

Party Intervention - Moradin's Divine Guidance System

Party Composition & Situation Overview

The Infected Character

- **Human Warlock 12th level** with Ring of Chaotic Illumination
- **Dual Crisis:** Cerebromorphosis infection (3 days) + *Dominate Person* (8 days remaining)
- **Divine Intervention:** Lathander and Mask actively manifesting through the ring

The Dwarven Companions

- **Fighter 12th level** - Bearer of Aegis Fang (Moradin artifact)
- **Druid 11th/Ranger 1st level** - Devout follower of Moradin
- **Fighter 4th/Monk 8th level** - Temple-trained, spiritual connection to Moradin

The Knowledge Gap

- None of the dwarves possess Arcane Knowledge or Religious Knowledge
- They know their companion is "cursed" but don't understand the specifics
- They witness disturbing changes but lack context for the transformation

Moradin's Divine Response

Day 1: The Prayer for Guidance

When the dwarves pray to Moradin for help with their infected companion:

Scene: The three dwarves kneel before a hastily constructed stone altar, hammering prayers into the earth in the traditional way of their people.

Moradin's Manifestation: The sound of a great forge echoes through the area. Sparks of divine fire dance around the Bearer of Aegis Fang, and the artifact grows warm with recognition.

Moradin's Voice (deep, resonant, like hammer on anvil): *"My children, your companion walks a path between salvation and damnation. The infection that claims him is known to me—it is the curse of the Mind Thieves, ancient enemies of all free-thinking folk. But there is more... dark magic binds his will, and divine powers struggle within him. Hear my wisdom."*

Divine Visions Granted to Aegis Fang Bearer

Vision 1: The Nature of Cerebromorphosis

Moradin shows scenes of ancient dwarven holds fallen to illithid invasion

What the Fighter Sees:

- Massive underground cities filled with thralls
- Dwarven warriors fighting tentacled horrors
- The gradual transformation process: first the mind, then the body
- Final scene: A dwarf with tentacles where a beard should be

Moradin's Explanation: *"The Mind Thieves corrupt not through violence alone, but through seduction. They promise power, knowledge, dominion. Your friend's mind is already partially claimed—see how his eyes flicker with alien thought? This curse works in three stages, and each day brings him closer to complete transformation."*

Knowledge Gained:

- Cerebromorphosis progresses in stages
- Mental corruption precedes physical change
- The infected person may seem normal but have alien thoughts
- Time limit: transformation completes in days, not weeks

Vision 2: The Domination Magic

Scenes of ancient dwarven priests breaking enchantments

What the Fighter Sees:

- Dwarven clerics casting *Break Enchantment* on possessed warriors
- The visual difference between magical domination and natural behavior
- Ancient techniques for recognizing mental influence
- Methods of restraint that don't harm the dominated person

Moradin's Explanation: *"Dark magic clouds his mind beyond the infection. See how his movements are not his own? How his words carry another's will? This is the work of enchantment—powerful, but not permanent. The curse can be broken, but it requires strength, wisdom, and the right approach."*

Knowledge Gained:

- Companion is under magical mental control
- Domination can be broken with proper divine magic
- Restraint may be necessary to prevent self-harm
- The magic has a duration—it will end eventually

Vision 3: Extreme Intervention Methods

Scenes of desperate measures taken by ancient heroes

What the Fighter Sees:

- **Physical Restraint:** Dwarven warriors using adamantine shackles blessed by Moradin
- **Cold Shock Treatment:** Infected being submerged in ice-cold blessed water
- **Pain Interruption:** Controlled, non-lethal damage breaking mental patterns
- **Divine Severance:** A high-level cleric literally cutting magical connections with *Dispel Magic*

Moradin's Warning: *"These methods are dangerous, my son. They may save or destroy. Use them only if gentler ways fail, and know that each carries great risk. The body weakened by infection may not survive harsh treatment, but sometimes harsh treatment is the only path to survival."*

Practical Intervention Options (D&D 3.5 Rules)

Option 1: Physical Restraint Method

Required: Masterwork manacles or rope, Strength checks **Mechanics:**

- Grapple check (Fighter's BAB +12 vs. Warlock's BAB +9)
- Use Aid Another action (other party members assist)
- Restrained character can attempt Escape Artist or Strength checks
- **Risk:** Dominated character may order self-harm
- **Duration:** Can maintain restraint indefinitely

Moradin's Blessing: Aegis Fang bearer gains +4 sacred bonus to grapple checks against party members "for their own good"

Option 2: Cold Shock Therapy

Required: Access to very cold water, blessing ritual **Mechanics:**

- Druid can create ice with *Control Weather* or *Ice Storm*
- Monk can use *Quivering Palm* to stop blood flow temporarily (non-lethal)
- Subject takes 1d6 nonlethal cold damage per round
- Fort save DC 15 each round or become fatigued
- **Effect:** -4 penalty to mental control for 1d4 rounds after treatment
- **Risk:** Hypothermia if overdone

Moradin's Blessing: Blessed cold water adds +2 to saves against enchantment for 1 hour

Option 3: Controlled Pain Interruption

Required: Precise nonlethal damage application **Mechanics:**

- Fighter uses sap or fists for nonlethal damage
- Monk uses *Stunning Fist* (Fort save DC 16)
- Target takes exactly 1/4 current HP in nonlethal damage
- **Effect:** Dominated creature gets new save against domination (DC -2)
- **Risk:** May trigger infection's defensive mechanisms

Moradin's Blessing: Nonlethal damage from blessed weapons grants +1 to subsequent saves

Option 4: Divine Intervention Assistance

Required: Collective prayer, sacrifice of valuable items **Mechanics:**

- All three dwarves spend 8 hours in prayer
- Sacrifice items worth 500+ gp each to Moradin
- Make Knowledge (religion) checks DC 20 (untrained, so d20 only)
- **Success:** Moradin grants one *Break Enchantment* effect (CL 15th)
- **Failure:** Moradin provides guidance but no direct magic

Moradin's Blessing: If successful, effect automatically targets the most harmful enchantment first

Daily Intervention Opportunities

Day 1 Interventions

Morning: Warlock seems mostly normal, domination subtle

- **Best Approach:** Gentle questioning, watching for inconsistencies
- **Physical Signs:** Slightly vacant stare, delayed responses
- **Opportunity:** Easiest time for restraint if necessary

Evening: Infection dreams begin, domination may cause night terrors

- **Best Approach:** Watch shifts, prevent self-harm during nightmares
- **Physical Signs:** Muttering in sleep, violent movements
- **Opportunity:** Apply cold shock therapy during fever dreams

Day 2 Interventions

Morning: Physical changes begin, domination fights divine intervention

- **Best Approach:** Direct confrontation about the changes
- **Physical Signs:** Headaches, nausea, brief tentacle flickering
- **Opportunity:** Pain interruption during physical transformation moments

Evening: Mental seduction visions, domination may cause erratic behavior

- **Best Approach:** Constant supervision, group prayer sessions
- **Physical Signs:** Talking to invisible entities, inappropriate laughter
- **Opportunity:** Divine intervention ritual while visions are active

Day 3 Interventions

Morning: Final transformation attempt, domination reaches peak strength

- **Best Approach:** Physical restraint essential, prepare for violence
- **Physical Signs:** Visible tentacle development, alien mannerisms
- **Opportunity:** All intervention methods simultaneously if necessary

Evening: Crisis resolution, domination begins to weaken

- **Best Approach:** Support character through final choice
- **Physical Signs:** Depends on player choices during divine manifestation
- **Opportunity:** Divine intervention can tip the scales toward salvation

Moradin's Specific Guidance by Day

Day 1 Guidance

"Watch your friend carefully, my children. The curse works first upon the mind—he may speak words that are not his own, or fail to recognize dangers that should be obvious. Trust not his judgment in important matters, but do not let him know of your suspicion. The magic that binds his will is strong, but it seeks to remain hidden."

Practical Instructions:

- Assign watch shifts, never leave warlock alone
- Ask simple questions only the real companion would know
- Prepare restraints but don't use them unless absolutely necessary
- Look for changes in speech patterns, favorite foods, personal habits

Day 2 Guidance

"The infection grows bold, and the mind-magic grows desperate. Your friend may beg you to leave him alone, or insist he feels perfectly well even as his body changes before your eyes. Do not be deceived by false confidence or artificial calm. This is when the curse is most dangerous, for it will use your love for him as a weapon against you all."

Practical Instructions:

- Ignore protests about feeling "fine" if physical changes are visible
- Prepare for possible violence as dominated mind turns against friends
- Begin prayer rituals—Moradin's power is strongest when called upon over time
- Consider cold shock therapy if fever symptoms appear

Day 3 Guidance

"The final battle is upon you. Light and Shadow war within your friend's soul, and the domination magic fights to claim him before the transformation can complete—or destroy him trying. This is when you must choose: gentle methods that may fail, or harsh methods that may succeed. I cannot make this choice for you, my children, but I will bless whatever path your hearts tell you is right."

Practical Instructions:

- Prepare for all possibilities—salvation, transformation, or loss
- Use Aegis Fang's power to its fullest (see artifact abilities below)
- Coordinate all intervention methods if the situation becomes desperate
- Be ready to support your friend regardless of the outcome

Aegis Fang Enhanced Abilities During Crisis

Divine Resonance

Effect: While wielded during the cerebromorphosis crisis, Aegis Fang gains additional powers

- **Detection:** Can sense the strength of mental domination (aura intensity)
- **Protection:** Grants wielder immunity to the same domination effect
- **Disruption:** Successful critical hits force new saves against mental effects
- **Communication:** Can relay basic emotional states of the infected character

Moradin's Wrath Mode

Activation: When protecting an infected party member from their own dominated actions **Duration:** 1 round per point of Charisma modifier **Effects:**

- +4 enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls
- Wielder gains *Freedom of Movement*
- All attacks count as good-aligned and blessed for overcoming resistances
- Can make one additional attack per round when fighting aberrations

Dwarven Solidarity

Effect: When all three dwarven party members are within 30 feet of each other

- All gain +2 morale bonus to saves against fear and charm effects
- Can share total hit points among the three (redistribute as desired)
- Aegis Fang wielder can extend any personal buff to other dwarves
- Group prayers become 50% more effective (reduce DCs by 2)

Success and Failure Outcomes

If Interventions Succeed

- Domination effect is broken early (3-5 days remaining duration lost)
- Character gains +4 bonus to saves during final divine choice
- Party gains permanent +1 morale bonus when fighting aberrations
- Moradin's blessing: Each dwarf can call upon divine aid 1/month

If Interventions Fail

- Domination continues full duration, may interfere with divine choice
- Character suffers -2 penalty during final transformation choice
- Party must deal with potential violence during Day 3 crisis
- Moradin's test: Must prove dedication through harder trials later

Mixed Results

- Some domination effects broken, others remain
- Character can make final choice with minor interference
- Party learns valuable lessons about fighting mental influences
- Moradin's approval: Grants knowledge of other cleansing rituals

DM Notes for Running This System

Balancing Challenge and Hope

- Never make the situation hopeless, but don't make it easy
- Player agency remains paramount—interventions support, don't replace choice
- Failed intervention attempts should provide information for better future attempts

Roleplaying Opportunities

- Emphasize the dwarves' loyalty vs. their lack of understanding
- Show Moradin's practical, direct approach vs. other deities' mysticism
- Create moments where friendship transcends magical compulsion

Mechanical Integration

- Use existing D&D 3.5 rules whenever possible
- Moradin's bonuses follow standard sacred bonus types
- Intervention attempts have clear success/failure conditions with meaningful consequences

Story Continuity

- Results of intervention attempts should influence the final divine choice scene
- Success or failure here affects party dynamics going forward
- Moradin's opinion of the party is shaped by their dedication to their friend

This system creates a parallel heroic journey for the dwarven party members, giving them agency and importance during their friend's transformation crisis while respecting both D&D 3.5 mechanics and the dramatic weight of the situation.