest*, which function much the same as *boots of elvenkind*. Game Masters should feel free to come up with their own equivalent magic items, as desired.

### RHYDAN MAGIC ITEMS

Some magic items described here are intended for use by rhydan. In addition to these, there are many rhydan equivalents to humanoid magic items. For example, any magical article of clothing may be made into a collar, harness, or fitted blanket for a rhydan, and such items often change their shape to magically fit a new attuned wearer. Items requiring the use of hands or other parts a rhydan does not have, such as *gloves of missile snaring*, do not have rhydan equivalents.

### NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items are presented in alphabetical order by name, followed by the item's category, rarity, and magical properties. These items are described as they exist on Aldea; similar items may exist on other worlds, but their appearance or intended purpose might differ.

