



## Unearthed Arcana

# Ignorance Is Blessed

**Divine power in the service of uncaring, unknowable, or underpowered gods**

By Ken Hart

Illustration by Noah Bradley

*“Muffled drums beat out a nerve-scratching rhythm, and red lights flickered hypnotically in the underground Temple of Hates, where five thousand ragged worshipers knelt and abased themselves and ecstatically pressed foreheads against the cold and gritty cobbles as the trance took hold and the human venom rose in them.”*

—Fritz Leiber, “The Cloud of Hate”

Divine power in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is a powerful weapon and a great responsibility. Clerics, avengers, and other devotees swear to follow the tenets of their faith and to act as holy emissaries, spreading their deities’ influence. Such people usually venerate their gods; they might even adore them. Gods’ attitudes, on the other hand, are not so monolithic.

Differing divine outlooks can lead to variants in believer experiences and capacities.

Most of the deities in the *Rules Compendium* and the *Player’s Handbook* pay attention to the mortal world and, on occasion, heed the pleas of their clerics and other divine agents. Even evil gods, such as Lolth and Tiamat, do so. When deities intervene in the mortal world, directly or otherwise, they generally seek to help themselves through the success of their servants. Many powers and features of the divine classes reflect an attitude of “We’re in this together.”

On the other hand, mythology and fantasy fiction are full of jealous, dark, or lazy deities who couldn’t be bothered to aid their followers. More than a few Greek and Roman gods succumb to petty vices and spend much of their time contesting with each other. They don’t consider the needs of the priests within the old, pre-Vatican College of Pontiffs. Their main

pastimes are seducing mortals, drinking heavily, and betraying their fellow gods—the *Melrose Place* of ancient civilization.

Other uncaring or disdainful gods come in the form of powerful beings from another dimension, such as the Great Old Ones of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. These aliens disdain other life forms, including their own followers. Their servants' obedience derives from fear or madness, not love. For this loyalty, the cultists are typically rewarded with enslavement, searing death, or conversion into monstrous, tentacled hybrids. Similarly, the demonic Lords of Chaos in Michael Moorcock's classic Elric Saga regard most mortals the way a cat might a wounded bird.

Other fictional deities are mortals who got really, really lucky or who inherited divine energy at birth. These gods (or demigods) might possess otherworldly strength and attract worshipers who access divine power through their faith, but the attitude of these deities can be decidedly earthbound. In Fritz Leiber's revered *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser* tales, certain gods reside in the city of Lankhmar. Why bother praying to an unseen force when you can make an appointment?

All the examples above have been major inspirations for roleplayers and for the D&D game, going back to 1979 and Gary Gygax's Appendix N in the 1st Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*®. You or someone in your gaming circle might decide to create a divinely powered hero based on these concepts, either as an homage or because it sounds like an interesting idea.

So, would a barbaric cleric of an unforgiving god, such as Crom in Robert E. Howard's Conan tales, have full access to the 4th Edition cleric's wealth of

## WHAT IS APPENDIX N?

In the 1st Edition of *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, Gary Gygax included several appendices in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Appendix N was a list of the great fantasy authors and works that inspired him. These classic stories remain wonderful inspiration for today's gamer.

Only a handful of Appendix N authors and stories are cited here, but you can find the full list at <http://www.wizards.com/DnD/Article.aspx?x=dnd/4dnd/Appendix/N>. With that compilation in hand, begin exploring your local library, used-book seller, and friendly online merchant.

healing abilities? Would an avenger in the service of a selfish Shadowfell demigod deign to use divine power to let someone else make an attack, as with the channel divinity power *divine guidance*? According to the basic 4th Edition rules, the answer to both questions is a resounding "Yes!" Different builds aside, members of a particular class possess similar class features.

This Unearthed Arcana article takes a different approach, answering these questions with a tempting "What if . . .?" It begins with sample gods and role-playing suggestions addressing divine adventurers in the service of distant, disdainful, or down-to-earth deities. Channel divinity powers, class feature alternatives, and other options are offered to implement such a character creation slant. Finally, aids for fleshing out your own divine creations are provided.

## APATHETIC AND SELFISH GODS: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, "The World," offers ideas on altering core assumptions to create a variant setting, such as "Gods Are Distant." Unlike standard, semi-involved D&D deities, the gods in this variant are detached from worldly concerns. A riff on this idea could involve selfish gods who interact with mortals, but consider only their own whims. A heavenly hands-off or selfish policy could be the wont of all deities (as suggested in "Gods Are Distant"), or it could be selectively applied.

After consultation with your DM, you could create a divine hero who worships a selfish god or one who never gets involved in mortal affairs. Indeed, that deity might not be aware that it has worshipers.

A god's message might be enough to convince some people to wear the ceremonial garments and swear to spread the holy word. Performing acts to honor their god might be enough to satisfy these pious souls. Smiting a foe with *split the sky* to honor your god, however, is much cooler. Your character's choice of a divine path could be motivated by selfish desire for power—right in line with many apathetic and selfish gods that could appear in your game.

## Mythology and Fiction

The pantheons of the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Norse featured distant deities, such as the Greek god of blacksmithing, Hephaestus (Roman name: Vulcan). More renowned are those gods whose avarice and selfishness fueled many tales—none more so than the ruler of the Greek gods, Zeus (Jupiter). Zeus constantly cheated on his wife, Hera, fathering a slew of deities, demigods, and divine skirmishes in the process. As it turns out, remote Hephaestus, through his love of crafting, had more interest in his worshippers than did the top dog Zeus, who ironically presided over law and justice. This depiction of certain Greek gods as selfish and flawed carries over into Rick Riordan's modern fantasy series, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*.

The god Crom is mentioned often in Robert E. Howard's Conan tales—usually as part of an angry oath or a shocked exclamation. Conan claims that Crom is uncaring. He never does anything, either on a large scale (natural disasters) or a small one (aid to a devoted follower). Crom provides humans at birth with the courage and determination to overcome obstacles. That's enough for Conan. So how could an uninvolved Crom empower your hero? Conan would be the first to admit, if drunk, that he doesn't understand or like magic. It wouldn't be surprising to discover that he was unaware of specially trained servants of Crom who accessed divine power.

Your campaign could be set in an analog of ancient Greece or Rome or during the heyday of the Vikings. Alternatively, your adventurer could worship a distant or weakened god from a nearly forgotten pantheon patterned after mythological ones.

## Remote Deities

A variant campaign could include one or more of the core deities being extremely aloof, thus altering the message and practices of their religions. Imagine a fiery temple of Pelor in a world where Pelor largely doesn't care what mortals do. In such a setting, Pelor's priests call the shots, warping his message of watchfulness and compassion into a doctrine of searing spiritual intolerance. Branding the heathens who don't bow to their will could be the least of their depredations.

A campaign's cosmology need not be altered much, however, to add the concept of apathetic gods. Powerful entities in the Feywild, Shadowfell, and elsewhere are worshiped in the mortal world and possess godlike qualities. They might (whether by ignorance or disdain) make a habit of failing to come to the aid of their followers.

Another possibility is “dead” gods: deities presumed slain during a calamitous period, such as the Time of Troubles or the Spellplague in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Such gods could have survived, but remained largely silent during their recovery.

The gods of the DARK SUN campaign setting are definitely silent types: elemental priests on Athas worship archetypically remote gods. Taking the concept to less of an extreme, a divine adventurer on Athas or in any other setting could worship a primordial. This approach places the hero somewhere between the standard 4th Edition divine character and Athas's elemental priest.

Your adventurer's chosen deity could be more of a force of nature—an intelligent and inscrutable being with little concern for what silly, temporal mortals do. Consider the four elemental primordials in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting: Akadi,

Grumbar, Istishia, and Kossuth. Although they are not true deities in Faerûn's current cosmology, they are worshiped as gods by many tribes. The rune-priest option *rune of elemental attuning* (see below) presents one suggestion for tweaking a divine class to bring this idea to your gaming table.

## Roleplaying Suggestions

Divine heroes in the service of a distant or vain god could emulate the deity, becoming reclusive or arrogant, although this approach rarely attracts new followers. Other adventurers are gregarious and volatile, rarely holding back emotions, almost as though compensating for the god's less welcoming qualities. These emotions manifest as fire-and-brimstone speeches or shining, inspirational tales.

Alternatively, a character's demeanor could mirror specific aspects of the god or force worshiped. With elemental gods, for instance, a paladin who follows an air deity might be lighthearted and easily amused, while a cleric devoted to an ice-based god might come across as unsympathetic or cruel at times. Divinely powered adventurers who worship a distant god of death are often somber, speaking in terse, to-the-point sentences. They likely avoid procrastination, understanding better than most that life is a brief, transitory stage. They believe that people should get the most out of life while it lasts. Good and unaligned heroes of this type can have a calming effect on others; characters of a darker bent might take a sardonic, cynical tone that is unnerving.

If you're interested in playing a divine adventurer in a campaign where the standard D&D cosmology exists, consider taking a multiclass feat or creating a hybrid character to reflect the fact that you're not a



typical divine hero. For instance, a sorcerer multiclass feat or hybrid might fit someone who worships an elemental or temperamental god. Choosing a shaman or warlord multiclass feat or building a hybrid with either of those classes could best reflect a hero from a tribal or militaristic culture that worships a distant god.

## DARK, DISDAINFUL DEITIES: KISS THE TENTACLE

Cthulhu, powerful aboleths, and creatures from Beyond—what they have in common is an inhuman attitude toward life, as well as thought processes and motives that are hard to fathom. What we do comprehend is that they don't like mortals, unless possibly as appetizers. Yet in mythology, fiction, and roleplaying games, such beings are worshiped as gods by deranged, fanatical cults. Many of these cultists act covertly to corrupt influential people and institutions, paving the way for widespread subversion or invasion.

What if such cultists were not covert about it? A campaign variant mentioned in Chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests, "What if the primordials won?" In this case, the spiritual landscape of the universe would be reversed. Faiths based on bizarre creatures of the Elemental Chaos or the Far Realm dominate the mortal world, while worship of the astral gods is limited to secretive cults.

Divine heroes who revere alien entities might not always be evil, but they're certainly a little strange. If you want to practice your Peter Lorre or Christopher Walken impersonation, here's your opportunity

## Mythology and Fiction

Descriptions of inhuman, remorseless deities stretch far back in history. The ancient Egyptians feared and respected Set, the donkey-headed god of storms and chaos, whose name evolved into Satan, the alias of the Biblical fallen angel Lucifer (and inspired Sutekh the Destroyer, for the *Doctor Who* fans out there). Despite his bad reputation and his mythological struggles with the god Horus, Set was worshiped for a long time.

Dark gods of a less anthropomorphic nature arrived during the heyday of pulp horror fiction, well represented by the aforementioned H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. In the Cthulhu Mythos and the tales of Conan, Kull, and Solomon Kane, monstrous entities and the people who revere them often take center stage. Your divine adventurer could worship such beings but believe that compromise and cooperation are possible. You might see those of your faith who seek conflict as having corrupted your god's message. Even so, powers that heal or aid others, such as those of the standard 4th Edition cleric, are likely not a high priority for your hero.

## Disdainful, Alien Deities

Many of the primordials of the Elemental Chaos are Lovecraftian in nature. They are powerful enough that devoted followers could potentially access divine energy, but are so alien to the natural world that they cannot be truly understood.

A lack of understanding is part and parcel of the elder aberrations from the Far Realm. Although mind flayers and aboleths generally do not worship gods (some aboleths have outlived gods, so they're not impressed), refusing to acknowledge the superiority

of another being, a small minority within each of those monstrous races do pray. Some mind flayers worship the tentacled Ilsensine; an illithid cleric is not out of the question. In 2nd Edition AD&D, aboleths were tied to the worship of Juiblex, the demon lord of slimes and oozes. In 4th Edition, the Faceless Lord, for example, could perform a "divine masquerade," stepping in to help aboleth cultists gain access to divine power. After all, in his view, the more chaos, the better.

Other, less outlandish races in isolated communities that began existence centuries earlier as former illithid or aboleth slaves might pray to the image of an illithid or an aboleth. Clerics of such faiths could tap into divine power through either the deification of an ancient Far Realm entity or the opportunistic actions of another deity. Dishonest gods such as Lolth and Vecna could get pleasure out of masquerading this way, because it would fool mortals, cause strife, and irritate the "superior" illithid or aboleth race.

Speaking of divine deception, what if one of the established good or unaligned deities had been secretly killed and replaced by a masquerading power from the Far Realm? The shadowy and strangely cloaked senior clerics in Corellon's main temple might go unnoticed for a while, at least until one of the faithful happens to notice slime dripping from a cleric's sleeves. In the meantime, the divine abilities of your lower-ranked adventurer in Corellon's service would continue to work as normal. After a period of time during which you suffer disturbing dreams of abandoning your friends, you might awaken to discover that your *healing word* has been replaced by *subversive word* (described below).

Not as repulsive, but equally as alien as Far Realm creatures, are angelic beings from the Astral

Sea. Residents of the heavenly realms of Celestia and Hestavar might be beatific, but they are not immune to temptation or the lust for power. A frustrated angel, banned from punishing wayward mortals as freely as it wishes, could decide to develop a cult to get around the restriction. It could seek out ignorant mortals touched by divine presence at some point, intimidate them into worshipfulness, and convince them to act as deadly weapons in its stead.

## INHUMAN DEITIES AND RAVENLOFT

“Divine masquerade” might be no different tactically from how divine power was accessed in the 2nd and 3rd Edition RAVENLOFT campaign setting. Clerics in that shadowy demiplane were able to use divine magic normally, even in the case of “outsider” clerics from other campaign settings whose contact with their gods was diminished. Either the external gods were answering their clerics’ prayers in spite of the mysterious Dark Powers that maintain the demiplane’s barrier, or those prayers were being answered by the Dark Powers masquerading as the external gods. Conceivably, overly curious clerics who reach the latter conclusion could go mad, turn to worship of the Dark Powers, or both.

## Roleplaying Suggestions

Divine adventurers who worship inhuman deities likely perform their religious duties fervently and act in a deadly serious way even in their everyday activities. Many of them are as antagonistic toward other beings as is their chosen god/demon/giant brain. Such a character would have a difficult time making friends with others in the adventuring party. A “true believer” in the cause of an undying aboleth is unlikely to find common ground with a follower of Pelor or the Raven Queen.

A character who chooses an unknowable deity might have done so for reasons that were personal prior to the character’s ordination in a divine class. For instance, a young adventurer might have initially joined the cult or holy order because of her hatred toward a person or society. In time, she settled upon widespread chaos and destruction as effective weapons. (Overkill, perhaps, but revenge is revenge.) Likewise, a bitter noble whose family was exiled for dubious crimes could worship a god of destruction so that he might challenge all self-righteous and lawful authorities. These reasons don’t make their faith less genuine, but can explain why they turn to incomprehensible gods.

For those players looking for backgrounds that might aid party unity instead, consider a hero who was enslaved by—or born into slavery under—creatures from the Elemental Chaos or the Far Realm. (Among these unlucky people, the common races are human, elf, githzerai, drow, and gnoll.) To survive, your character displayed remarkable adaptability, and he or she was then elevated to an overseer position—ordained as a divine agent of the god. The hero’s faith in the alien god could have been a sham, part of an elaborate escape plan, but if it succeeded in fooling the senior

members of the order, it might be sufficient to access divine power in that god’s name. Once given, divine power isn’t easily taken away. After your hero reveals his or her true character, the rest of the order no doubt declares the adventurer a heretic, bringing a new slate of nasty problems to the campaign. (See “Faith and Heresy” in *Dragon* 397.)

Regardless of background, heroes devoted to inhuman gods usually are trained to seek out weakness. Once you understand the enemies of the faith and their flaws, you can more easily destroy them. As a result, improving your Insight skill and possibly selecting Skill Training (Bluff) could reflect your ability to subvert the weak or make plans to escape your masters’ cruelty. More surreptitious agents might choose one of the rogue multiclass feats (such as Twilight Adept) or the assassin multiclass feat Shadow Initiate.

## DEMIGODS: WITH GREAT POWER COMES NOT MUCH RESPONSIBILITY

*“Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.”*

—William Shakespeare,  
*Twelfth Night*, Act II, Scene V

Replace “greatness” with “godhood” in the Bard’s quotation, and you’ve got the essence of the demigod. Whether these beings are part of a god’s family tree or the result of exposure to the divine equivalent of the Fantastic Four’s cosmic rays, the realms of fantasy and mythology are full of immensely powerful beings who meet the qualifications for godhood but remain closely tied to the mortal world or conduct themselves in decidedly nondeific ways. Followers of such deities have an opportunity that is denied to followers of other gods: They might encounter the entities they revere in the flesh!

Many such demigods, however, aren’t even aware that they have worshipers. Those that are aware of worshipers often have no particular use or desire for them.

### Mythology and Fiction

Recall again the tales of Earth’s ancient gods, where the escapades, doomed romances, and extramarital affairs of Zeus and others resulted in half-god, half-mortal offspring. Perhaps the best known of these is the Greek Heracles or, as he is known to Romans and TV fans, Hercules. The son of Zeus/Jupiter is generally thought of as a superstrong man. He was also worshiped by Greek and Roman followers who, after

hearing of his (to coin a phrase) Herculean theft of cattle, prayed at shrines and temples for this being to provide food for them as well.

Hindu mythology also refers to demigods, although the description is a little different. Here, former mortals became divine beings known as devas (partially inspiring the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS race of that name), who were worshiped.

The mythology of ancient Egypt routinely featured demigods. These beings sometimes appeared as the result of a divine dalliance. More commonly, the pharaohs were treated as living gods. They received prayers both during their lives and after their spirit entered the Lands of the West.

In fiction, the previously mentioned Faflhrd and the Gray Mouser tales by Fritz Leiber present an unusual situation. Within the appropriately named domain of Godsland, deities occasionally aided mortals. Within the city of Lankhmar reside demigods who don’t bother with clerics. If people want to show their devotion, they can leave gifts. (Leiber’s Nehwon cosmology also includes Gods of Trouble, who do have clerics capable of using divine power, even if these gods care nothing for their followers.) If your group were to use Leiber’s stories as inspiration for your campaign—a wise move—divine heroes in the service of such demigods could be a relatively new development. Even the god in question has no idea how it’ll turn out. To balance the oddity of—and potential DM headaches resulting from—divine adventurers’ face-to-face briefings with their chosen gods, consider making some of the classes’ powers or features a little less reliable. This detriment could reflect the gods’ earthbound status. For example, a saving throw rule option is offered in “New Divine Character Options” below.

In a similar vein, the Lords of Chaos in Moorcock’s Elric series come across as extremely powerful demons, as opposed to high-minded deities. Perhaps these demon lords somehow benefited from a windfall of divine power. As a result, these sadistic, manipulative beings have their divine followers.

Drawing upon Moorcock’s fiction, you could create a cult devoted to a demon that has adopted the guise of a god (it’s an easier way to grab willing souls). Taking a page out of Robert E. Howard’s classic Solomon Kane and Conan tales, the god in question could be a pulsating, monstrous thing from either the depths of the earth or the vilest sewer, where it came upon an artifact and absorbed divine power. Alternatively, your group’s archenemy could be a lich or other powerful foe nearing the fulfillment of his nefarious epic destiny. He seeks and has found servants to provide the final divine surge.

### Demigods

Many campaign settings have embraced demigods in their pantheons. The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, for instance, has divine agents who revere “quasi-deities” such as Gwaeron Windstrom, the Red Knight, Sharess, and Velsharoon. In the 2nd Edition BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting, the major gods happen to be mortals who were present at the divine equivalent of the 1908 Tunguska explosion and were transformed into deities on the spot.

Following this pattern, feel free to modify the core pantheon so that one or more of the gods are physically manifest, creating a plethora of theological and political complications. For instance, many warriors and athletes pray to Kord before a battle or competition, each side confident that it will receive his blessing. But if Kord were physically present at such

an event, might he choose a favorite? Might he enter the competition or the battle himself, deciding in the throes of combat who to favor? Such acts could shake the faith of some believers while impressing others with the god's survival-of-the-fittest attitude.

Certain demons and devils have recruited enough mortal followers to achieve godhood or a close approximation. For worthy examples, see Yeenoghu, the Demon Prince of Gnolls (*Dragon* 364) and Baphomet, the Prince of Beasts (*Dragon* 369).

Your campaign might also incorporate godhood arising from a lucky happenstance or the culmination of a master plan. The epic destinies Chosen and Demigod, in particular, make it possible for mortals to purposefully achieve a measure of deification. A nonplayer character who the adventurers met and worked with at the beginning of their careers could wind up as a deity with worshipers by the time characters reach the epic tier. Having known a demigod before he or she achieved godly status could turn out to be a boon or a curse.

## Roleplaying Suggestions

Your divine hero's behavior might depend on the spiritual—and physical—proximity of your chosen deity. If your god is someone who can be contacted directly, you could be overwhelmed with humility or inflated with conceit. ("Yes, that's all very interesting, but as my god told me yesterday over lunch . . .") If your god has a violent, temperamental nature, you could be extremely anxious or driven to succeed. Unlike most agents of a god, you know that your deity doesn't look kindly upon failure, because he said so straight to your face or provided a memorable graphic example of your former superior.

Followers of such beings sometimes start down that path because the god or demigod directly intervened on their behalf or that of a loved one. Alternatively, they're lured by the perceived access to divinity and the power that such access could bring. As is often the case when following charismatic people who promise much, disillusionment soon follows. Even if you're playing a divine adventurer who no longer has great faith in your god, you can use divine power freely, no matter where you go. Depending on your god's ambitions and the cult of personality that develops around that being, none of your cohorts might notice that you're gone.

## NEW DIVINE CHARACTER OPTIONS

As described above, the spiritual connection between your divine hero and his or her chosen deity—or the power of the deity itself—might not be as strong as it is in a standard D&D campaign. Normally, this remoteness has little effect on the way that divine adventurers use their gifts or the nature of their powers. Here in Unearthed Arcana, however, options

exist to make such characters' diminished contact or different priorities a tangible, thought-provoking part of the campaign.

## For All Divine Characters

At the start of each day, roll a d20. This roll cannot be modified in any way.

**19-20:** Your connection to divine power is unusually strong today. As a result, during your first combat encounter today, you can use one of your divine encounter attack powers twice.

**3-18:** Your connection to divine power is as strong as ever, and you can use your abilities as normal.

**1-2:** Your connection is weaker today, resulting in the loss of one use of a divine encounter attack power during your first combat encounter today. Effectively, this means that when you have used every divine encounter attack power you have during that encounter except for one, you can't use the last one.

## For Avengers

You can substitute the channel divinity power *divine identification* for *divine guidance*.

### Divine Identification Avenger Utility

*Believing your prey to be close, you whisper the name of your god to sharpen your perceptive powers.*

**Encounter ♦ Channel Divinity, Divine**  
**Minor Action Personal**

**Effect:** Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of your oath of enmity target, and it grants combat advantage to you, even if you can't see it.

**Special:** You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.

## UNEARTHED ARCANA

As an Unearthed Arcana article, this text presents unofficial variants for the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game. You won't find these options in the *D&D Character Builder*, the *D&D Compendium*, or any printed rulebooks. If you'd like to use these divine hero options for your character, be sure to discuss it in advance with your DM and get his or her approval.



## For Clerics

You can substitute the channel divinity power *negate healing* for *divine fortune*.

### Negate Healing

#### Cleric Utility

*Calling upon divine power, you deny an opponent a chance to heal during battle.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Channel Divinity, Divine**

**Immediate Interrupt** **Ranged 5**

**Trigger:** An enemy within 5 squares of you regains hit points or gains temporary hit points.

**Target:** The triggering enemy

**Effect:** The target doesn't regain the hit points or gain the temporary hit points.

**Special:** You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.

In addition, you can substitute *subversive word* for *healing word*.

### Subversive Word

#### Cleric Attack

*With a whispered prayer, you call upon destructive divine energy to siphon the life force of an enemy.*

**Encounter (Special)** ♦ **Divine, Necrotic, Radiant**

**Minor Action** **Ranged 5**

**Requirement:** You must have a healing surge remaining.

**Target:** One enemy

**Effect:** You lose a healing surge, and the target takes necrotic and radiant damage equal to your healing surge value.

*Level 11:* The target takes 1d6 extra necrotic and radiant damage.

*Level 21:* The target takes 2d6 extra necrotic and radiant damage.

**Special:** At 16th level, you can use this power twice per encounter, but only once per round.

## For Paladins

You can substitute the channel divinity power *specter's shield* for *divine mettle*.

### Specter's Shield

#### Paladin Utility

*As your enemy strikes, your shield displays a distorted, ghastly reflection, revealing the shadowy, terrifying figure that awaits him in the near future.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Divine, Fear**

**Immediate Reaction** **Close burst 5**

**Trigger:** An enemy within 5 squares of you attacks you.

**Target:** The triggering enemy in the burst

**Effect:** The target takes a penalty to all defenses equal to your Charisma modifier until the end of your next turn.

## For Runepriests

You can substitute *rune of elemental attuning* for *rune of mending*.

### Rune of Elemental Attuning

#### Rune priest Utility

*You invoke this rune to shield you and an ally from an elemental attack.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Divine, Runic**

**Minor Action** **Close burst 5**

**Targets:** You and one ally in the burst

**Effect:** Choose acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. You lose a healing surge, and each target gains resist 5 to the chosen damage type until the end of the encounter.

*Level 11:* Resist 10 to the chosen damage type.

*Level 21:* Resist 15 to the chosen damage type.

**Rune of Destruction:** The next attack made by each target before the end of your next turn deals 4 extra damage of the chosen type (6 extra damage at 11th level and 8 extra damage at 21st level).

**Rune of Protection:** The power can target one additional ally in the burst.



## CREATE YOUR OWN GOD

Adventuring on behalf of—or against—a religious belief is one of the classic motivations for heroes with divine power. Bringing that approach to life in your campaign might require a deity or religion

that doesn't exist in history, fiction, or an established D&D setting. The following material aids in the quick creation of a novel god, whether as the foundation of a dead religion or the inspiration for a passionate flock of followers.

Roll randomly or choose the options that best serve the story you're telling. Many of the results

fit the themes presented above. Keep in mind that these suggestions are starting points for your own brainstorming. For instance, if a roll determines that a god's worshipers "shun cats," you could use any animal in place of cats or you could say that the worshipers revere cats. The tables are meant to spark your thinking, not dictate it.

1d10	Alignment	Origin	Goals	Personality 1	Personality 2	Appearance	Appearance
1	Lawful good	Far Realm	World domination	Arrogant	Lazy	Humanoid	Wings
2	Lawful good	Elemental Chaos	Planar domination	Coarse	Meticulous	Avian	Horns
3	Good	Abyss/demonic	To be left alone	Cruel	Mocking	Insectoid	Steaming body
4	Good	Astral Sea/angelic	Fulfillment of lustful urges	Curious	Positive	Mammalian	Stinger
5	Unaligned	Shadowfell	Happiness of followers	Energetic	Restless	Reptilian	Tentacles
6	Unaligned	Feywild	Dedication of followers to a certain code (e.g., strength, deception, compassion)	Fearful	Sharp	Plant	Shimmering
7	Evil	Part of divine bloodline	Nihilism	Gloomy	Strict	Tentacled	Slimy
8	Evil	Mortal who has gained power	Preservation of the status quo	Gregarious	Stubborn	Ever-changing	Glowing eyes
9	Chaotic evil	Unknown/amnesiac	Recognition by other gods of excellence, prowess, or power	Indifferent	Trustworthy	Amorphous	Metallic parts
10	Chaotic evil	Alien or technological	Vengeance on mortal enemies or other gods	Jealous	Wicked	Gaseous	Prehensile tongue

1d10	Bloodthirstiness	Hated By	Attitude	Sphere of Worship
1-2	Gentle, passive	Gods of differing alignments	Indifferent or unaware	A few true believers, sworn to total secrecy
3-4	Even-tempered	Gods of the same alignment	Encouraging	Mostly cults, tribes; referred to in whispers and lost tomes
5-6	Prone to anger	Family members or former allies	Tolerant or friendly	No more than a few hundred know of it; discovering location of a cult is one of the initiation tests
7-8	Enjoys violence and bloody sacrifices	All gods	Condescending, manipulative	A few thousand worshipers; existence is public, but membership is by invitation only
9-10	"Rip them to shreds!"	None/not considered worth hating	Contemptuous	Widespread worship; completely open to new followers

1d20	Significant or Odd Interests	Main Flaw	Followers' Quirks/Superstitions (roll twice)
1	Arts, literature	Narcissistic	Avoid mirrors
2	Quest for knowledge	Greedy	Proudly display facial tattoos/earrings
3	Bravery, fortitude	Apathetic	Shun cats; nongood followers might attempt to harm them
4	Physical appearance (self and/or mortals)	Overconfident	Keep hands covered in public
5	Dreams	Lustful	Kiss the doorway on the first visit to a dwelling
6	Enlightenment	Curious	Wear mummified animal or body part around neck
7	Torture	Deranged	Respond to a nonbeliever's idea with a counterargument, regardless of personal opinion
8	Innocent mortals (as symbols of purity)	Inferiority complex	If offered a knife, give that person a coin, or know that you will one day be enemies
9	Innocent mortals (as delicacies)	Reliant upon phylactery or other item	Sleep under the open air or in rooms that do not have corners only
10	Obsession about the future	Haunted by spirits of victims*	Hair is often lank and oily, resembling greasy tentacles
11	Dragons	Addicted to sensation	Collect soil samples from each town visited
12	A particular animal type (e.g., toads, lions)	Imprisoned or nearly dead	Relish sensations of pain
13	Time travel	Part of an inconvenient yet sticky alliance	Rhyme whenever possible, especially during conflict
14	Mortal interaction	Recklessness	Reluctant to share names; names hold power
15	Nature of religion or magic	Senile	Whisper to unseen people
16	Physical combat	Envious	Greet everyone with strong hugs (motives vary depending on god)
17	Extreme heat and/or cold	Paranoid	Settle debates with contest, e.g., Three-Dragon Ante, arm wrestling, poison tolerance
18	Eyes	Merciful	Must enter a home through the darkest/brightest entrance visible
19	Doorways	Theatrical	React vehemently to any insult
20	Arguments	Proud	Believe that "7" is a holy number; hail its appearance

\* Either those slain by the god (directly or indirectly) or those whom the god failed to protect.

1d6	1d6 again	Domain*	1d6	1d6 again	Domain*	1d6	1d6 again	Domain*
1	1	Arcana	3	1	Knowledge	5	1	Strife
	2	Change		2	Life		2	Sun
	3	Civilization		3	Love		3	Torment
	4	Creation		4	Luck		4	Trickery
	5	Darkness		5	Madness		5	Tyranny
	6	Death		6	Moon		6	Reroll this d6
2	1	Destruction	4	1	Poison	6	1	Undeath
	2	Earth		2	Protection		2	Vengeance
	3	Fate		3	Sea		3	War
	4	Freedom		4	Skill		4	Wilderness
	5	Hope		5	Storm		5	Winter
	6	Justice		6	Strength		6	Reroll this d6

\* See related feats and channel divinity powers in Divine Power—select two or three domains for the god

## About the Author

Ken Hart has edited and written a number of RPG supplements and adventures. Past contributions include Goodman Games' *Dungeon Crawl Classics* and *Etherscope*. With coconspirator Jeff LaSala, he wrote "Faith and Heresy" in *Dragon* 397. He has also contributed to the forthcoming anthology *Foreshadows: The Ghosts of Zero*. Hart lives with his wife and daughter in northern New Jersey and is trying to convince his 4-year-old that the Dread Dormammu is cool, despite his name. He blogs about gaming, *Survivor*, and pop culture at [ken-of-ghastria.livejournal.com](http://ken-of-ghastria.livejournal.com).

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