

Liber

Probatur Temporis

Vol I

Edited by Brother AMB



Version Notice

v5.1 - 15/5/2000

(first edition 1990)

Alchemists Guild NZ ©

(The Black Book – First Standard edition)

Orientation

This course of study in Hermeticism stretches over a set of ten volumes. Named below:

- Vol I Probatur Temporis (Temporary trial - Probation)
- Vol II Probatur totus (Completion of Probation)
- Vol III Ars Imperium Mens (The Art of Controlling the Mind)
- Vol IV Prima Alchemae (Primer Lab manual)
- Vol V Discipulus Inceptor (Apprentice Papers)
- Vol VI Regula (Regulations and rules)
- Vol VII& VIII Miftach Aben (The Key to the Stone – Adept Papers)
- Vol IX Aspicio Mens (Advanced Trancework)
- Vol X Annexes

A Brief Overview Of This Introductory Discourse

"I have found that in this Meditation there are five principle heads, which must be diligently considered, as much by all who are in possession of the wisdom of philosophy as by all who aspire after that wisdom which is attained by our art. The first is the invocation of God; the second, the contemplation of Nature; the third, true preparation; the fourth, the way of using; the fifth, the use and profit. He who does not carefully attend to these points will never be included among the real Alchemists, or be numbered among the perfect professors of the spagyric science."

(Basile Valentine – The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony - 1602)

It is important right from the outset to understand exactly what this introductory discourse seeks to achieve, so that we might focus on what is important and avoid unnecessary distractions, thereby making the most of an intention to study productively.

First and foremost it should be accepted that many aspirants who desire and seek initiation via the ancient western mystery tradition often have either extremely unrealistic expectations or a healthy degree of ignorance about the subject. Experience demonstrates that sooner or later either or both of these things will conflict with the reality of training and possibly interfere with the student's ability to maintain a productive study regime.

Thus, whether you are familiar with the mystery tradition, or not, and seek instruction in a particular school or from a specific tutor because you hope the flavour of their particular approach appeals to you, or whether you know little of the tradition, but feel that it has something important to offer in your desire to further your personal spiritual journey - we believe it is important that you learn, before you are faced with accepting or rejecting serious commitment to long term formal study, from someone who has made some headway in this area of expertise.

This approach is necessary, we would suggest, where long term commitment to any esoteric school is a consideration. It is particularly necessary where our school of thought is concerned because we provide quite a novel approach to esoteric training. Therefore, in the course of this introductory discourse we present two views concerning the western mystery tradition. Firstly there is the general, historical and popular view. Secondly, there is the particular approach we have developed. It is hoped by covering both areas that the student will develop a good understanding about the tradition itself, and the pros and cons of the approaches to training that have previously been tried as well as the motive behind, and benefits of, our approach to the process.

Because there are many books published in the realm of popular occultism, which describe in great detail the methods of past and contemporary schools and systems of occult training, it is our stand that the world does not need another college that is simply a repetition of the conventional, popular, standard approach. When the formal training course we provide was being designed it developed around the central idea that for all the complexity of the modern tradition it is agreed that there is an almost complete lack of ability to guide students into advanced states of consciousness and enable them to work real Magick with accuracy and reliability. In other words it is our intention to raise the standard of training in order to attain higher goals than has previously been the norm.

In the guise of excuses for failure we hear oft-repeated clichés like “it takes more than one life, and often several, to attain the summit of spiritual aspiration”. This may be true, but when we consider how many shots at the task we have probably already taken we also must consider that it’s likely that we have missed something. Although not everyone is ready for the extremes of success, the Guild insists, based on its experience, that those achievements that are part of the generally accepted lot are far below the actual goals we all should not only be aiming at but relatively easily attaining.

Therefore it should be remembered from the outset that our process is result driven. Designed to work fast and effectively and therefore makes use of techniques that are not everyone’s cup of tea. There is no place here for the indolent, the spectator or the tourist. We suggest from the outcome it is better that you withdraw from tuition now rather than waste your time or waste your tutor’s time with a mediocre commitment or disreputable behaviour. The Guild does not want you if you are not 100% committed to the life of an alchemist.

We believe that the present low standard of attainment in mainstream esoteric schools has arisen from a general stagnation brought on by an almost complete loss of knowledge concerning the underlying principles which enable the a tutor to successfully lead a student from spiritual impotency back to self empowerment, and through a lack of skill in maintaining the integrity of working groups. Our formal Instruction, therefore, is aimed at educating the student in these basic principles, in a fundamental understanding of the machinery of occult training and practice, devoid of any extraneous and distracting subject matter. By such a method, we suggest, the student who is patient and persistent in our system will be able to apply the tools they have obtained from their training to any system he or she desires, and to turn that system from an impotent toy into a powerful Magickal discipline and way of life.

Why have a Tutor as opposed to being self-taught?

It is often asked why it is necessary to have the assistance of a tutor for such instruction, when many schools these days seem to do so well without them, giving instruction via correspondence courses. Our assertion is that, primarily, and for the greater number of people who take part in such correspondence

courses, such instruction is only really providing information of a certain impersonal type. While it is often helpful to have such information, that type of instruction does not constitute effective esoteric training of the kind that leads to serious personal-internal transmutation. The bulk of students who assiduously work away at these kinds of courses simply end up well informed but no better of for want of significant reliable spiritual progress.

Therefore, we insist, that such instruction allows the average student to progress to a certain early point of readiness and no further. What is required, if we are to advance into the real work, is the experienced help of a competent guide. Because of the nature of the stages of growth the advancing initiate must pass through it is self evident, to those who have the experience that one cannot progress past a certain early stage, without outside help.

For this reason our study course is designed to provide maximum success only when the student desiring to follow this path does so under the guidance of an experience tutor.

In order to prove our point, because it seems that the student often demands or requires such proof, that a tutor is necessary, we were motivated to open these documents to semi-public access. In this way we are assured that some persons, with sincere desire to advance in our science, will insist they can succeed in this work both safely and effectively without help, will learn that both safety and effect are undermined by lack of experienced guidance.

To such persons who have tried and have lost heart or suffered we only say that this system has been proved to deliver what it offers, but only under the conditions we insist it be applied. Admit defeat and if you desire to succeed seek an experienced tutor.

Study Night

The student should establish a regular study rhythm. In order to assure that a good rhythm is established that includes productive activities we set out below in a series of five steps the exact procedure you should follow each week.

First Step: Choose a convenient study period, one night a week, where you can remain undisturbed for at least 1 hour. The exact time should be discussed with your tutor so that you can meet at the agreed time to work together. Adhere to the keeping of this study period religiously. The reason for this is that an attempt to assert your will by encouraging yourself to establish new rhythms will test your degree of commitment to the task. A student with a weak will and little commitment to study will find a way to break or dishonour the commitment to regular study quickly and thereby demonstrate their unsuitability for the task.

Second Step: Each weekly study period will then begin by performing the opening prayer and the meditation.

The opening prayer (or affirmation) is taken from the 'Egyptian book of the Dead' (The Pert Em Heru - or Book of Coming Forth into the Light) "The Chapter of changing into the God who Giveth Light in the Darkness" - Literally: The prayer epitomises the Initiates search for Inner Wisdom.

Opening Prayer

"I am the Girdle of the Robe of the God Nu, which shineth and sheddeth Light, which abideth in His Presence and sendeth forth Light into Darkness, which knitteth together the two fighters who liveth in my body through the mighty spell of my mouth, which raiseth up Him who hath fallen".

Opening Meditation

After the opening prayer we suggest you perform a short and simple meditation designed to focus your attention 'in the present moment' so that you can gain the maximum benefit from each study period.

Seat yourself in the 'God form', that is, in a straight-backed chair feet and knees together hands resting straight and apart on your lap. This stance can be seen in some Egyptian statues. Close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing until you have established a calm even flow of breath in and out. Now concentrate on each of your senses one at a time. Listen carefully to every noise you can hear, smell the atmosphere you are studying in, become aware of the tastes in your mouth, feel the tactile sensations you get through your body, and lastly, when you open your eyes take a long careful look at the room you are in.

Third Step: The third step, then, is where your weekly work is carried out – reading the lesson, reading textbooks, discussion of this material with your tutor and practicing any exercises you have been set. If you are an Internet student intending to log on to IRC (for example) each study session, in order to work with your tutor, you might do that immediately after the meditation. (Note; when discussing your tuition with your tutor, using a chat client, please do it in a private message window, not in an open channel).

Fourth Step: Make notes on the material discussed or read, and on any advice your tutor offers concerning your ongoing work. Make an entry in your journal as necessary.

Fifth Step: After completing the night's lesson close the study period with the final adoration. It is important to follow this entire formula precisely and ritually every week.

The closing adoration is more an invocation directed at the highest ideal of Godhead. That God who is Lord over all creation, who itself has not been created, and who exists in total unity, beyond duality, and therefore outside of conflict. This second prayer was adapted from an ancient Greek Hermetic text by the creators of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Closing Adoration

"Holy Art Thou, Lord of the Universe"

"Holy Art Thou, Whom Nature Hath not formed"

"Holy Art Thou, The Vast and the Mighty One"

"Lord of the Light and of the Darkness ... Amen"

Caution:

It is not your tutor's job to chase you up if you fail to fulfil your obligations where tuition is concerned. If you do not closely adhere to all the instruction given, tuition will automatically be postponed or cancelled (without notice) until you make contact again. It is your responsibility to fulfil tuition requirements; it is not your tutor's job to goad you. Self-motivation is important.

The introductory lectures are divided into four blocks of five lessons/study periods each including a fifth lecture to close the course. One subject dominates each block. For example the focus of the first block revolves around instruction on esoteric fraternities, the second block on Magick, the third on Alchemy and the fourth on Qabala. These four subjects are the basis of our formal training so we desire you to have a very good understanding of *our attitude* to each before making any decision as to whether or not to attempt the practical application of the material presented in formal tuition.

The last lesson in each block is designed to review the information in the preceding four lessons. The student should be aware that the tutor will require him to present his journal in its entirety for all of these review sessions

There is a final instruction, which represents the fifth and last block of instruction that aids in the transformation from probation to formal training. This final probationary instruction is provided to graduates, who have been invited to formal training, only.

At set points within the body of these introductory discourses, information on meditation is also given. This meditational instruction we call trancework and involves some simple demonstration of basic techniques for working with astral states of awareness. This simple introductory trancework forms the backbone of the more complex trancework presented in our formal training so it must be attended to with the greatest care. You are advised not to actually start the trancework exercises until you get word from your tutor, the timing of which depends on certain goals being achieved as the process is designed to cater for the individual needs of each student.

We understand that some students will be familiar with much of the subject material presented in the introductory discourses. Therefore some may consider that the instruction is becoming tedious and wish to move more quickly towards more serious matters. In some cases this is possible. Each student is judged on his or her individual potential, in such a situation, and as long as the tutor believes the student has displayed all of the appropriate personality traits, and success in the exercises described, to a degree which warrant early advancement, a request may be considered. But it should be understood that we know from experience that many students think they understand much of the material presented when in fact the requirements of later training often reveal that their understanding is relatively superficial and often lacks in certain key points.

We also understand that some students will have their own opinion about some of the material provided in these lessons, and that that opinion may be contrary to ours. It should be remembered by more advanced students that this introductory instruction is designed, firstly, for individuals who are almost complete novices in general, and secondly, for anyone who is not familiar with the Guild's philosophy specifically. We should point out, therefore, that we do not desire to indoctrinate anyone into a ridged point of view, but instead to supply an understanding of certain subjects as a starting point for further investigation. Later, as the formal student gains skill in the art of the observation and investigation of the occult side of his being, and his environment, he can then decide for himself what he accepts or rejects as far as our opinion is concerned.

In the meantime the scene we set in these introductory lessons points to the motives behind our approach to the task of delivering training.

For example, it is understood that some subjects, such as the history of our Tradition, are open to much debate. In this example each individual's personal view of the information provided is respected. On the other hand there is some subject matter contained in our instruction that is quite explicit and exact in meaning, which can be verified by demonstration, and personal

investigation. The acceptance of some of these ideas is, it will be seen, essential to success in our system of study.

It is not our concern, at the outset, whether any individual student accepts what is taught in our instruction, but what is required is that each student maintains an open mind about the information presented.

We hope you enjoy this introductory instruction. Please do not hesitate to question your tutor on any of the material presented. Questioning is the basis of a good learning experience.

Probationers Lesson 1

The Tradition and its Schools

"Thus in this one vile thing you will discover and bring to perfection the whole work of philosophy, which to most men appears impossible, though it is a convenient and easy task. If we were to shew it to the outer world we would be derided by men, woman and children. Therefore be modest and secret, and you will be left in peace and security."

(Nicholas Delphinus - The Book of Lambspring)

The Probationers Contract

" Square conduct, level steps and upright intentions "

What is the purpose of the novice accepting an oath or contract at the outset of instruction? There are two primary reasons for insisting that every novice accept such a binding agreement. Firstly, it is important for the integrity of the tuition relationship that the tutor has a measuring stick by which he can determine the degree of **mortality** a student is willing to practice. Occult training, especially that which aims at success in the Great Work, does not function without an adherence to a certain moral code. The probationer's oath, then, is a preliminary expression of that code.

Secondly, effective occult training relies *heavily* on the establishment and maintenance of personal **discipline** in its students. We are inherently Magickal beings, as our tradition and our experience teach, but we have lost access to our personal power through the weakening of our higher will. One of the surest methods for re-asserting that will is to accept and abide by a set of rules, a discipline that is specifically designed for the job. In some ways it is not the rules themselves that are important (although they do suit a practical purpose), but rather it is the act of forcing ourselves to uphold rules that is the point. The side of our nature which abhors the Light and would do all it can to weaken our will and turn us from the path to soul liberation will desire to wrestle against such a discipline - and thus the Great Work, the work of the attainment of enlightenment, full knowledge of our total being, begins.

The Probationer's Prayers and Meditation

The ability to produce Magickal effects relies on our controlling some well-defined psycho-dynamics. One of these dynamics is will power; a further consideration is the productive use of **habit**, built up by a ritual-rhythm and suggestions that take advantage of the powers of the subconscious in order to awaken certain latent potentialities and to *create constructive habits*.

The process of Magickal training exposes the student to various types of information and to various practices on an ascending scale of complexity. This probationary instruction is designed to establish a firm healthy mental foundation upon which to build a Magickal personality and to ensure time is taken to assess the individual's response to each new stimulus.

We introduce the novice to these first considerations in the form of the opening prayer that must be read before every study period begins and a short meditation following the prayer. At the end of the study period another prayer is read to close down the session. Here we have the basic structure of an occult ritual intended to establish a new, productive, psychophysical habit.

The idea, then, is that on the evening you have set aside as your study period, begin by performing the opening prayer and the meditation. (See the opening lecture). You can light a candle and incense if you desire, in order to aid in creating a more definite atmosphere.

The idea is to focus your newly developing Magickal personality within well defined limits, the boundaries of which are set by your opening and closing gestures. During the study period try very hard to avoid thinking about mundane things. Shut out that part of your life and attempt to flood yourself with thoughts, reading, note taking, pictures and images that are centred on your study. When choosing your study time, therefore, a period should be chosen where outside distraction is reduced to a minimum. This helps to aid concentration and to clear a space in your life that belongs to the occultist only. It is an hour (or more) of sanctuary, where the divine self can stretch and flex its muscles like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis.

The opening and closing turn this period into a ritual. They are methods that help you to learn to switch on and turn off power as you will it so that you will be able to control your personal power once it begins to awaken properly. These are your first psychic exercises, ways of preparing for what will follow.

“Preparation is Everything”

The Past History of the Western Mystery Tradition

The details of the story of how the western mystery tradition began have probably been presented differently with every Order that cares to consider it, almost. But the basic stories, the fundamentals, are generally agreed upon.

Humanity existed in a state devoid of the possibility of attaining enlightenment by natural evolution. That is, it had plateaued out at a biological and psychological level that is characterised as being the peak of lower animal evolution. This proto-humanity needed a shock, a catalyst, supplied from outside of its gene pool to bounce it up into the next phase of evolution – the human. This shock was, it is generally agreed, supplied from the outside by a

non-human race of beings from a higher level of existence, an event that constitutes the sort after 'missing link'. Just who or what these beings were is not clear or specifically agreed upon. But the Qabalistic¹ tradition cites mention of the Beni Elohim, the Sons of God, spoken of early in Genesis.

This inter-marriage between humanity, and what the Qabalistic tradition refer to as Divine Beings - incarnate in bodies of flesh, produced a number of new species, some monsters and some from which modern humanity can trace its ancestry. These new men had both physically and psychologically the capability to evolve into the next level of being above human, the transcendental man. We might call this process one of careful gene manipulation for the purpose of creating a higher life form.

It is suggested that this race, of praetor-human intelligence, also gifted their new mankind with a variety of advanced (for their present stage of development), knowledge: art, warfare, language, medicine, agriculture, the beginnings of civilisation and ... for the elite few who had developed more quickly than the rest spiritually they gifted - occult knowledge, the esoteric or universal science, which would enable them to develop their psychophysical condition beyond natural bounds.

Some traditions teach that humanity itself, through a process of evolution, by trial and error, discovered the secret laws of nature with no physical outside help, such as we have postulated above. Shaman, they would have us believe, were the first simple primitive Magi. Successive generations and cultures developed their knowledge and its ordering until roughly about 3000-2000 BC, at which time the Egyptians and Chaldeans had developed huge powerful Mystery Schools. This version of esoteric history is only propagated, largely, by the earth traditions such as wicca. As H.P.Blavatsky, the author of 'The Secret Doctrine', pointed out "In all ages of human evolution primitive cultures have existed beside advanced civilised ones" (rough quote), and that, therefore, Magickal knowledge did not evolve from a primitive into an advanced state. The western mystery schools, the inheritors of this ancient tradition, state quite firmly that humanity did not discover by trial and error but were given lock-stock-and-barrel a complete advanced universal science which we now refer to by such names as 'the ageless wisdom', 'the divine science' or simply 'the ancient mysteries', and commonly 'occultism' for example.

These mystery teachings were basically the arte of accelerating human evolution through various techniques that exploited a deeper knowledge of the secret laws of nature, both physical and psychological. The process of teaching, itself, involved both an education in these laws, exercises that put these laws into practice, and a philosophy concerning the proper channels that the results of enlightenment should be guided into.

¹ Qabala: (also spelled Qabbalah, Kabbala, Cabala, Cabbala, etc). A Hebrew word meaning 'to receive' referring originally to the oral reception of a secret spiritual tradition upon which the Old Testament and various other Hebrew religious texts were based. The western mystery tradition makes extensive use of the 'Hermetic' Qabala, which, while heavily Hebraic, is more universal in nature.

So the Egyptians, the Persians and Chaldeans of Mesopotamia, and eventually the Semites, specifically the Hebrews, were the immediate inheritors of the ancient Atlantean mysteries - the Mysteries of the 'Solar Temple' as their white or evolutionary Magick is termed, as well as the mysteries of the 'Luna Temple' or dark Magick. These cultures changed the original unified and universal science of the Beni Elohim into various different disciplines. As Paracelsus, the famous Alchemist, tells us in his 'Aurora of the Philosophers': 'The Chaldeans, Persians, and Egyptians had all of them the same knowledge of the secrets of nature, and also the same religion. It is only the names that differed. The Chaldeans and Persians called their doctrine Sophia and Magic; and the Egyptians, because of the sacrifice, called their wisdom Priestcraft. The magic of the Persians and the Theology of the Egyptians were both of them taught in the schools of old. (. . .) But Moses, Abraham, Solomon, Adam, and the wise men that came from the East to Christ, were true magi, divine sophists and Qabalists. Of this art the Greeks knew very little or nothing at all; and therefore we shall leave this philosophical wisdom of the Greeks as being mere speculation, utterly separate from other true arts and sciences'. Bold words indeed, (but nevertheless true), considering modern science believes that it had its beginning in the contemplation's of the Greek philosophers.

Eventually the Greeks conquered Egypt and were thereby immersed in the dregs of the ancient secrets - philosophy, mathematics, chemistry and medicine. The Arabs in post Christian times followed in the steps of the Greeks conquering Egypt about 46 AD. By the end of the dark ages Christian Europe had secretly been Initiated into the Mysteries of our ancient forebears through the efforts, mainly, of certain religious clerics, monks who travelled to the East, to learn from the progenitors of the Sufis, Qabalists amongst the Hebrews and Hermetic Magi (for example), and returned to start secret schools within the confines of the monastic tradition, wherein Qabala and Alchemy and other occult arts developed a distinctly European expression.

From these early Christian secret societies grew more complex schools with more and more developed knowledge evolved through years of experience. By the beginning of the renaissance these schools were regularly initiating secular persons, mainly aristocrats, into their ranks, and the mystery schools slowly became divorced from religious control. Here we find hints of the beginnings of some of the most famous secret traditions such as the Templars, the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians.

Now, the most ancient mystery schools, those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, most certainly had complex rites of initiation and advancement, in which subtle natural forces were invoked in order to catalyse changes in their initiates consciousness. But at the fall of the ancient Egyptian mysteries, and the mysteries of Greece and Rome, these ageless rites were all but lost. Through the dark ages, the middle ages and on up through the renaissance the secret colleges probably used ceremonial initiation sparingly, and often not at all. Most likely the early Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th centuries had no ceremonial as part of their early tradition, for these men and woman formed secret societies interested in the preservation and research of occult

science and Christian mysticism only. Their interest was in experiment and the further unveiling of the hidden laws of nature and devotion to a spiritual ideal, with the firm hope of once again recovering a greater portion of the knowledge possessed once by their most ancient forefathers, and of protecting it from the ravages of mundane human society.

It was not until the beginnings of modern speculative Freemasonry that ceremonial Initiation and advancement was once again experimented with and developed into, by the late 1700s, a very complex and varied series of rites that expressed a desire to once again awaken the ancient esoteric rites in a modern setting. The primary catalyst for this explosion of occult ritual was Freemasonry. The real psychological benefits of such rites were not, really, understood or explained it seems, until the advent of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1888.

It is, then, through the seed of Freemasonry, almost solely, that we find many modern western occult schools² have grown. Masonry itself is not an overtly occult institution but it attracted the attention and commitment of many of the western world's foremost occultists for the last 300 years. These vigorous investigators of the divine grafted new more complex and more deeply occult branches onto the tame rites of popular Freemasonry until by the end of the 1800's a neo-Masonic fraternity called the Society of Rosicrucians in England (S.:R.:I.:A.:) gave birth to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which has become the most notorious modern technically occult *fraternity* in our time, effecting almost every school of thought in this subject area since its public exposure just after the turn of the century.

Today we refer the mainstream of schools in the western tradition as 'Hermetic'. For they, according to legend, preserve a tradition that had its inception with the one time King of Egypt Thoth-Hermes. Schools which have openly followed in the wake of the G.:D.: system particularly use the epithet Hermetic are considered so.

Keeping a Magick Journal

Occult training is a science, as well as an art. No scientific endeavour would be as productive or safe as it should be without keeping careful and detailed record of its progress. Such training as ours affects ones behaviour, dream life, beliefs, emotional and intellectual faculties and daily relationships with family, work mates and friends. Life in general, not just your training, very soon becomes a very complex affair, and therefore it is important that you establish the habit quickly of recording you progress so you can keep track during the rough periods. It is too late once you find yourself struggling to decide "I better start keeping my journal now" because the important entries you will need to look over will be those in the weeks or months leading up to

² Specifically the school structure as an institution, not so much the actual occult techniques that such schools taught.

the start of the problem period. Therefore it is important that you immediately begin keeping a daily record in a 'Magick journal' - in which you will record:

- Every dream you remember.
- The results of all trance (astral) work.
- What you read in relation to your study and your opinions and questions about the contents of reading material.
- Your attitudes, questions and progress in general study.
- Mood swings, emotional highs and lows, concerns and fears, etc., connected with the work.
- Realisations and insights concerning or stemming from the work.

In short anything and everything you feel is connected with, or springs from, your tuition should be noted. The question often arises "how much detail should I include?" The answer is simple. Since the journal is designed (partly) to help you understand how problem behaviour begins, you will be grateful later, once problems do begin, if you have included too much detail rather than too little. It should be remembered that a big part of serious occult training is about learning to be honest with yourself about your nature, your experiences and your life. Short entries with a lack of helpful detailed in a journal generally betray a resistance towards honesty with self rather than a willingness to succeed.

If you have not done or experienced any of the above listed six activities on any one day you should simply write "I did nothing today". There is no need to explain why. **It is important that every day of every week has some kind of entry.** Remember that at times your tutor will require a look at your journal. One reason for this is so that he can check on your progress, to make sure you're still moving forward without any difficulties. Another reason is so that he can learn to understand you a bit better. If he is going to help you later, during formal tuition, if you desire to advance that far, he cannot help you safely and productively if he does not know what kind of a person you are. It is important to remember this when deciding what kind of detail about yourself you might include in your journal.

At the least your journal records will be requested every review lesson. Any student who fails to provide adequate journal records at his tutor's request is in danger of having his tuition terminated. There is no room for negotiation on this matter as it is of the utmost importance. For this reason online students should endeavour to keep an up to date e-copy of their journal ready to hand to the tutor if required.

Reading Assignments

There are three textbooks that every student who advances to formal training is *required* to study with care. If you desire, you may ask for copies of these textbooks now³ so that you may begin to give them some preliminary

³ E-text versions are available.

consideration. However they are somewhat advanced reading, so as a further option we strongly suggest that you first make an effort to obtain at least one book from each of the four sections below, as a proper supplement to these introductory discourses.

Suggested Reading

1 The Tradition and its Schools:

- **The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail** - Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln
- **The Temple and the Lodge** - Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln
- **What you should know about the Golden Dawn**
(Was called 'My Rosicrucian Adventure') – Israel Regardie.
- **The Unlocked Secret** (Freemasonry revealed) – James Dewar.
- **Selected Masonic Papers** – A.E.Waite.
- **Orders of the Quest or** – Manly P Hall
- **Masonic Orders of Fraternity or** – Manly P Hall
- **Orders of Universal Reformation** – Manly P Hall

2 Magick:

- **Apprenticed to Magic** – W.E. Butler
- **The Tree of Life** – Israel Regardie
- **The Training and Work of the Initiate** – Dion Fortune
- **A separate reality** – Carlos Castaneda
- **Tales of Power** – Carlos Castaneda
- **Magick Without Tears** – A.Crowley

3 Alchemy:

- **The Alchemists Handbook** – Frater Albertus
- **The Philosophers Stone** – Israel Regardie
- **Plant Alchemy** – Manfred Junius

4 Qabala:

- **The Garden of Pomegranates** – Israel Regardie
- **The Mystical Qabala** – Dion Fortune
- **The Tree of Life** – Shimeon Halevi
- **The Way of Kabbalah** – Shimeon Halevi
- **A Practical guide to Qabalistic Symbolism** (2 Vols) – Gareth Knight

(Note: The books on the above list are chosen because of their relationship to the Guilds formal training course, and not because of any general considerations as to a books worthiness as a source of helpful esoteric information. They are listed in order of preference.)

Appendix

Some Important Words

The following is a list of some important words that recur in our lectures. In order that they are understood in the way in which we intended them to be we include this appendix to lesson 1.

Alchemy: Specifically an ancient occult science and art that focuses on seeking to discover the secret laws of nature through a process of seeking the Philosophers Stone. Traditional Alchemy is a form of sacred chemistry that makes use of spiritual techniques.

Astral: refers generally to the layers of non-physical existence that extend from just beyond the physical world to just before the absolute divine world. WE can say that these realms are psychological in nature.

Magick: Spelled with a 'k' to differentiate it from stage illusionism. It is the ancient art of causing change to happen through the application of mental powers. Therefore Magick is a form of occult psychology.

Occult: Hidden, Secret. (See any good dictionary). A system of Magickal philosophy, including various practical exercises, that is concerned with exalting the physical reality by incarnating spirit into matter.

Mystic(al): A system of spiritual development concerned with rejecting the physical reality in preference for unity with God.

Esoteric: Not commonly accepted (adhered to/liked), used or adhered to. E.g. classical music is considered esoteric.

Elements: Referring to the four alchemical/Magickal elements. These represent four different conditions or states that reality exists in. They can also be considered as four different forces working in nature. A fifth element, called the quintessence or spirit, is also referred to. The fifth is a harmonious combination of the four. The common names of these elements are Fire, Air, Water and Earth and do not solely refer to the physical substances that commonly go by these names.

Exoteric: Common, mundane.

Higher Genius: also called the higher self. Refers to the extreme upper limit of the human experience.

Hermetic: Refers to a particular Magickal tradition and philosophy which is said to have been founded by the God-King Thoth/Hermes about 8000 BC. It was adopted by the western world as its primary Magickal orientation.

Holy Guardian Angel: A term popularised by the Golden Dawn initiates. Refers to the Angelic intelligence that governs, as an overseer, individual humans through the higher genius.

Rosicrucian: An Esoteric Order whose teachings are based in Qabala, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Neo-Platonics, Mystic Christianity and in some cases The Ancient Mysteries of Egypt. It was originally a secret society whose modern beginnings were in the 17th century.

Fraternity: Brotherhood. Usually refers to a esoteric society which studied occult knowledge and often in secret. Re: Esoteric or Occult Order. Is used in the same vein as 'Monastic Order' and has a similar meaning.

Qabala: The Secret Tradition (occult) of the ancient Semites.

Alchemy: Refers to an ancient sacred form of chemistry and a form of psychology.

Freemasonry: A ceremonial Order that teaches a system of morals through ritual and symbolism.

Ceremonial: Re: Magick and Orders. In the Western Tradition a ceremonial Order is one that marks the beginning of each of its Grades (or levels of achievement) with ritual dramas designed to explain esoteric principles.

Mysteries: Re: Ancient Mysteries. A complex Science of occult knowledge taught both dramatically (ceremonially) and verbally (and written) in the Temples and Colleges of the Ancient (pre-Christian) World.

Hermetic: A Tradition of occult knowledge that was said to be founded by the Pharaoh Thoth (Hermes) approximately 8,500 years BC and forms the basis of the modern Western Mystery Tradition.

Golden Dawn: The Hermetic Order of the. One of the most famous modern Mystery schools in the Western Tradition. (G.;D.:.)

Gnosis: Derives from Gnostic Christianity. Gnosis: the direct perception of a spiritual truth.

Soul: The soul is considered in two degrees of development. The higher soul, which Qabalists call *Neschamah* and represents the part of us which thrusts after divine things, and the lower soul which Qabalists call *Nephesch* and is called the animal soul, which is subjective and instinctual.

Spirit: The spirit is known as the *Ruach* by Qabalists. It is the rational and objective mind.

Probationers Lesson 2

Preservation of Esoteric Ideas

" ... that the secret might not be lost, but rather continued and preserved to posterity, they expounded it most faithfully, both in their writings and in oral teaching to their faithful disciples, for the benefit of posterity; nevertheless they so clothed and concealed the truth in allegorical language that even now only very few are able to understand their instruction and turn it to practical account."
(Anon - The Sophic Hydrolith)

In the past ages of the history of esoteric fraternities two things, almost exclusively, have played the major role in the maintenance of the secret sciences, and that is the production and preservation of esoteric literature and a secret oral tradition⁴. When we talk about esoteric literature we specifically refer to serious, deep and often very technical records of occult philosophy, practice and experience. We do not refer to pop occultism, which has often become popular because it has lost its link to the oral tradition. The oldest occult books that have survived to modern times are of a complex esoteric nature. When we study these ancient records we can see a definite parallel between the universal science, say, 4000 years ago, and that which we have inherited and developed today.

What we know of the secret Magickal practices and theory of the ancient Magicians we have learned largely from the written word they have bequeathed to us. When lines of transmission collapse and a traditional view is in danger of folding, sometimes the only thing that ensures the lineage is not completely lost is the records that conscientious adepts of the tradition maintained and sometimes published.

Accurate and workable esoteric literature falls roughly (for our present purpose) into two broad groups. That produced by individuals outside of an Established School and that produced by individuals working within Occult Schools. The former is often published work, but not always. The latter is often rarely seen by persons outside of the occult fraternities whose archives they rest in. External publications are numerous and often abound with error. Nevertheless there are noble exceptions. Some of the archives preserved within Esoteric Orders hold vast numbers of very old and even ancient manuscript records, instructions and symbolic diagrams attesting to the thousands of years experiment with meditation, ritual and Alchemy, for

⁴ Oral tradition: refers to the passing on of a body of knowledge that held the keys to the understanding of more common or published esoteric traditions. This oral tradition was composed of a set knowledge and a body of knowledge gathered from experience. The loss of the oral tradition in any branch of esoteric transmission is nearly always the primary cause of the corruption of that branch and its lack of fruit bearing activity.

example, and the successes and failures of thousands of highly trained meticulous practitioners of occult science.

Such a collection and production of documents is a monument to the great knowledge and understanding that is offered to the student of esoteric science in the framework of formal training. Much fine adjustment has been made to every aspect of theory and practice in 6000 years evolution of occult science. In every generation a new wave of esoteric literature is produced which is designed to present the ageless universal science in contemporary language.

Therefore a very important aspect of occult training is the collection and study of esoteric literature. At this time in history we find the bookshelves of occult bookshops overflowing with material on every aspect of occult interest. The trained student who has a good familiarity with the western mystery tradition will quickly tell you that much of that which one can buy today, in the way of esoteric literature, is of little or no value to the serious student undergoing formal training. Therefore, whether you have a limited budget or can spend freely on books for your personal library, it is important that you save yourself time and frustration by knowing which literature is best to give priority to.

The basic rules, when searching for new reading material, for students studying *our* system, are quite simple:

- (1) Look for books that you know are written by initiates, and preferably ones who have been initiated into some school belonging to the same stream we follow, i.e. the Masonic-Golden Dawn tradition and its offshoots.

One of the first hurdles to overcome in occult training is the learning of the 'lingo'. Just as higher mathematics, physics or astronomy, for example, have their own languages in which the more complex subjects of their concern are understood and conversed in, so too does every system of occultism have a 'lingo esoterica' in which its deeper teachings can be discussed and understood. Many western systems use the same basic occult language, which we call Hermetic, but every school (almost) varies in the details of what they believe certain words mean and in the interpretation of certain symbols. When reading books written by authors who belong to these various schools of thought the first problem to overcome is an understanding of the meaning of the terminology they use. This can become quite confusing, more so when you add to your reading schedule books written by non-initiates or initiates outside the main stream who use their own personal lingo, or who have twisted an established esoteric language.

The idea, then, is to stick to just one school of thought, at first, until you have mastered its basics. Then branch out into other allied systems and then onto more obscure material as you go. Otherwise if you try to manage everything and anything from the beginning then all you will probably do is succeed in confusing yourself and never get past the first post.

Often one of the results of such a hotch potch approach is that the student ends up in believing that basically everyone, including advanced adepts, make up their understanding as they go, because there is no 'science' to the subject. This in fact is quite wrong. An accurate science and understanding does exist. It simply has become distorted in the public arena over the ages.

So why choose books written by Masonic-Golden Dawn (G.:D.:) initiates? Firstly, because we use their terminology (language) in our system. We use it because our system developed out of the Masonic-G.:D.: tradition, and because it is accepted by many, many occultists today as having set a standard in the communication of western esoteric ideas. Secondly, because it is agreed that the published material of G.:D.: Initiates is of a high standard (generally) and covers every subject (excepting to a greater degree Alchemy) that is of interest to the beginner and journeyman alike.

(2) When choosing books published by G.:D.: Initiates (or individuals who follow the G.:D.: stream) there are a number of outstanding authors which should form the basis of any personal library:

- Israel Regardie
- Dion Fortune
- Gareth Knight
- A.E.Waite
- Paul Foster Case
- Aleister Crowley

We have listed these authors in a rough 'best first' arrangement. Lets begin with Israel Regardie.

Israel (Francis) Regardie was the one time student of Aleister Crowley. Regardie joined a Stella Matutina Temple of the G.:D.: stream eventually and studied the system in England and later in the USA. Regardie's claim to fame is that he was the individual who first published the once secret G.:D.: study material in a fashion which made it accessible to the mass popular occult market. This act brought him both great acclaim and a good deal of abuse. It should be remembered that he had to break his oath in order to publicise the material. So many feel no matter what his reasons for doing this they cannot be justified. The publication that caused all of the uproar was a three or four volume set called 'The Golden Dawn'. Later the four volumes were compiled into one paperback volume and then re-arranged and re-edited into a large hardback called 'The Complete Golden Dawn'. The work contains about 80% of the Order's original official teachings and is still the primary source of information on the subject. Regardie produced several publications that are worth buying or reading. Below is a selection of his works that may be helpful to one of our students in formal training:

- **What you should know about the Golden Dawn** (formally 'My Rosicrucian Adventure') - An excellent introduction to the history and workings of the Order.

- **The Tree of Life** - One of his early works that gives a very detailed description of the Arte Magick.
- **The Garden of Pomegranates** - A good prima on Qabala.
- **The Middle Pillar** - Primarily a discourse on the psychology of Magick that rotates around a base of the Middle Pillar meditation.
- **The Philosophers Stone** - Another excellent psychology of Magick but from an alchemical point of view.
- **Twelve Steps to Enlightenment** - A step by step introduction to helpful exercises in Magickal development
- **Crowleys Apprentice** - Regardie's biography (By Gerald Shuster)

Second in line to Regardie must come Dion Fortune. She was a one time member of the Stella Matutina Temple run by McGregor Mathers (one of the originators of the G.:D.: system) widow. Fortune was eventually expelled (through Mrs Mathers jealousy of her abilities) and started her own Order called the 'The Society of Inner Light'. Her school took the basis of the G.:D.: system and moved in Celtic and Egyptian directions. The 'Inner Light' gave birth to a number of other later Orders and societies that are of note. Dion Fortunes' occult publications are very much in a similar vein to Regardies (in our mind), giving direct easily understood fundamental instruction in occult training as it is understood from a main stream G.:D.: point of view. Dion also wrote a number of occult novels that are based on sound esoteric practice and theory. We can recommend all of her works:

- Applied Magick
- Aspects of Occultism
- Esoteric Orders and their Work
- Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage
- Practical Occultism in Daily Life
- Psychic Self-defence
- Sane Occultism
- Mystical Qabala
- The Training and Work of an Initiate
- Through the Gates of Death

Novels

- Moon Magic
- Demon Lover
- The Goat Foot God
- The Sea Priestess
- The Winged Bull

Biographies

- The Magical Life of Dion Fortune, by Alan Richardson
- Search for Dion Fortune, by Janine Chapman

It should be understood that Dion Fortune's novels are not simply interesting stories with which one might whittle away the hours. They are an attempt to present actual occult dynamics as they may appear in the lives of true adepts. Therefore they are full of important lessons and technical clues.

In the popular mind the next most well known individual after Regardie and Fortune has to be Aleister Crowley. To many people today Crowley has assumed an almost (if not entirely) prophet like stature. His history is complex and quite strange. He joined the G.:D.: early in life and rose through its ranks quite quickly. He was a very well educated man and very intelligent.

Before he entered the higher Grades in the Order he had a falling out with some of its governing members and eventually left claiming to have taken over the autocratic Government of the Order himself. At that time he founded his own version of the Golden Dawn called the Argentum Astrum (A.:A.:) and later transferred his focus into another Masonic based Order called the Order of the Temple of the Orient (O.:T.:O.:).

In our opinion Crowley's greatest offering to the tradition was his ability to scientifically examine, experiment with and quantify every aspect of occult practice (except Alchemy). He established some very important laws and standards and had much of value to say concerning the difficulties of studying Magick and of the arte Magick itself. On the other hand he has been accused of being the most evil man alive, of being insane and/or deluded, a drug addict and sexual pervert . . . not without cause. All the same, that he and his aims were quite misunderstood by even the most adept occultists there is no doubt. We advise reading Crowley but *caution heavily against putting any of his teachings into practice*. His best works for our purposes are:

- **Magick Without Tears** - A compilation of letters of instruction to one of his students covering every aspect of training.
- **Magick in Theory and Practice** - A starter manual in Magickal practice.
- **Liber Aleph** - Crowley's most heart held theories on Magick and its philosophy and life.
- **Gems of the Equinox** (by Regardie) - A collection of the best parts of Crowley's huge work 'Equinox of the Gods'.
- **The Confessions of Aleister Crowley** - His autobiography.
- **The Great Beast** (by John Symonds) - A Crowley biography.

Next on our list is Gareth Knight. He was a one-time pupil of Dion Fortune. He is a well-known and respected occultist in England and has published one or two very good books. His best are definitely:

- **A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism** (2 Vols) - This work was designed to finish what Fortune had begun in her 'Mystical Qabala'.
- **The Secret Tradition in Arthurian Legend** - One of the best works on the subject.

Next in line is A.E.Waite. He joined the G.:D.: in its early years. When it split in the early 1900's Waite created his own Order called 'The Holy Order of the G.:D.:'. Waite strongly disliked Magick so his Order had stripped all references to Magick from its ceremony and instruction in order to follow a more Christian Mystic path.

Waite was the inspiration behind the Rider-Waite Tarot deck that was, in its day, one of the most popular decks around. He was an avid Freemason and a learned Qabalist and published many scholarly books in his time. Many contemporary and later authors deride his works as being too flowery mouthed, but we feel this is petty quivelling, for the quality of information is very high.

- **The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail** - One of the better works on the subject
- **Selected Masonic Papers** - A collection of very interesting lectures on many aspects of Freemasonry.
- **The Holy Qabala** - For a long time one of only two English expositions on the Zohar.

The last author on our list was Paul Foster Case. He was an American G.:D.: man who rose to high office in the US Order and then decided to abandon it for his own version of its teachings. He founded his own school called the 'Builders of the Adytum' (B.:O.:T.:A.:) which centred its teachings around Qabala and more importantly the Tarot. Case was also not a fan of traditional medieval Magick so watered down the G.:D.: instruction on the subject to, practically, mere mentions of the system. His approach is primarily contemplative and meditative. He published a couple of interesting works of which we can recommend two:

- **The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order** - A very interesting look at modern Rosicrucianism from a G.:D.: type aspect.
- **The Tarot - Wisdom of the Ages** - A very good basic instruction in his Orders version of Tarot which is very G.:D.: in basis.

Besides these primary authors there are a number of others worth giving a good deal of consideration, foremost are those authors who have written on Alchemy:

- Frater Albertus - '**The Alchemists Handbook**' and '**Alchemist of the Rocky Mountains**'
- Manifold Junius - '**Plant Alchemy**'
- Fulcanelli - '**Mysteries of the Cathedrals**', '**Dwellings of the Philosophers**'
- Basil Valentine - '**The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony**'
- Anonymous - '**Collectanea Chemica**'

Also worth a read are the authors:

- Simeon Halevi - '**Adam and the Qabalistic Tree**', '**School of the Soul**', '**Kabbalah and Psychology**', '**The Anatomy of Fate**' and '**The Anointed**'.
- Eliphas Levi - '**Transcendental Magic**'
- Aidian Kelly - '**Crafting the Art of Magick (Wicca)**'
- W.E.Butler - '**Apprenticed to Magic**' and '**The Magician - his Training and Work**'.

- Franz Bardon - **'Initiation into Hermetics'**

Probationers Lesson 3

Egregores and Group Psychology

"Much has been said about the life and functions of that interesting Magickal entity known as the egregore, but little is generally known. The birth, life and death of any esoteric group is intimately tied to its egregore, therefore ignorance of the nature of this class of entity causes the group to be battered by the winds of fate upon every turn of the path, subject to disaster at every turn. Therefore the knowledgeable head of an esoteric group will be needfully strict in the act of cutting off any decaying branch, lest the tree be wholly corrupted."

(Frater Aben - Spring Equinox 1991)

One of the most important ideas to consider when examining the motives for occult study within organised fraternities (or other types of group) is the Magickal concept of the dynamic of group psychology. In order to elucidate on this subject here we must begin by explaining the basics of the structure and function of the human mind.

Our psyche is basically divided into three fields or areas of activity. First we have the unconscious mind that is considered, metaphorically, to be below normal consciousness. It is that place where we sink into each night as we enter sleep. The unconscious mind's most important function is to store memory of, digest and regurgitate, the conclusions of our experiences. The experiences of the unconscious are, greatly, subjective.

Above, metaphorically speaking, the unconscious mind we have the conscious or waking mind. The primary function of this part of the psyche is to observe and assess the environment that our physical body lives in. The conscious mind judges and plans.

Between, again - metaphorically speaking, the unconscious and conscious minds is the subconscious mind. Its functions are borrowed partly from the unconscious and partly from the conscious minds. For example, when I am daydreaming I am in a subconscious state that is very close to consciousness. Therefore, in this state I still have a reasonable access to my ability to make judgements concerning my reality. On the other hand, when I am so deeply relaxed that I am just about to fall into unconscious sleep I am at the deepest level of the subconscious with little access, if any, to my conscious mind's faculties.

The subconscious is that twilight zone where conscious dreaming takes place. Where pathworking, creative visualisation and meditation takes place.

In the subconscious we can remember events in our physical lives by imagining or visualising them. We call this recall or remembering. In the subconscious we can also, by using the faculty of our imagination, 'see' the

functions of our unconscious mind working away. These self-initiated experiences are called dreams, but also can be experienced deliberately in certain types of meditation.

Within the unconscious, as we have said, we store our memories. These include our beliefs, plans and wishes and hopes. All of the psychological 'mechanisms' that drive us live in the unconscious. The part of our mind that controls our eating and digestion, for example, is a quite distinct personality that rises into our conscious mind from its home in the unconscious, every time we get hungry. In the same way, when we finish breakfast in the morning and get into our car to drive to work the 'eater' personality sinks back into the unconscious and the 'driver' pops up ready and willing to operate your vehicle.

The most interesting thing about all of this is that the secret territory of the unconscious can be visualised in the subconscious as a kind of world, not unlike the world of every day life. At the same time each 'sub-personality' (the 'eater', 'driver', 'thinker', etc.) can be visualised as actual people living in this imaginary world. In this way we can develop a skill that allows us to communicate with our inner selves.

So what does all of this have to do with group psychology? Well we might imagine, for the purposes of this discussion, that our subconscious mind is like a bubble that surrounds our physical body. Within this bubble exist all the ideas we hold onto and, for example, all of the things we are interested in. Now if we had the ability to look into people's psychological bubbles and see what is going on in them we would notice some very interesting things - especially where groups of people are concerned.

Let us say, for argument's sake, that we are looking at a room full of individuals who are attending an occult instruction course. If we could see each person's psyche-bubble we would notice that besides all of the different ideas, beliefs, attitudes, etc. that they each have, everyone in the room shares a common idea/subject - that of an interest in occult things.

Now, what happens when everyone arrives at the meeting is that their 'bubbles' are all separate and self contained. As the meeting starts and each individual at the meeting begins to communicate and share ideas and practical exercises those portions of their subconscious mind's which share an affinity externalise themselves and join together to form a new unconscious bubble whose 'body' is found in every person in the group. This is called a group mind. This collective unconscious bubble holds within it all of the commonly held ideas and beliefs in the group. Every person in the group affects the group mind, its growth, developments and eventual decay. In turn, the group mind affects the whole group. Such group behaviour can be seen working most effectively at sports matches, rock concerts and riots for example.

At the end of the night as each member leaves the group the collective psyche begins to dismantle itself. As their minds turn away from the group and onto other things than their collective interests, the 'stuff' that held the group

mind together, dissipates. Nevertheless, if the group deliberately cultivates the group mind by concentrating on maintaining its integrity then it can be encouraged to stay whole (integrated) over a long period of time including the time between meetings. We see such a process put into action where patriotism is concerned and within large religious communities. Every group has a group mind, the repository of its commonly held beliefs. This means towns, entire countries or cultures, political parties, knitting circles, every club and society has its own collective mind. The bigger the group the longer the groups mind will remain intact.

Next we must consider that such psychological entities are born, live, evolve and die just like any sentient life form. The mind of a group evolves as the group evolves. As the group pulls together, forms a solid core of committed members so too does the group mind form a solid entity in the collective unconscious. At a certain point in this process the collective conscious of the group not only accepts input from each member of the group and feeds back the sum of the input to each, but it starts to gently draw on the group. These collective entities are referred to as egregores, a name that was coined within European esoteric circles. At such a stage the egregore assumes somewhat of an independent evolution. It no longer relies entirely on the group's input but starts to develop that input into new avenues that did not before exist within the minds of the members of the group.

This point in a groups evolution is most important for it is a sign that the group has matured to a point of relative stability. At such a time it is not unusual, within esoteric circles, that this degree of maturity is recognised by the guardians of our Tradition who dwell on the inner planes, and thereafter the group is watched and guided and nurtured more carefully from 'within'.

Now, occultists have for ages known about egregores and have deliberately nurtured the collective minds of their secret colleges. The master of each group has the job of watching carefully how each new addition to his group reacts to the psychology of the group and is quick to 'prune' off any decaying wood that might infect the rest of the tree. For it is true that it only takes one strong personality to alter the entire dynamics of a group and, possibly, corrupt the group mind. It is for this reason that it is most important that access to an occult group is restricted if it wants to survive. And it is for this reason that Magickal oaths and secrecy are still as important today as they were in the past.

Insistence on every member joining an occult group taking a Magickal oath builds a safety mechanism into the egregore. If this institution is adhered to religiously and upheld strictly then the ability for the egregore to 'reject' bad fruit is enhanced. This mechanism can become so effective that the egregore will reject members because of what it feels developing in their minds before they are themselves aware of their misdirection. This is the true meaning of an 'activation' of a Magickal oath. Subsequently, once the group member is rejected by the egregore it is not unusual for him to feel a massive loss of energy and direction as the groups collective resources are cut off from him.

The other side of the productive effect that an egregore has on a group is that once it is stable and growing it can provide the new member with an added boost of enthusiasm, direction and awareness. New members to an occult group begin the process of connecting to the group's egregore by repeating practices that are novel to the group, entering into conversations that are focused on the group's best interests and by sharing in group activities. Of course this only happens if the individual happily accepts the groups teachings and practices. Any resistance to the exterior functions of a group impact on the interior (psychological) functions as well.

Probation, and graded instruction in general, therefore serves the purpose of protecting the group mind of the individuals who are involved in maintaining the integrity of the group. By passing through Probation, for example, each student either discovers they have no desire to get involved in our course of instruction before they are 'officially' accepted to serious study, or they 'feel' an empathy with our path and happily go about the process of being accepted by our egregore through the process of instruction. Such empathy is, really, not to the letter of the word given in our lessons; it is more an empathy between minds - their mind and the group mind.

In this way we afford ourselves the kind of protection against outside antagonism that would make serious study difficult and developed group work near impossible. For every time a group has a major upheaval that results in the establishment of factions or in key individuals leaving, the group mind undergoes a great shock from which, if it is serious enough, it may not survive. Under such circumstances the group will fold.

We might also see the reasoning behind occult fraternities establishing lodges or temples with limited numbers of members. These small groups act like cells in a greater organism, each having its own egregore that has a link with the overall egregore of the fraternity. If, under these circumstances, one group flounders and falls apart the negative effect this has can be isolated from the rest of the fraternity thereby increasing its ability to survive.

Probationers Lesson 4

Utopia

"The end should be the application of all tradition, experience, and knowledge to the perfection of the human state and estate. The Great Work was the perfect adjustment of human purpose with the divine plan, through the understanding of the laws of Nature and the practice of an enlightened code based upon the threefold foundation of philosophy, science and religion."

(Manly P Hall - Orders of Universal Reformation)

Here we begin to consider the aim or goal of study within esoteric fraternities. Human beings are by nature social creatures. Ever since the first occultists (and shamans, mystics, etc.) began to develop their skills they have often been rejected by society at large to some degree, and have, naturally, sought out solace in like-minded company. This was very likely the first impetus towards the formation of esoteric groups.

One of the benefits of study within an esoteric fraternity is that it gives each individual an opportunity to sublimate (develop) their social instinct. Social contact within an esoteric group is usually of a more evolved type than is experienced in common society. This is because the conversation, group activities, eating habits, morals, learning and general behaviour of members within occult fraternities revolve around spiritual ideas and are controlled by spiritual discipline. This is often a very satisfying situation for the individual who has felt alone in his spiritual search and rejected by his non-occult orientated family, friends and acquaintances.

Esoteric fraternities in general agree that such elevated social dynamics are the future of the greater part of humanity. Occultists of all ages dreamed of a time when humanity in general would evolve into a state where it enjoyed and encouraged more advanced behaviour. Where creativity and occult science would be commonly understood and accepted aspects of society. Such a society is termed a spiritual utopia.

Esoteric fraternities with utopian vision see the process of each individual members esoteric training as a precursor to the task of establishing such ideal societies. For each individual who manages to succeed in the Great Work, the process of attaining enlightenment has a marked impact on the collective unconscious of humanity.

This is a very important factor in occult training that is often not considered by the novice student. The collective unconscious is like a huge pool of instinct that drives humanity forward. All ideas, inspiration and motivation arise out of the collective unconscious. At the same time the collective unconscious absorbs and stores every activity, both organic and psychological, that every

creature is involved in. The collective unconscious absorbs all of this information, digests it, and then feeds it back into our minds as ideas and drive. This, of course, is a gross simplification of the process, but serves our purpose, we hope, in pointing out where occult education fits into the picture.

For every individual who succeeds in the Great Work has a massive impact on the collective unconscious ... whether they like it, or, are aware of it, or not. The psyche of every advanced occultist is like an elixir to the racial mind. The ideas accessed, developed and fed back into the collective by every advanced occultist affect every human being to a greater or lesser degree. Slowly, in this way, over ages, the human race evolves towards the utopian society esoteric fraternities dream of.

In this way each successful occultist repays the debt he owes the Great Spirit for his or her own training. This is what we call 'service' in its real sense. It should therefore be considered at the outset that esoteric training is very self-centred. The philosophy behind this deep self-concern is that if the individual does not take proper care of himself he will not be a fit channel through which to help the collective.

There is another side to this coin too. There are some occultists who never develop past the initial stages of training, who never complete the 'lesser work', and who therefore are tempted, either deliberately or through ignorance, to use the little knowledge they have for evil (retrogressive) purposes. These individuals are technically practising black Magick. But we do not consider them as true black Magi for they are too ignorant of the effects of their actions to be truly evil. For lack of a definite label in the western mystery tradition in our school we refer to such individuals as 'petty tyrants' or 'Makutu' (mar-koo-too) a label used by native New Zealand Magi (Tohungas - toe-hong-ah's). Such individuals poison the collective unconscious by opening doorways into devolving psychological mechanisms that belong to our past animal-like natures.

Now, it is suggested by tradition that this whole process, the establishment and guidance of occult schools and their students, is guided from the inner levels by a type of secret - spiritual - government. Tradition has referred to this government, which it tells us is formed of advanced individuals who have succeeded in the Great Work, by various names. The most popular title, in past times, given to this elite group of individuals, was 'The Great White Brotherhood' (G.W.B.). The 'white' referring to the type of Magick they practice not their racial origin. The Order of the Golden Dawn referred to certain individuals within the ranks of the G.W.B. as 'The Secret Chiefs', and asserted that these chiefs had the ability to step in and out of physical reality at will and were in possession of awesome occult powers. In the eastern schools these individuals are referred to as Bodhisattvas. Their primary task, we are told, is the establishment and encouragement of productive occult groups to succeed in the Great Work, and thereby the advancement of humanity, towards utopia. We are told that this secret government was first established at the beginning of humanities sentience and has guided our races evolution from that day to this. Although various methods and channels have been used to effect this

steady soul growth in humanity the mystery school tradition is the main organ of the organization of such effort in the physical realm.

The conclusion that we draw from the preceding ideas is this. Firstly, that training in occult fraternities is divided into three levels of activity. (1) the training of novices, (2) the development of skill, and (3) partaking consciously in the development of utopia. The first level of activity we call 'apprenticeship'. The second we call 'adeptship'. The last we label 'mastery'.

Secondly, when considering whether or not the above plan has any basis in fact we must consider at least one question: 'is it acceptable that the individual develops Magickal skill for his own ends only?' Or, would it be more honourable to aid the divine in carrying out its Will?

Thirdly, if attainment of Magickal power - of any kind - has a marked effect on the collective (racial) unconscious, and thereby on humanity in general, is it not logical to assume that any individual who gains such power is going to be a matter for concern by those powers that guide our evolution?

If so, then no matter what we consider 'good' or 'bad' behaviour (Magickally speaking) the powers that be will deal with us according to their own plan. If we are going to perform acts that will set human development back then we will be stopped or retarded. If we have the ability to advance human evolution then every aid will be given unto us. Therefore, of course, knowledge of what is considered actual productive behaviour and what is considered unproductive is a great concern to us as students of the mysteries.

Consider this carefully. And if you intend on carrying on to formal training - act accordingly - for your own safety.

The idea of a social utopia was interestingly described in the classic work by Francis Bacon called 'The new Atlantis', which we hope you will take time to read, for it is suggested that this work was based on the ideals of an old esoteric society in Europe.

Probationers Lesson 5

First Review

"The Red Lion was used as a symbol by the Alchemists to express the highest powers of the Adept. The whiteness of purity having been attained, the heat must be violently increased, until the redness of perfect strength manifests itself. Head 2. Now the danger which attends our labours arises from attempting to exercise this will power, before we have purged ourselves of ignorance and darkness."

(S.L. MacGregor Mathers - Ritual Magic of the Golden Dawn)

Each fifth study session in this course is a review lesson. A review study night requires of you to compile and send in an email message to your tutor a complete copy of your Magickal journal (to date), including any extra notes, comments or questions you wish to ask about the last four lessons before you begin the next block and a new subject area.

It is required that you have completed your reading assignment for the last lesson block also. Therefore part of your review email to your tutor should include at least a 500-word essay on the contents of your reading assignment. This essay should be saved as a text file and added to the review email as an attachment. This essay should include the following subject material:

- (1) A brief review of the entire book.
- (2) Your opinion about the subject matter contained in the book and the author's view of that subject.
- (3) Questions about any material covered in the book that you did not understand and would like to know more about.
- (4) An explanation of how important, or not, the book itself and its subject material is in the scheme of our study course.

If you have not completed the reading assignment before the fifth study session you should still write your essay, but include a preface explaining where you are up to in the book and why you feel you have not yet completed it by the due date.

All of the above must be completed and emailed to your tutor before this study session is over. There will be no reminder at reviews 10, 15 and 20 concerning the instructions given here. You are expected to take responsibility for completing each block during its review just as you are instructed to do here.

Note: Please mark in your journal the exact place where you were up to for this review so that you do not send the same entries again in the next review to your tutor. The same should be done for each review.

Probationers Lesson 6

Discipline and Morality

"Freemasonry is a benevolent Order, instituted by virtuous men, for the praiseworthy purpose of spreading the blessings of morality and science amongst all ranks and descriptions of men."

(George Oliver - The Book of the Lodge)

Two primary concerns for those who study, and who are in positions of authority within schools of occult training are the maintenance of discipline and a high moral standard. As the above quote suggests, Freemasonry, the font of the modern western mystery tradition, has as its first foundation the insistence that morality is our greatest tool in climbing the spiritual ladder.

The process of mastering Magick is one that, necessarily, involves the serious alteration of our personal psychology. In order to master Magick we must undergo extreme changes in belief, attitude, orientation, behaviour and such-like. All of these changes are changes in the foundation of our personal being ... our mind. If we lose control over the foundation of our present reality our entire life will fall apart. Such ideas are not too difficult to understand and accept and we cannot do enough to impress the importance of these statements. The problem is, how can we ensure that we maintain stability and productive control of our lives when faced with such dramatic change?

The answer is simple to describe. It sounds logical. But in practice it is not so easy to carry out. The powers in the universe whose intention it is to thwart our desire to master Magick, for such powers do exist, will make use of every opportunity that arises in order to remove us from the path altogether.

Our first and best line of defence against the pressures of occult training is discipline.

Most of us have very little real discipline in our lives. Often we are only impelled to perform certain acts because they are pleasurable, because the legal consequences of acting otherwise are more than we are willing to suffer, or because it is a matter of survival. The problem with Magick is, firstly, that the early stages of training often involve the performance of tasks which do not on the outside seem to be pleasurable, which we have no legal responsibility to carry out, and which do not seem absolutely (or sometimes even remotely) necessary for our survival.

When a student is faced regularly with the hardships of learning he will begin to question the necessity of the work he is involved in. He will begin to play a game with himself the point of which, really, is to encourage his mind to come up with what he accepts as reasonable excuses to stop training. Those parts

of our lives that feel threatened by occult training are, of course, more than willing to provide such excuses ... no matter how unreasonable they may actually be.

From the outset, then, while our heads are clear and we know what we want, we must accept the inevitability of a conflict between our desire to master Magick and our fear of attainment of that goal. Nobody escapes this conflict. It is a natural part of the path. **Those who do not accept this fact are doomed to fall into its trap and lose their way upon the path.** Once we have accepted that there will be times when we will try to trick ourselves into being distracted from the goal we must then accept that only a maintenance of strict discipline in our training and lives will help us overcome the temptation of distraction.

With all of this in mind it should be understood that formal training has built into it a series of exercises and mechanisms that are designed to give you guidelines to, and tools for, maintaining an effective regime of personal discipline.

Your tutor cannot force you to behave in a manner that will ensure that training is both safe and productive. He cannot force you to stick with your training through thick and thin. Because of this, right from the start, the day you sign your probationer's obligation/contract, it is you who must assume ultimate responsibility for your success or failure where training is concerned.

Each aspect of the training process in probation, for example, is most important. If any part of the work outline is neglected the entire process suffers. Every portion of probation involves exercising some small degree of discipline in order to both keep up its practice and to perform such tasks in a productive manner. This whole process begins with the probationers contract. The contract outlines the boundaries within which we ourselves must ensure we stay if we are to have a chance at reaching formal training.

The next step, and a complementary one with discipline, is morality. Because your tutor, ultimately, cannot force you to maintain discipline, in the end, it is your own desire to maintain personal integrity that will force you to be disciplined. If you do not care about keeping your contract, if you allow yourself to believe that you know more than those who designed our training course, and those who laid down the rules of occult training from times of old, which our system adheres to, then you will discover that you have no check on your ability to maintain personal discipline when the temptation to give up or undermine the effectiveness of the process arises.

It is necessary when agreeing to the probationer's obligation to assure yourself that (1) you acknowledge the rules as being acceptable. (2) That as long as you remain part of our training regime it is your duty to abide by the rules imposed on you by it. (3) That to change your mind about keeping the contract and not inform your tutor is dishonourable. It is a deliberate deception. (4) That honour is important above all else as the last line of defence against being lost from the path.

If you cannot maintain a sense of honour you will bend the rules. It's as simple as that. Bending the rules is a sign of weakening discipline. Once discipline is lost training becomes either unproductive and/or unsafe. This is the bottom line.

Honour is an aspect of morality. Both a strong moral character and sense of honour, in their turn, rely in knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. It is easy, for example, to say that your honour is intact when you are messing with the rules, if you believe it is right to do so. So lastly, let us look at the Guilds Rule concerning right and wrong, good and evil.

The Mage's Ethic or The Difference Between Black and White Magick

Article 1:

There is an ultimate Truth that guides and sustains everything in the Universe.

Article 2:

To act outside of that Truth is Black Magick (counter productive).

Article 3:

In order to practice White Magick one must seek the Truth in order to know the Truth.

Article 4:

Our only access to the Truth is through our Higher Genius.

Article 5:

The first goal of all White Magick is to learn how to access ones Higher Genius, and thereby to discover the Truth expressed through it. This is the proper Work for an Apprentice Mage.

Article 6:

The Second Goal of all White Magick is to put into practice the knowledge gained during Apprenticeship in order to experience this Truth. This is the proper work of the Adept Mage.

Article 7:

The Third Goal of all White Magick is to act in accordance with the Truth. This is the proper Work of the Master Mage.

Article 8:

Any interference by one individual in another's, or by one's self in ones own, ability to conform to the Path described in articles 5,6 and 7 is Black Magick.

We suggest, if you desire to succeed in our training course, that you print a copy of 'The Mage's Ethic' and study it carefully until the essence of its meaning is remembered ... then understood. The motive for all of the actions of an Initiate into our formal training are based on this ethic. To read the ethic and then to give it no further real consideration is the beginning of failure in our school. If you decide that you desire to apply for formal training at the end of this course of tuition your tutor, the other students in formal training and your superiors in the Guild will automatically expect you to conduct your life according to this ethic. For us, who have gone before you through the threshold of the temple, and who have accepted the discipline of a life-times commitment to the path, we insist that an individual who does not accept the ethic as a Rule to live by, through his or her actions automatically demonstrates a desire to remain *Homo Normalis* ... a non-initiate. Accepting the Mage's ethic as a rule to live by is the first act that sets us apart from the common herd and dedicates our life to the search for liberation from the slavery of Ignorance. Without the ethic there is no guideline, no boundary, no definition of 'Initiate' by which we may steer the vessel of our self-discovery.

So let us, here, recapitulate all of the preceding ideas.

- (1) Success and safety in training relies on unwavering self-discipline.
- (2) The first sign of a loss of discipline is often the deliberate undermining of the effort required - in training - and the boundaries set by the rules governing training.
- (3) The exercise of effective self-discipline often relies on a strong personal moral code and a sense of honour.
- (4) The Mage's ethic is the foundation of the Mage's sense of honour and his moral code.

It should be understood that what an Mage sees as being good and evil are, necessarily, different than what the average person chooses to accept. What you as a probationer should work to understand is that an Initiate into the ancient mysteries has accepted, that by crossing the threshold into long-term formal training, s/he embraces a very different moral and ethical code by which to live. Our path can only be understood and lived under the conditions of this code. To try to live by the average mans ethic and to practice Magick is to court failure and/or disaster.

The entire Magickal ethic is itself based on Article 1. Not accepting this article undermines the whole field of occult training ... as presented in our school.

If we cannot accept that there is an order underlying creation and that aligning ourselves with that order is the key to success then to continue in formal training, in our system at least, is futile.

Probationers Lesson 7

Magick

"In reality, Magick is a sacred science, it is in a very true sense the sum total of all knowledge because it teaches how to know and utilise the sovereign rules."

(Franz Bardon - Initiation into Hermetics)

Magick In this discourse we focus solely on the subject of Magick itself. There are a number of definitions about just what Magick is. For a start we should make a clear distinction between stage magic or illusionism, the type of thing we see on television, and high Magick, the arte of causing change to happen in conformity with ones will-power. You will notice that we adhere to a modern convention of spelling Magick, the occult arte, with a 'k' on the end in order to define it from mere dramatic stage performance or pseudo-magic of pop occultism. When discussing Magick (and Alchemy) we also use the terms arte (with a 'e') and science. We mean by arte a discipline that requires a certain knack or skill and design in order to produce workable results. In this way we should understand that Magick, like music or painting, requires a certain inherent flair on the part of the practitioner. We use the term science in exactly the same manner as it is used to describe biology or physics today. Magick (and Alchemy) are not religious superstitions. They are founded on hard esoteric science, are developed and maintained through the understanding of complex laws and are both intellectually and emotionally very demanding studies. That is, the study of Magick, when attended to properly, is no less demanding than the study of any other modern science at university level.

At past times in history it is very likely that the avid student of Magick practised a combination of illusionism and high Magick. Today, though, the two fields of practice are quite separate.

The exact origins of Magick are veiled by the mist of time. There is one school of thought that suggests that Magick began as a type of shamanism during the early history of humanity. These Shaman, we are told, were either natural occultists, i.e. they were born with psychic faculties, or they stumbled upon mystic experiences through, say, the use of natural narcotics. Thus, over time, complex systems of Magick evolved which at certain times in history became very organised and powerful.

This version of the history of Magick, it seems, is a favourite of systems like wicca (modern witchcraft) who thrive on the belief that they have preserved such early traditions.

A second school of thought states that before the dawn of recorded history there have been other, possibly many, high civilisations which, before our time, have been lost to the ravages of the ages. That always where high

culture has existed primitive cultures have also co-existed. The same being true today in our world, societies existing in Stone Age type lifestyles live within reach of huge metropolitan centres.

This same tradition asserts that mankind did not gradually learn Magick in a hit and miss or Darwinian type evolution, but instead, that it inherited the science complete from a more advanced non-human culture that, in prehistoric times, had an interaction with humanity.

Ancient cultures, like the Egyptians, Babylonians and Semites, themselves assert that the latter process is the one which accurately described the origins not only of Magick but of agriculture, war and civilisation itself.

For example, modern science tells us that the Egyptian culture began about 3500 BC when a Warrior-king, named Menes, united the primitive tribes of the upper and lower Nile into one culture. What modern science cannot explain is how this, so-called, Stone Age culture managed to have a fully developed complex writing and religious system hundreds or even thousands of years in advance of its time.

The ancient Egyptians themselves had a quite different story about their origins. They tell us that Egypt had been ruled over by 49 Pharaohs before the time of Menes. That some of these Pharaohs were God-like and Demi-God like beings who had lived for thousands and hundreds of years in some cases. The earliest of these Kings, we are told, were responsible for the cultivation of humanity from the beginning. Eventually these Pharaohs lived for shorter and shorter lengths of time until their bloodline was so diluted by inter-breeding with humanity that well before the time of Menes all trace of their powers had been lost and the government of Egypt had passed into the hands of humans whereby it fell into relative corruption.

The language and magio-religious tradition that is known to have existed, intact, at the time of Menes, was, then, according to tradition, a remnant of a vastly more ancient, and some suggest - more advanced, culture than today's.

But there has passed over 5000 years of human history since that time. The conflicts that have arisen as a consequence of human society have caused some cultures, some isolated or repressed groups, to lose connection with the original mystery tradition brought over from beyond the beginning of modern history. As a result some such societies have had their occult knowledge reduced to a bare minimum, corrupted, or alternatively, lost it altogether and had to eventually re-access the knowledge themselves. Shamanism, we suggest, was the result of such conditions, not once in early history but repeatedly down through the ages.

Magick, originally, was a craft like any other, such as war, agriculture, architecture, or politics. Magickians were employed by Kings in stable societies or supported by the community in small social groups. They were healers, and were expected to ensure communal livelihood and success in war. Because of this the aims and focus of ancient Magi were quite different

than they are today. The student of the occult arts in past ages was expected to develop certain definite skills through the use of special tools. There was pressure to perform brought on the Mage from both his community and the state. The focus was often on the control of people and situations and the acquisition of such control lead many to cross the boundaries of white into dark Magick.

Today the Mage has no accepted role in common western society. His position has been usurped by the scientist in this technical age. Because of this the focus of modern occultism is not in the attainment of 'knacks' that provide the ability to manipulate people and situations, but rather to the attainment of personal liberation from ignorance and corruption. The modern Mage does still, upon his path to liberation, find need now and then for the manipulation of reality in order to smooth his progress. But he now concentrates in obtaining Truth before anything else and power over himself rather than external objects and situations. This is what is referred to by the use of the term The Great Work. It is the obtaining of power over the self, emancipation from ignorance of Truth and the alignment of ones personal will with the Divine Will.

There are, of course, those individuals, and schools, who would disagree with this assessment. They would claim that Magick is primarily the acquisition of skill in manipulating reality. That the attainment of enlightenment, of freedom from ignorance, is in fact something else altogether outside the realm of Magick.

Our tradition, our school of thought, does not accept this latter explanation at all. Our intention is not the acquisition of power for powers sake, or for the illusionary belief that one's personal stature is enlarged by the study of the sacred sciences. But instead, we insist, that the attainment of Wisdom for the purpose of aiding human evolution is the only true motive for the study and mastery of the occult sciences.

Now that we have taken a brief look at the origin of Magick, historically, as an arte, we will consider just what Magick is technically.

The entire practice of Magick rests on the belief that our physical universe relies for its existence on a more subtle type of matter which medieval Mages called the sidereal universe, and which we today commonly refer to as the astral universe or plane(s). Magickians assert that the forces and matter of the astral universe are, likewise, susceptible to manipulation by the human mind, for the astral is composed of mind stuff. Under these conditions, with the use of purpose built tools, the accomplished Mage has the ability to govern, control and alter physical reality at every level.

This is the crux of Magick. Therefore there are two areas of interest for the Mage.

- (1) The accumulated, and accumulation of, knowledge concerning the physics of the astral universe. We might suggest that this largely

involves the intellectual pursuit of knowledge gained by thousands of years of trial and error exploration of the astral by skilled magi. This knowledge, as we have previously mentioned, has been recorded by the adepts and masters of our tradition down through the ages in their best writings.

- (2) The second area of interest is found in the practical application of this knowledge. The Magick writings of the past ages were, necessarily, often written in cypher or allegory. This means that unless one belonged to a school which already possessed the keys to such codes, one had to, by trial and error, rediscover the truths recorded in these books oneself in order to produce practical results in Magick.

This was often a very difficult task, a task that produced much superstition, error and bold lies. It has also, in our opinion, been the main contributing cause in the steady move away from serious practical Magick with tangible results, towards the heavy intellectualisation of Magick that we see today. In some ages even to speak of the mysteries to a non-initiate invoked a death penalty. In other times there has been no such restriction, as we find at the present (generally). But the keys to success in the arte are often hidden so deeply in the past that no amount of access to books, manuscripts and secret processes provides us with working, reliable results of the same calibre described by historians and practitioners of classic and ancient times. In fact, today, the practical application of Magick has been so undermined that critics and pseudo-occultists tend to attribute such historical claims to exaggeration, metaphor or deliberate lies.

The Guild, however, insists that any truly accomplished Mage has developed the ability to manifest his Magick in a very tangible manner, at will. He is not an intellectual sophist, although he must necessarily have an intelligent approach to his vocation. He takes no pride in simple scholarly mastery of Magick, so called arm-chair theurgy, but also does not mistake the mere acquiring of Magickal impedimenta and the recitation of invocation during the rote practice of ritual as being the sign of an accomplished Mage either. The master of Magick, we insist, has an extremely accurate, penetrating and reliable clairvoyant and telepathic ability. He has the skill of affecting the fundamental properties of matter quickly, reliably and tangibly. He has access to knowledge that he has never before studied. Can heal, preferably unaided, almost any disease. Without these skills, at least, we insist that a Mage is still only a student, somewhat adept though he may be.

By this time in history we can see that many different versions of the original mystery tradition exist. There are all kinds of trinkets, props, incantations, rituals and meditation methods available, each promising some degree of success in the Great work. No matter which tools one is introduced to, or has preference for, in the end they all only aid in one thing - the ability to move the astral light with the intention of manipulating physical reality. This is the definition of Magick. Anyone, therefore, who claims to be a skilled Mage must, by this definition, have the ability to change reality at will by means of a skilful manipulation of astral substance. At first this skill is raw and involves an ability to draw in or avoid certain objects or situations in the environment of daily life.

Later this skill is enhanced to the point that this power of attraction and repulsion has almost immediate results. Full accomplishment sees the maestro with the ability to break down matter and to re-arrange it in new forms, maybe on new levels, without destroying the principle of life.

Finally, we shall point out again, that all of this begins with the ability to enter into and understand astral physics. The first stage of this we present as a series of pathworking-like exercises that we call trancework. Later these simple exercises are approached from a different point of view, which allows the student to grasp how he may develop the ability to use trancework to bring forth, direct and manipulate the fundamental energy of the universe so that he or she can sculpt his present environment into a vessel within which Magick may manifest both automatically and at will.

Probationers Lesson 8

The Psychology of Magick

"Men are used to thinking of themselves only as men, and woman think of themselves as woman, but the psychological facts indicate that every human being is androgynous ... The ancient Alchemists agreed: 'Our Adamic Hermaphrodite, though he appears in masculine form, nevertheless carries about with him Eve, or his feminine part, hidden in his body.'"

(John Sanford - The Invisible Partners)

In the previous lesson we talked about where Magick evolved from and touched a little on how Magick works. In this lesson we will define the 'how it works' idea in more detail. We described how Magick is based on a belief in the existence of the astral universe and that it was the Mages ability to manipulate the physical through the astral that constituted his arte.

Let us now take this idea one step further and point out that what we refer to, as occultists, as the astral universe, the psychologist calls either the unconscious and/or the subconscious minds. The implications of this understanding are quite far reaching then.

For a start, if Magick is based on the existence of, and ability to, manipulate the astral light, and the astral light is actually 'mind stuff' then this leads us to the conclusion that Magick is a species of advanced psychology. On the other hand we could say that the science of modern psychology is an attempt to learn and control astral physics. Whichever view we take the point we desire to impress on you all is that before anything thing else 'Magick is a species of psychology'.

This becomes even more apparent when we consider that the astral light, the substance or 'matter' which provides the basis for form in the astral, can only be 'moved' by a Mage using his will and his imagination. As we pointed out in lesson 6 discipline is designed to exercise the student's will. We can further this statement now and add that it is the degree of will power that we have that decides how long and how well we can concentrate or focus. The astral light cannot be moved productively by a mind that is distracted. So without the ability to focus on one subject for at least 30 minutes at a time without distraction no serious Magickal effects are possible.

For this reason many simple little exercises, which often pass unnoticed, or which are under-estimated their value, are built into occult training in order to, step by step, grade by grade, exercise the will like a muscle until it is capable of sustained focus. Much of these exercises can be found in the intricate details of ritualistic behaviour that Magick teaches. How candles are lit and snuffed out, how robing-up for ritual should be performed, times of silence and

self-control that must be observed, the maintenance of the observation of small invocations, meditations, journal keeping, etc.

At the same time we set out to train the will we also introduce exercises to develop the imagination. Imagination is the second key to success in Magick. It should be understood that imagination is not merely the ability to 'image' in the mind. We also imagine smells, sounds, tastes, etc. In fact we can imagine sensations that originate with all five of our external senses.

For most people three of these sensory channels are most prominent when it comes to recording information about our environment. We each have a bias for either (1) visual input, (2) audio (sound) input, or (3) what is referred to as kinaesthetic input (i.e. feeling - either tactile or emotional).

A individual who is primarily a visually orientated person will display certain very obvious behaviours in their speech and recall body-language. The same is demonstrable for kinaesthetic and auditory bias persons. One of the ways we can tell if a person is in an altered state, (e.g. in an astral state of awareness), is that he accesses information from one of the other two primary sensory channels besides the one he uses in his normal waking state. Our point here is that imagination, which revolves around the re-creation of sensory input, does not necessarily have to be prominently visual - which is what many people expect. It can be primarily auditory or kinaesthetic. Here is an interesting 'knack' to learning astral projection.

Mastering Magick, then, where the use of imagination is concerned, has a lot to do with understanding how you perceive the astral (sound, sight or touch) primarily and then learning to use that bias to function more effectively in that environment. Here is a key to overcoming one of the greatest obstacles in occult training.

Besides the inclusion of exercises to sharpen the will in the process of occult training, then, we also find exercises that develop ones ability to understand, enter into and act within the astral universe. In past times the type of exercise that was used in this area was very limited. Today we understand much more about the unconscious and subconscious minds and how we might make use of their structure and dynamics. During formal training an exhaustive instruction in the basics of psychology, occult psychology, allows each student to learn about the functions of the mind and how they inter-relate. In past time this area of knowledge has been deliberately obscured in occult schools and writings, so great a secret, so great a key, was it considered to be - and rightly so. Other Schools have neglected to teach anything of occult psychology at all, and we can recognise these systems by their lack of success or the frequent misadventure that arises from the use of their methods without understanding. We also notice the slow corruption and fall into misuse of Magickal systems that have lost the keys to occult psychology.

If we understand and accept the preceding view of Magick then it is strange to find that very few occultists have any understanding of conventional psychology at all - let alone the esoteric view of the machinery of the mind. In

fact, it seems as if psychology, where the role of Magick is concerned, was not given due consideration until the establishment of the Order of the Golden Dawn. For it is in the writings of Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune and Israel Regardie that we see some of the first references to the relationship between the two fields of science. Regardie himself was, I am sure, the first Mage to bluntly suggest that it was each occultist's personal responsibility to seek psychoanalysis, if they were involved in serious formal training. Without such a serious approach to occult study, Regardie asserted, the student would either fail to see the process through because of the interference Magick would cause with his personal psychology, or alternatively, he could lose his grip on sanity.

For this reason the formal training course that we offer has carefully integrated into its occult instruction a full regime of practical and intellectual psychology. We have done this for a number of reasons. So that students will not need to go outside the formal training situation to seek psychoanalysis, primarily. One of the problems the average student might have with seeking outside help in this area is that it is likely that when discussing his personal life with a conventional psychologist difficulties and misunderstandings are bound to arise when it becomes necessary to mention ones interest in the occult to the therapist. Another reason for our training students in the field of psychology is that we believe that the effectiveness of training is vastly enhanced if the student has a good grounding in the subject.

If the student understands the mechanism of personal psychology it is bound to be easier for him to recognise a problem as it arises and put preventative measures into action. Where Magick is concerned, as problems arise, prevention of serious dysfunction is much preferable to cure.

With an understanding of psychology the student in formal training can be a more productive member of the group. For as we have mentioned in lesson 3 the success or failure, to a degree, of the group mind that the student works within depends on each individuals input to the group.

When it comes to gaining a good education in personal psychology, from an esoteric point of view, there are really only a few helpful sources of information. The first and most obvious are those works on Jungian psychology. Carl Jung, one of the Fathers of modern psychology, had a very spiritual approach to the subject. He was the first modern researcher to re-discover the importance of the psychological archetypes and their dwelling, the unconscious. He also recognised and worked towards a deeper understanding of the transcendental levels of the mind, those areas that we seek to 'know' as part of the goal of our serious training.

There are many very good modern works on Jungian psychology and we advise each student to familiarise themselves with the general area covered by Jung. Most public libraries these days have a good supply of such works.

The other sources of such works on psychology that are helpful to our concerns are written by occultists themselves. Of primary importance are

Israel Regardie's two works 'The Philosophers Stone', and 'The Middle Pillar', where he gives an excellent detailed overview of psychology from an occultist's point of view. Shimeon Halevi has also published an excellent book called 'Kabbalah and Psychology' which is a good introduction to the Qabalists point of view of the development of the human mind. Dion Fortune, the ex-Golden Dawn initiate, has produced a number of simple works on Magick nearly all of which include important hints and clear descriptions of Occult Psychology. One work in particular 'The Machinery of the Mind' is a basic manual on psychology for the occultist. But we recommend a good reading of all her novels for the best 'working' knowledge of occult psychology.

So we shall sum up the main points again. Firstly, Magick itself, as an entire discipline, should be approached with the understanding that it is a form of psychology. This is because Magick is the ability to manipulate mental forces in order to create changes in physical reality.

Secondly, the two primary mental 'mechanisms' which are responsible for the ability to effect Magick are will and imagination.

Thirdly, that in order to gain success in Magick it is necessary to actively seek out a good education in psychology, particularly that form taught by Carl Jung.

Probationers Lesson 9

The Philosophy of Magick

"Occult Philosophy seems to have been the nurse or god-mother of all intellectual forces, the key to all divine obscurities and the absolute queen of society in those ages when it was reserved exclusively for the education of priests and of kings."

(Eliphas Levi - Transcendental Magick)

The motive for the existence of the 'arte Magick' is based on a certain philosophy about reality, and how to deal with that reality. In this lesson we will look at the philosophy that gives life and structure to Magick.

Every Magickal system is based on the idea that the physical environment that we are all aware of is not the only 'reality' we have access to. This we may say is a standard belief. There is no general consensus, though, as to the exact nature of this other reality. Some systems speak of another world or universe that exists behind, beyond, parallel to or outside of our physical reality. Their concept is this simple. Some systems divide that other reality into a few or many levels or layers or 'planes' of existence giving, sometimes, very elaborate names to these differing existences and their various landmarks.

Whatever system one is attracted to it will be generally noticed that all accept that this 'other world' is the 'reality' that makes Magick possible. It is the source of all Magickal manifestations. It is also generally agreed that this other reality has some kind of link with our own physical environment. If this were not so then it would be impossible for the Magick of the other world to affect our world.

Another belief held in common by most Magickal systems is that this other world is populated by non-physical sentient beings. Again, some systems speak about these other beings in very simple terms; some have very complex descriptions of the nature and hierarchy of these other beings. An important aspect of a Mage's career in most Magickal systems is, therefore, his ability to communicate and co-operate with these beings.

Besides the varying specifics in belief any particular Magickal system holds we might say that the idea of a non-physical world populated with non-physical intelligences that can be communicated with is the basis of all Magickal philosophies.

In the western mystery tradition we find this other world most often referred to as the astral plane. The name evolved from an older term 'Sidereal Universe', and both have a similar meaning that refers to their association with 'Stars'. These stars are not the solar entities of interstellar astronomy but instead refer

to the inner stars or astral bodies of living creatures. Magickians also call the astral plane the 'Magickal Universe' for reasons before mentioned.

Now, the western mystery tradition goes further than suggesting that there is a doorway between the Magickal universe and the physical world. We are taught, and can eventually prove for ourselves, that the Magickal universe is the basis of, or blueprint for, the physical universe. The 'matter' of the Magickal universe, the 'astral light' of which Eliphas Levi speaks, is like clay that is modelled by the power of thought. This is one of the greatest secrets of Magick. The ultimate conclusion of this idea, for our present concerns, is that the physical reality we are so familiar with is created by our thoughts and can, therefore be manipulated by thought.

Magick, then, it follows, is the ability to use your mind to create change in the astral which will in turn manifest in the physical. It is asserted that the more understanding one has about how this process might be carried out the greater the change and more dramatic the 'Magickal' effects that he might bring about.

These are the simple ideas, the base philosophy, upon which the entire field of Magickal practice is founded. Once the ancient Magers knew about the existence of the Magickal universe and its relationship with the physical universe then they developed a vast body of knowledge based on a series of conclusions that were reached.

Most of these conclusions are common sense, but an understanding of them leads to an understanding of the development and state of the arte today.

If the Magickal universe exists and if it is the foundation of physical reality then in order to master Magick one must:

- (1) Find the doorway between the worlds.
- (2) Learn how to safely and reliably cross over between the worlds.
- (3) Gather and understand as much as possible about the other world - and its relationship to the physical world.
- (4) Develop a series of tools that will enable one to affect the astral and thereby affect Magick.

The ancients, then, did just that. They developed different techniques to get them to the doorway between the worlds and they became very skilled at passing in and out. Once this was accomplished they explored very carefully every corner of that universe that they had the ability to reach. From these activities three fields of knowledge developed:

- (1) Training: A series of exercises that would enable students to access the Magickal universe, travel therein and learn there from.
- (2) Sidereal Cartography: a detailed map of the astral universe.
- (3) Magick: Knowledge of how one could effect the physical universe profoundly through ones activities in or upon the astral.

From these early researches, most of which were completed well before the 4th millennium BCE, the grand philosophies of Magick were constructed. Today there are only two or three serious and ancient schools of thought centred on Magickal philosophy. Of these the Egyptian and Hebrew Qabalistic systems are by far the most detailed and far reaching in the western tradition. There is a problem with the Egyptian in that it is so complex and so ancient and has undergone a number of transformations that we have misplaced most of the details that would allow us to once again develop from it a deep, reliable working system of Magick. This leaves us, finally, with the Qabalistic system of which we know the most, have the greatest access to, and which is, relatively speaking, complete and unmolested by the ravages of politics and religion with which it has mingled in the last 3000 years.

In the Qabala, then, we find a very detailed analysis of the structure of the sidereal universe and of its inhabitants. We may read about the understanding the ancients had about the physical reality because of what they knew existed behind it. Traditional Qabalistic works describe in great detail a philosophy concerning the nature of God and his relationship with both man and the universe. From such understandings the institution of occult Initiation arose and a desire to speed the maturation of the human soul to a state whereby he may become partaker in the sublime mysteries of the evolution of his race and the universe.

The Tarot, it is said, was one of these organised knowledge and training systems. Originally the Tarot, we are told, was invented as a repository for Hermetic knowledge. It is designed as a Mutus Liber, or 'Book without Words'. It spoke directly to the unconscious in its own language - symbolism. Over time the original use for the Tarot was lost or obscured, until the latter 18th century when certain French occultists began to investigate its esoteric origins and structure. Most prominent amongst these gentlemen were Eliphas Levi and Dr.Papus.

It is very likely though, that the original Tarot was an experimental attempt at trying to devise a non-text format tutory tool. There is little or no evidence that a serious esoteric tradition existed behind the first tarot decks. There was almost no conformity in the size of the earliest decks and the subject matter and images on the cards varied from deck to deck. It is likely that the well organised and greatly standardised esoteric decks that are available today are an evolution of the original idea of Tarot and not a re-discovery of some original secret system that had been all but lost.

The occult (esoteric) Tarot system we have today is not really seen as a vehicle for divination, although this is one of its uses. The mainstream occult Tarot systems see the deck as (1) a book of occult instruction, and (2) and method of occult training.

The occult instruction encoded into Tarot teaches us the 'philosophy' of Magick. It enumerates the various steps and phases that the aspirant passes through on his path to higher knowledge. It describes the occult structure, Man, God and the Universe, upon which these processes act and react.

But the Tarot is not just a form of intellectual information. It is also a tool for higher development. The symbols arranged on each of the cards speak as potent language to the unconscious. The information encoded into the Tarot informs the unconscious concerning how it should unfold itself. The Tarot, then, is a set of instructions that activate this unfolding process when a combination of intellectual understanding of and meditation on the cards is practised persistently.

The first French occultists to expose these ideas had made a major jump in the evolution of Tarot. But they had not perfected the system anywhere as much as it needed to be in order for it to gain the respect it deserved. That did not happen until the Golden Dawn was established and it was eventually revealed that their ceremonial held information about the correct arrangement and astrological attribution of each card in the deck. The Golden Dawn revelation concerning Tarot was then carried to its present high and extreme by one Paul Foster Case who is undoubtedly the greatest authority on the system in modern time. In fact his system is so complex and far reaching, that in order to preserve the knowledge he developed Case founded an occult fraternity, out of the crumbling remains of the old G.:D.:, through which to teach his Tarot system.

The Guild does not teach Tarot as part of its official formal training. Nevertheless some instruction may be given privately to those students who desire it, with an understanding that the Guild asserts that while the tarot is an interesting toy it is considered to be of little value in aiding the techniques the Guild uses to effect mental and spiritual change.

Probationers Lesson 10

Second Review

"The fourth abstract core is the full brunt of the spirit's descent," he went on. "The fourth abstract core is an act of revelation. The spirit reveals itself to us. Sorcerers describe it as the spirit lying in ambush and then descending on us, its prey. Sorcerers say that the spirit's descent is always shrouded. It happens, and yet it seems not to have happened at all."

(Don Juan – The Power of Silence, Carlos Castaneda)

Tutors Note:

Assessment

- (1) Full journal record
- (2) Catch up on reading progress
- (3) Trancework assessment

Probationers Lesson 11

The Training Process

" Although they (Alchemists) never departed from the simple ways of Nature, they have something to teach us, which we, in these more sophisticated times, still need to learn, because we have applied ourselves to what we have regarded as the advanced branches of knowledge, and despise the study of so 'simple' a thing as natural generation."

(Michael Sendivogius - The New Chemical Light)

Here we are, then, at the beginning of block 3, which covers, primarily, the subject of Alchemy. Firstly, it should be understood that because the Guild's focus is mainly in this area a good deal of the tuition concentrates on this subject in the advanced training. Any individual who is, therefore, considering beginning formal training should not fail to remember this.

There are two aspects to Alchemy. One is what most refers to as the practical work - laboratory Alchemy - and the other is what is often called spiritual Alchemy - a form of esoteric psychology. In our system, and from now on, we shall refer to the practical work as 'operative' Alchemy and the psychological work as 'speculative' Alchemy.

It should, firstly, be understood that an Alchemist who desires to be successful in his endeavours would practice both forms of Alchemy.

In classic times one adept or master generally taught Alchemy to one student. Because of the nature of the work very often the Alchemist would require his student to live-in. In an age where there were no electric elements for heating flasks an around-the-clock vigil over the Alchemists athanor (oven or fire) was necessary sometimes day and night for months on end. While the Adept had his sleep the novice would sit up tending the fire, so it was important that the apprentice was both reliable and had skill with maintaining a certain degree of heat in the athanor. Should he fall asleep, let the fire die away too much or place too much fuel on the fire, the work, which may have taken years to reach its present stage, would be ruined. It is not hard to imagine that many a hapless apprentice was thrashed to within an inch of his life by an angry Alchemist who's Great Work was spoiled.

The relationship between the adept and the apprentice would have been one that was very carefully cultivated by the elder. Once he had learned he could trust his student, only then would he move from teaching the fundamentals to allowing the novice to aid him in the Great Work. Such instruction would, very likely, have been a learn-as-you-watch type of situation.

As the primary method of instruction this one-on-one teacher-student process ensured that the arte was kept very much underground for centuries. Most of the instruction was practical and oral on-the-spot. The average adept eventually passing away with nothing to leave behind but the legacy of knowledge he gifted to his apprentice and possibly some tools and chemicals.

The second method of instruction, in antique times, was carried out under the banner of secret occult fraternities. *Alchemical* fraternities, though, were rare in the west. German and French Rosicrucian schools being really the only example of note. Solo Alchemists working within such fraternities, esoteric and often monastic, and influencing their closest brethren was a more usual predicament. The primary benefit of fraternal instruction in Alchemy was that such an institution could finance large-scale experiments and thereby advance knowledge and experience in the arte very quickly. Orders of this kind would maintain records of their successes and the longer they were operative the greater their chances were of succeeding in discovering the Great Secret. We can, therefore, imagine that some of the very long term Orders attained much wealth and discovered the secrets of extending their adept's life expectancies to extreme limits through use of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life.

By the end of the 18th century we see that large scale organised alchemical experiments and instruction had all but disappeared. Once again instruction went underground and the line of transmission narrowed to very small informal groups or one-on-one tuition.

Today, it might be said, in general, that modern operative alchemical work in the western tradition stems largely from those methods taught by a certain Frater Albertus during the 1960's and 1970's. Frater Albertus began his career as an alchemical tutor with the occult Fraternity known as the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) in the USA. Eventually he left AMORC, after some tuition problems arose, to found his own school that he called the Paracelsus Research Society (PRS) - later the Paracelsus College. Albertus, through the Paracelsus College, taught a seven-year course in laboratory Alchemy, Astrology and his own version of Qabala. I would be accurate to say that Albertus was the first man in modern times to teach the operative tradition openly to non-initiates on a relatively large scale.

Today much of the information we have access to, in the western tradition, through books, schools, and experienced Alchemists derives either directly or indirectly from the methods taught by Albertus. The exceptions are few and far between.

Albertus taught that proper training in operative Alchemy consisted of three stages in the past. The first stage was the learning of the fundamentals of the arte through mastering the process of making alchemical medicines from herbs. This was called the 'prima' or herbal work. The second stage was the application of the knowledge gained in the prima to the animal kingdom. Because of a modern desire not to harm animals, as was a concern for a few

Alchemists in the past, the animal work was limited to a few simple experiments with hen's eggs (mainly). The third stage involved work in the mineral and metallic realms. Frater Albertus taught the prima in the first year of his seven-year course. The second year moved straight into basic work with minerals and steadily became more complex over the remaining five years. During the mineral lessons the animal work was discussed and some experiments shown as examples.

As far as the speculative work in Alchemy is concerned Albertus taught almost nothing of note. There were basic meditation exercises and, as we have said, a form of Qabala and some Astrology. But the focus was primarily intellectual and not really internal-practical (speculative). In later years many of Albertus' students looked for the other half of their alchemical interests in other systems such as the Golden Dawn, AMORC, and Freemasonry. Frater Albertus died in 1984, and the PRS, in its home base in Utah, folded soon after. A branch of the work in Europe is said to still exist today (the 1990's).

It is not surprising, then, to see that the next school to rise and fill the place of the PRS was a combination of the operative alchemical teachings of Albertus and the Magick of the Golden Dawn - a French school that became known as the Philosophers of Nature. It is interesting to note that the Golden Dawn itself, which never had any real alchemical instruction in its system, then, in some places, adopted the more simple practices of Albertus.

The Philosophers of Nature (PON) was started by a Frenchman called Jean Dubuis. Dubuis, we are told, was also a one-time member of the AMORC. He was also, it was rumoured, an active member of a French Golden Dawn Temple. Eventually he dropped the Golden Dawn tradition and put together a correspondence course that was a combination of PRS style operative Alchemy and Golden Dawn teachings on Qabala. Like the PRS training Dubuis' course was originally designed to cover seven years. It is a true modern school in that it has no fraternal structure, demands no obligations from its students, and sells its knowledge to any who can afford it.

There are western laboratory alchemical practices outside of the Albertus tradition (if we may call it that). But they are isolated and it is not easy to find out exactly what such individuals are practising. There are some western Alchemists who are practising eastern (largely Ayurvedic) methods of Alchemy also, but these are not strictly speaking part of our tradition.

It is understood by Alchemists that very few students of the occult are interested in operative Alchemy. Therefore the Guild does not require all of its students to practice the laboratory work. Nevertheless every student is expected to make the maximum effort possible to gain a deep intellectual understanding of the methods, philosophy and aims of the operative Alchemist.

Students who are considering taking up the operative work must first consider the laws of the country they are living in. It is necessary to establish a small private laboratory and to buy scientific glassware. The distillation of alcohol is

also a necessary part of the practice. Civil law in some countries forbids private individuals being involved in such activities, while other countries have no such bans at all.

The study of good classic literature on the subject is a necessary part of Alchemy, therefore those who follow this path will need to access as many helpful books as possible. Such reading is often quite tiresome and very difficult to make head or tail of because of the cryptic manner in which it is written. But it should be understood that much of the value that can be gained from Alchemy is had through the contemplation of the processes seen in the flasks compared with nature's processes and what the classic Alchemists wrote about them.

On the other side of the coin speculative Alchemy is taught to every student in formal training and for the present we might say that that work largely involves the deep understanding and practice of trancework exercises similar to those you are probably already familiar with. The speculative work can be understood with little or no knowledge of the details of the operative work. But it is our contention that little real headway can be made in the psychological side of Alchemy if the student does not have a deep understanding of natural law. Such an understanding is best had, for our purposes, from 'knowing' the operative process.

Probationers Lesson 12

Astral Influences - Astrology

"The Great Art of medicine has its cornerstone in the art of astronomy, as does the disease of man, his health, and his death. Whoever heeds this not is in error. For the physician who does not understand astronomy cannot be called a complete physician, because more than half of all diseases are governed by the heavens."

(Paracelsus - Astronomia Magna)

There are, we might say, three schools of thought in the realm of Alchemy. The first school believes or behaves as if the only thing that matters in Alchemy is the physical laboratory practice. Some of the members of this school of thought openly assert their stance, while others are not aware that their approach is largely a physical one, denying the speculative practice.

The second school is diametrically opposed to the first in that it believes that Alchemy is largely a spiritual (sic: astral) or psychological discipline. Within this school we find individuals who strongly believe that there was never any validity to the operative discipline, while others simply have no interest in the operative - valid or not. We often hear the former of this kind saying: "Alchemy was always a spiritual discipline but some misguided souls thought the chemical usages in classic texts were literal." Of course it is not difficult to assume that none of the persons who adhere to this view have actually practised the operative aspect.

The third school of thought stands between these two and includes persons who either work both in the operative and speculative traditions or who accept both as being valid even if they only have access to one or other. In other words they walk 'the middle way'.

Because it can be seen that both the operative and the speculative are productive in their own areas and towards each other it is the Guild's assertion that both are not only valid fields of activity but necessary to real success in one or other. We see that the speculative Alchemists, concerned primarily with psychological Alchemy, would not have a practice if it were not for the findings of the operative Alchemist. For it is well known that psychological Alchemy was derived from the early chymical texts. The opposite is also true. Many chymical texts are filled with allusions to psychological workings. Also much of what the operative Alchemist was able to discover in his arte was obtainable only through his ability to use the extended functions of his psyche.

In this lesson we would like, therefore, to take a closer look at how the psychological side of Alchemy, specifically the astral, interplays with the physical side.

The first and most obvious area we find this is in the field of astrology. Astrology is the science of measuring the cycles, and relationships between cycles, of various astral forces.

Picture a situation, if you will, where there is a room empty except for 23 different coloured fields of force. Each field interpenetrates the others and so by just looking into the room one cannot discern one field from another clearly. Nevertheless there are 23 different types of force in this room.

Now each of these force fields has periods when they are very strong and others when they are very weak. That is, they exist in a never-ending series of cycles. No two forces in the room have the same wavelength and therefore they all have different cycles. Some are short cycles of only a couple of days; others have cycles that take up to half a century to go from weakness to strength only once.

This is a picture, in the form of a simple analogy, of what the astral world is like at a certain level. So let us say that looking into this room at this level, and watching the peak and flow of the different forces, is like looking into the astral at 'force field' level. Now let us imagine that you are shifting your 'vision' into the physical level of this room. Once your eyes are accustomed to the new environment you notice the coloured fields are gone and now you are looking into a region of interstellar space. In the centre of this room you see our solar system with the Sun at its centre. Round the walls of the room, in a circular belt-like formation, you can see the various constellations that make up the signs of the zodiac.

For simplicity sake we will ignore the outer planets, those beyond Saturn, in our solar system, and the other astronomical objects, because the ancients did not include these in their basic considerations. Now if we consider that there are 12 signs in the zodiac, seven sacred planets, and four elements from which everything is composed we find we have $12+7+4 = 23$. Roughly speaking the zodiacal signs, the planets, and the elements are the primary 'astral' components that go into calculating an astrology chart.

Now comes the tricky bit. To compare what is happening in the physical with what is happening on the astral. There is a direct relationship between the state of the cycles of the astral forces and the positions of the planets in relation to the signs of the zodiac and each other. Let us imagine that the zodiac is like a huge belt of constellations and that the planets circle round the sun inside the boundary of this belt on the same plane - which in fact is what happens. The whole could be visualised as a machine, then. Let us imagine, in order to understand this whole process, that this astronomical 'machine' can be compared to a Sun dial - that is, it tells us what the 'time' is in the astral. Just as the physical Sun casts a shadow on a Sundial in a Garden so we can read the time of a series of demarcations about its circumference, in the same manner, the signs of the zodiac and the planets are the shadow cast by the astral forces. This shadow is our means of knowing what is happening with these forces in the astral.

Now Alchemists are aware that physical phenomena are the symptoms of astral forces at work. For example, the seasons of the year are the product of the condition of the astral 'elements' at various times during the solar cycle. Alchemists learned that some of the materials that they needed in their laboratory work could only be found at certain times of the year, or were only in good condition at certain times. Therefore, in order to be able to calculate these cycles more accurately, they used astrology. It was further considered that certain operations they were performing in the laboratory would only bear fruit if they were worked when particular astral forces were in certain states of flux or calm, etc. Astrology, again, was their means of calculating these times.

Taking all of this into consideration we must point out that astrology, as we know it today, is a greatly corrupted science. Much of the knowledge that the pre-Christian masters of astrology, the Babylonians and Egyptians, had about the arte has been lost to us. Therefore we must accept that no matter how valid astrology is in essence, in practice there is much to be recovered. For this reason the Guild does not include instruction in astrology as part of its formal training.

Also, for this reason many Alchemists do not use astrology as a means of timing operations or the collection of materials. Instead they might instead rely, for example, on their knowledge of seasons and ignore the remaining considerations that they cannot calculate. When all is said and done, today, the successes and failures of both those who use astrology and those who don't are probably equal.

The only other approach we have to this subject is the use of clairvoyance, that is, of the apprehension of astral conditions 'first hand'. This latter method we, in the Guild, place most promise in. Therefore we teach all our students, both alchemical and Magickal, the use of astral vision for the discovery of accurate knowledge from the Magickal universe that allows us to choose the right time and place to 'act' - when such becomes necessary.

Astral vision, the direct apprehension of astral conditions, also plays another important role in Alchemy. The Alchemist does not, essentially, recognise a division between mind and matter in his laboratory work. He knows, if he can 'see', that within the flasks and retorts of his laboratory that not only are there physical substances, animal, vegetable and mineral, but that there are also elemental life forms. The clairvoyant Alchemist has the ability to see that these 'elementals' (i.e. the creatures that live in the astral elements we call earth, water, air and fire), evolve with the process of the alchemical work. He can see that as the matter in his flasks evolves so do the creatures that live, in the astral, within the matter. The benefit of this ability is primarily singular. That by watching and communicating with such creatures the Alchemist can learn more about natural law, and the laws that govern Magick, than by almost any other method.

Now, all of this is good and fine for those who desire to become involved with laboratory Alchemy, but what of those who do not? It is our contention that

those who do not desire to become involved in the operative tradition should, none the less, seek out tutors, during formal tuition, who have a laboratory and spend some time in their company learning what they can second hand. The Alchemist's laboratory provides a situation to see things and experience things that it is very difficult to find anywhere else. The experienced Alchemist, for example, has the ability to demonstrate the relationship between the astral and the physical like no other esoteric practitioner can.

A good instruction in the relationship between the astral world and this one can only improve the student's skill in mastering himself and his environment. Let us the quickly recapitulate the main points of this lecture.

Firstly, laboratory Alchemy is not just a process involving the manipulation of chemicals for some Magickal purpose. That the Alchemist recognises an astral/life component to his work.

Secondly, that traditionally the average Alchemist used astrology in an attempt to calculate astral tides for the purpose of discovering the correct time to perform certain tasks or collect certain materials (animal, vegetable, or mineral).

Thirdly, that psychically advanced Alchemists have recourse to the use of clairvoyance in order to assess the state of astral currents and the astral state of materials.

Lastly, that our instruction, in Formal Training, does not include, as part of its official study course, tuition in astrology. Nevertheless, it is advised that every student seek out some degree of understanding of the details of astrology from amongst the many popular books that are published on the subject.

Probationers Lesson 13

Alchemy

"To appreciate and understand these Adepts' visions it is necessary to trace to some extent the history of their cult."

(Archibald Cockren - Alchemy rediscovered and restored)

This lesson focuses on Alchemy in general. As we have said previously we divide the arte into two disciplines - one chemical whose work is performed in nature and in the laboratory, and one psychological - whose work is carried out in the astral of the individual and collective psyches. The former is operative and the latter speculative in our system.

It is difficult to say, as far as past times are concerned, just how the average Alchemist viewed the speculative side of his arte. We could assume that the religious preferences of their respective cultures had a major influence on their spiritual (psychic) outlook. At the same time it is considered that many Alchemists working under the yoke of Christianity only included Christian trappings in their writings and behaviours in order to avoid persecution. It is, nevertheless, unlikely that all 'Christian Alchemists' had this view of Christianity because some Alchemists revealed to us that, indeed, the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, include many alchemical allegories and very clear descriptions of operative processes.

There is much evidence, though, that leads us to accept that a small number of Alchemists had advanced clairvoyant faculties, and that these individuals had a more universal and non-sectarian view of psychic phenomena. Many of these individuals were primarily speculative in their approach, such as the famous alchemical Mystic Jacob Boheme, but they definitely had access to the operative discipline. It is from these individuals that we find the most far-reaching and in-depth descriptions of spiritual reality and alchemical philosophy; the most respectful attitude towards occult knowledge, the deepest admiration for the tradition.

The chymical or operative side of Alchemy is quite a different story. No matter what anybody, today or in the past, might believe Alchemy 'is' it cannot be denied, once we have studied all that is known about the arte, that the chymical tradition is the most enduring and oldest aspect of the Tradition. Besides this, the image of an Alchemist, in the popular and educated mind alike, is that of an old man toiling over flasks and retorts in his laboratory, not a meditating mystic.

We know that the ancient Egyptians were involved in Alchemy and we can only guess at the miracles in metallurgy they achieved, for little has remained in record of their approach to our arte.

The oldest alchemical text that has survived is of Greek origin, by the Alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis. The text is a mixture of chymistry and spiritual/alchemical allegory. Which says a lot about the classic Greek Alchemists concerns. Many medieval texts have survived which are a mixture of the religion of their authors and chymistry. A good percentage are straight forward chymistry only. The 16th, 17th and 18th centuries see the greatest production of alchemical texts and engravings. Most of what we know about traditional operative Alchemy today derives from this renaissance. In fact the core operative practices of later 20th century Alchemy are sometimes referred to as having originated with French renaissance Alchemy.

Alchemy itself, both speculative and operative is sometimes, mostly by Alchemists themselves, called the touchstone of all art and science. A touchstone, for those who are not aware, is an implement a jeweller or assayer used to use in order to test precious metals. In other words it is a stone whose purpose is the exact identification of other (precious) stones. This is one of the most important tasks of Alchemy itself. Through the laboratory practice an experienced Alchemist has the ability of proving the kinds of ideas that are often only theories in other spiritual disciplines. For example, it is the Alchemist's boon that he can not only separate out and contain the astral body of any animal, vegetable or mineral, but he can also demonstrate the mechanics, laws and principles inherent in such a subtle body.

So we might say that the Truth about Nature is hidden within her creations, and it is the vocation of the Alchemist to reveal that Truth.

Thousands of years of development in the occult tradition have seen many false ideas; practices and beliefs adhere to the original pure science. Politics and religion, ignorance and deliberate deception have left their stain. Today much of this superfluous garbage is recognised for what it is. Nevertheless there is much that remains unrecognised. For this reason there are many schools, tutors and students involved in the preservation and dissemination of ideas and practices which are totally unproductive, sometimes dangerous and often simply distracting from the real goals of occultism.

One of the primary reasons for the Guild building alchemical instruction into its formal training course is that experience in this arte gives each student the ability of proving spiritual principles, taught by us, for themselves. We accept nothing that cannot be put to the test of both time and alchemical proof. We teach nothing that cannot be demonstrated in the laboratory and which adheres to the most tried and true ancient lore.

On-going research in the laboratory and in the realm of trance work also provides us with new insights into proven methods, deeper understanding of the words of the ancient sages. Occasionally it allows us to enhance on processes finding more efficient methods and applications.

Because Alchemy plays such an important role in the correction of outworn or false information or practices, ensuring that that which we pass on is preserved in a good, clean, accurate order - the Guild's founders have placed Alchemy at the head of its greatest concerns. It is for this reason, almost entirely, that our founders chose the name 'Alchemist's Guild' for the outer manifestation of our work. In New Zealand, where our school originated, the Alchemist's Guild is, in fact, one of two sole repositories for accurate information concerning the ancient western alchemical tradition. The first of these two repositories is to be found in the person and possessions of the tutor who taught the founders of the Guild. This person, before the establishment of the Guild, was the only practising and experienced Alchemist in our small country. The Guild was founded, originally, as a repository in perpetuum for the information and experience this original tutor had preserved.

Before those of you who are not overly concerned with the operative discipline become concerned about this focus we will point out that our founders also knew that few of our students would follow the laboratory path. For this reason much of the knowledge we have inherited and developed from alchemical sources is expressed through the format of our Magickal (internal alchemical) training - the greater part of the corpus of our tuition for most of our students. In the day-to-day work of Formal students within our system not much is actually discussed concerning Alchemy - in fact. For those who desire it tutors will always elaborate, orally or with the aid of literary resources, concerning the Alchemist's view or understanding of any principles we teach. But for the most part only those few who choose to follow the operative path will obtain full instruction in this area.

Finally, let us quickly sum up with a brief description of just what Alchemy and Alchemists are.

Alchemy is both an arte and a science. A body of knowledge built up by individuals who carefully physically and psychically observed, in the earth, rivers, seas, forests and skies above our heads the processes and laws of nature - both outer and hidden.

From these observations Alchemists deduced certain facts about our reality. These facts enabled them to understand, most importantly, where mankind and his world have come from, what 'actual' state they presently exist in, and what they are evolving towards. Further, through his intimate knowledge of natural process the Alchemist has learned both how to assist and how to master and surpass Nature in the attainment of the ends to which our creator has devised for us.

In order to carry out the 'Great Work' of helping individuals, and thereby humanity, to attain their spiritual heritage the Alchemist applies his knowledge in the realms of pharmacology and psychology - primarily.

Probationers Lesson 14

The Philosophy of Alchemy

"beware impatience do not cause thee through an itch of mind for to be bold, In this thy work to transgress Nature's Laws for no man errs sooner through heat or cold than he who through impatience of mind cannot expect it time which he would find."

(Eirenaeus Philalethes - The Marrow of Alchemy)

The basic philosophy of the arte of Alchemy is not a difficult one to delineate. It is the same philosophy today as it was 5000 years ago. Alchemists know that man, like matter, was created in a state of purity and innocence. At some point in his early existence, as a pure spiritual being, man accepted or initiated an action which began the process which took him, eventually, down into the realm of incarnation. This is the process that has been called 'The Fall' of man.

This fall into the cycle of incarnation took aeons of time. At this stage of man's evolution (or as some would say de-volution), man took on grosser vehicles of expression and grosser mechanisms of mind. In this way when man appeared on the physical plane he possessed both a physical body and a physical form of mentation. Nevertheless hidden within the mind and body of incarnate man is both the pure matter and mind he was originally endowed with.

Roughly speaking, if we were to take the average human body and separate the pure matter it contained from that impure substance which has adhered to it as a consequence of the fall we would find that the impurities outnumbered the pure by about 31 parts to 1.

Alchemical philosophy asserts (as does all true occult philosophy), that there is a direct relationship between mind and body. Further, it asserts that the impurities in the human body attract to them impure mental functions. By certain occult processes, varying depending on which kind of school you look at, it is possible, the Alchemist will tell us, to raise the vibrations in the body in order to throw off these impurities and to develop more refined building blocks of flesh and bone through which a more pure mentation is possible.

We might say that this understanding is the foundation of much of the motivation behind Formal occult Training in general. We may attain the purification of our physical bodies, as we have said, through various methods. Some schools focus on physical exercise (as in yoga), some concentrate on diet, others on creative visualisation or breathing techniques. Whichever path one might take, the goal for all, almost, is the same. A more pure body that may act as a clear lens through which to focus pure consciousness.

The traditional Alchemist of past ages (and probably today as well) primarily hoped to raise the vibration of the molecules that composed his physical body by the ingestion of very pure vegetable, animal and mineral substances. We speak here, of course, of the alchemical medicines (or remedies) that the Alchemist spends so much of his time labouring in his laboratory to prepare.

Down through the ages Alchemists searched every department of nature in order to find those substances that when prepared spagyrically would provide the greatest source of purifying power. In the course of their investigations they discovered a small number of special substances in the three kingdoms that contained such Magickal powers. These substances were so effective at purifying the human body that they could, if prepared properly and used properly, maintain the length of a person's life indefinitely.

The most famous and most sort after of these secret preparations is the so-called elixir of life. There are many lesser elixirs with life restoring and flesh regenerating properties that are noted amongst Alchemists but there was really only one fully reliable elixir of life. This substance was extracted from the mineral realm for in minerals is concentrated the most pure and abundant of nature's life forces. The remedy itself was so revered not only because of its ability to extend life expectancy and cure every disease but because it is a by-product in the process of confecting the philosopher's stone.

The elixir of life and the philosopher's stone are often confused in the mind of the lay-person. The two substances are often spoken about in the same breath. But in fact the elixir is a lesser product produced one stage before the end of the process that completes the philosopher's stone. The difference between these two substances is that the elixir is a medicine, a universal panacea, and the philosopher's stone is a metallic catalyst that brings about the purification or ripening of base metals. One provides health and the other wealth.

This now brings us to the second aspect of the philosophy of Alchemy. If the stone of the wise is only used to produce gold what place has this achievement in the realm of spiritual development? The answer is twofold. Firstly the action that the great stone effects is a living demonstrable proof of one of the most important initiatory principles. The stone is itself made of the pure matter contained in the mineral kingdom and it has the ability to transmute matter into a higher more perfect state. The Alchemists therefore assert that according to the law of analogy what is possible in the mineral realm is also possible in the animal/human and vegetable realms. That is, if man can separate the pure from the impure in this own body and discard the impurities then he will transmute himself into a more perfect being.

The second reason for the necessity of producing the Stone is explained like this. The arte itself demands so much of the Alchemist's time and expenses that without good reliable funding he would hardly be able to complete his work. The production of gold synthetically (i.e. alchemically) provides the Alchemist with the financial means to support further research and the

production of medicines and Initiatory remedies to further his own and others spiritual aims.

In the past, in this way, we can take it for granted, that it fell upon the shoulders of the Alchemists to finance the secret activities of esoteric fraternities. Indeed in the Rosicrucian manifestos of 1614 and 1615 we read that the brotherhood supported many of its activities from the production not only of alchemical gold but of alchemical gems as well.

Coming back to the subject of alchemical remedies for a moment, we might point out that these medicines were never really designed to be manufactured for the mass healing of the mundane populace. Any intelligent student involved in the study of alchemical products, manuscripts and books will notice quickly that almost no information at all is provided on the safe dosage for these remedies. Only the Alchemist, wise in his learning and experienced in the arte will 'see' what amount of any medicine is safe to take at any time.

Nevertheless most Alchemists at one time or other have healed a great many people of serious diseases with their spagyric remedies. Alchemical remedies are really designed to be used as aids to spiritual development. For not all of the benefit of these products is to be found in the final pure substances themselves but more in the seeing and understanding of the process by which they are produced. For the alchemical operation itself is a super-natural process which reveals to the Alchemist some of nature's greatest secrets.

This is the last of the probationer's lectures on Alchemy, so we shall close here, on this subject, by pointing out how the purification process is applied through trancework.

The Guild's approach to meditation, active imagination or trancework as we prefer to call it, is that through its aid we can, without the aide of Spagyric remedies, effect the purification of the body through the purification of the mind. Initiation and advancement, in our system at least, is largely a matter of psychology. Our particular brand of psychology is alchemical in nature. This means that we apply the natural laws we have observed in the laboratory within the realm of the mind. By the process of analogy we transcribe the laws of alchemical physics/chemistry into psychological processes and we see very quickly that the two worlds operate in the same manner. That means that a single underlying law/process governs the fall and resurrection of both mind and matter.

Over time the process is facilitated by the fact that sooner or later alchemical symbolism begins to superimpose itself on the random symbols of mundane life in both dreams and trancework. This improves our ability to both understand the unconscious' attempts at communicating with us and to decide what methods we might best use in order to bring about productive change in our lives (both inner and outer).

The study of Alchemy is the least easy of all occult sciences. But it is exactly this difficulty that makes it the most effective medium for change. For this

reason we can easily recommend to all students who will graduate to formal training to take up the study of this arte seriously if at all inclined in that direction.

Probationers Lesson 15

Third Review

"All Brethren know the word 'lodge' has at least three meanings: it is a place – a building or a room – in which freemasons meet; it is a society, or body, of freemasons that meets there; it is the actual meeting of that body. When we think of the lodge all three meanings often coalesce."

(Bernard Jones – A Compendium of Freemasonry)

Tutors Note:

Preparation for Lodge

- (4) Full journal record
- (5) Instruction in lodge protocol
- (6) Inform lodge Guardian of progress

Probationers Lesson 16

(I initiation and Advancement)

The Teacher-Pupil Relationship

"The tutor-pupil relationship in esoteric training is the focus of successful outcome. At some point, whether we like it or not, or accept the fact or not, we will all require aid in our journey - for there are periods where a total lack of ability to be objective about ourselves is a bar to any further significant progress."

(Frater C.H.A. - Instruction to a student)

Here, in the opening lesson on Qabala, we would like to discuss the importance of the traditional aspects of the tutor-pupil relationship in an esoteric education. The term Qabala (car-bar-la) is Hebrew in origin and refers loosely to the passing on of an oral esoteric tradition. In past times this Qabala referred to a very specific oral tradition which largely embodied a secret knowledge of the true import, the occult meaning, of the books in the Old Testament, especially the first five books which the Hebrews call the Torah (law). With the advent of Christianity orthodox Hebrew Qabala evolved a branch that catered for a Christian perspective - a Qabala that has rightly become known as the Judaeo-Christian Qabala - or simply - the Christian Qabala. From this school of esoteric thought evolved a Qabalistic stream that is the most non-sectarian development of this secret knowledge so far that we today refer to as the Anglo or Hermetic Qabala.

For our purposes we might take a moment here to just point out that Qabala is essentially a philosophy. To simplify matters for the novice we can say the Qabala provides us with a framework upon which to build our system of Training. Several millennium of investigation into the Mysteries of existence have provided us with certain conclusions about our spiritual past and present from which we can make accurate calculations about the direction, spiritually, that we, collectively and individually, should be taking in our future.

These conclusions and these calculations form the basis of the essential, root, or proto-Qabala.

One further area is covered by Qabala. A series of opinions about the methods that we might, or should, be using in order to obtain the goals of spiritual growth. The most prominent, literal and outward method orthodox Qabala describes is a religious one. The next most important method (which together with the last is in no way orthodox) is essentially a mystical, contemplative, process that is founded in an ancient system called Merkabah (mer-car-bah - chariot/astral body) Mysticism. The most secret and controversial method is the Qabalistic-Magickal approach to the attainment of our Spiritual goals.

Now that we have explained a little about just what Qabala is let us return to the subject of this lesson that is the tutor-pupil relationship during the process of Initiation and Advancement. Qabala is a tradition. It is a tradition of the oral (firstly and then latter written and oral) transmission of a specific brand of occult knowledge. This tradition is rooted in the dynamic of an ancient unbroken lineage of teacher-pupil instruction. From the very beginnings of Qabala in its pre-Hebrew proto-state in ancient Babylon, and before, down through the ages to the present time, the tradition itself has found many and various vehicles for its expression. The different cultures and mindsets that have been exposed to its central Truth have found a multitude of ways of presenting its wisdom. But behind and supporting it all is the teacher-pupil interaction.

Now it is essential that we understand the dynamic of this very special relationship if we are to successfully take our part, to play our role, in the ageless drama of the maturation of our soul and the preservation and dissemination of this mystery tradition. While a certain amount has been said about this relationship in eastern mystical writings very little has been mentioned in western occultism about the details of this subject. Here, then, we will provide you with an in-depth explanation of the Guilds attitude towards this matter that we hope you will give deep consideration ... deep consideration.

In the western mysteries there have been, primarily, two methods of passing occult information on from adept to novice and two degrees of such knowledge. The first method is the most common and most popular - that of instruction in colleges. These colleges have taken many forms down through the ages, some secret - some open, but we shall not enter into such details here at this time. The important point to make is that this form of instruction is generally impersonal.

The second method involves a personal one-on-one tutor-pupil instruction.

The two degrees of knowledge are, firstly, the common book learned type or outer occult knowledge, and secondly, the oral and inner instruction.

The former degree of knowledge is most often found in the college type situation. It also forms part of the one-on-one instruction but this latter kind of instruction eventually develops into an oral or more personal transmission of knowledge. In the college situation it is more often only the more gifted students who are singled out for personal tuition and the reception of the oral tradition that accompanies it. This is because to pass on such a personal instruction takes a great deal of time, patience and trust.

Here, then, we come to the first point we would like to make concerning this subject and our formal training. The degree of attention which is paid to our students during formal training the depth of instruction they receive, is directly related to the amount of effort which they put in to their work. Those who try the hardest, who show the greatest respect for the tradition, for our

system and for their tutors, will be the first to be considered for the reception of the more detailed, more personal, deeper and more difficult oral instruction.

Each tutor in our formal training system specialises in one or two areas of expertise. It is only possible for these persons to provide one or two individuals with the highest degree of instruction at any one time. Therefore they will, at any one time, be inclined to choose those who show the most promise.

The nature of this kind of very serious instruction is, and always has been, quite unusual and therefore requires certain skills on both the part of the student and of the tutor. By unusual we mean to point out that when one is engaged in this kind of instruction it is not difficult for the student to see that the teaching methods and the knowledge themselves are of quite a different quality, altogether, than the more general tuition. For example the student will experience, in the earlier stages, very often, a complete inability to see any order or logic in the Training Method or in their progress. As the tutor is going through the paces of testing the water and constantly trying to keep the boat, so to say, turned into the wind, the student who knows little of the detailed methods of navigating the deeper waters of the path of soul maturation will find himself torn between wanting to resist further progress (in fear of being in a situation which is unknown to him), and needing to trust his guide faithfully if he desires to continue. This, it has been found, is one of the first most difficult dynamics to come to grips with in the more serious levels of the occult tutor-pupil relationship.

It is not unusual to find the student who has reached this cross roads resisting the process but trying to continue both at the same time. This illusion that one can avoid the demands of the path but still move forward is a very frustrating situation for both student and tutor. The situation is further hindered by the fact that the tutor often cannot himself click the student out of this impasse, but must wait for his pupil to either retire from training through lack of ability to call up the understanding and courage necessary to correct his approach - or to find the required degree of trust in his guide to continue to the point where he receives a revelation of his own concerning the nature of this part of his journey.

There comes a time when it is very difficult, if not initially impossible, for the tutor to provide the student with an acceptable explanation for every direction he gives out. Some things just cannot be explained to those who have not experienced them. Some explanations are so likely to be misunderstood it is more productive, in most such cases, not to give them until the student has developed to a level where internal understanding is possible. At other stages there simply is not time to debate the pro's and cons of a certain approach to a problem. Occasionally, with some students, their ability to keep on top of the situation, with everything that is going on, is so minimised that even clear logical explanations cannot be understood.

A good analogy of this situation might be found in the image of a Captain and his crew upon a ship exploring uncharted territory. In order for the voyage to

be safe and completed in a timely fashion the crew must have faith in their Captains ability and carry out his instructions without question. If the Captain were forced to not make a move until every member of his crew had been consulted (including those who know nothing about navigating a ship) then little would be gained except confusion, argument and eventually mutiny. The tutor is like the Captain in our process. The crew are all those various sub-personalities existing in the vessel of the student's primary personality, which the tutor must bring to order, through discipline, and direct on a journey towards a definite goal - enlightenment.

Such scenarios are very difficult to deal with and, on the part of the student, to accept. Nevertheless they are the rule rather than the exception and therefore are unavoidable. The ease with which they are dealt with depends, largely, on the maturity of the aspirant's soul, his desire to succeed in the process, his self-honesty and his trust in both the tutor and the system of training.

Because we know by experience that this situation exists for nearly every one of us at some point during advanced training as tutors we are careful to hand pick those students to take through the process who have consistently displayed the appropriate personality traits. The first of these is discipline. We hearken here back to 'lesson 6' and the Mages ethic. We also refer to the need for students to display, not just speak of, a deep respect for their tutor's role, their superiors in the training hierarchy and for the training system itself. This is a very difficult issue nowadays when both exoterically and esoterically there is a growing movement towards distrust of, and disrespect for, authority. Nevertheless we know from experience that the kind of advanced training we are speaking of cannot succeed without such trust and respect. Therefore, let it be understood, that the Guild insists that it would fold and discontinue occult tuition rather than fall victim to tuition mediocrity because it cannot find fertile ground on which to sow the seeds of higher knowledge through the process of advanced training.

It is the tutor's responsibility, then, to set the boundaries for the student. To describe the rules and regulations, the behaviours and the conditions that are most conducive to the most successful outcome - which initially is intimate knowledge of and conversation with ones higher self. Because of a degradation in such standards overall in the esoteric community we must labour continually to drive home these ideas. This often means constant repetition of rules, remarks concerning attitude and the odd rebuke at times in order to re-enforce the seriousness of this task. It is the student's responsibility at such times to see his tutor's actions as not being personal attacks or opinions but instead the demands of the journey itself. The process is often one of trying constantly to maintain an equilibrium with students between the kind of friendship which nurtures trust and a business-like relationship that will allow familiarity without a loss of respect for authority.

The student's responsibilities in this drama are often not exercised to the degree that they should be. He should approach Tuition from the knowledge that it is very likely that when he believes he knows what is required of him, and in what direction he should be striving, that in fact he is more likely to

have it wrong. This is an extremely important point, for the fact is that this is most often what happens. The student who has fallen into the trap of believing that he knows what is best for him in a situation that is all but completely foreign to him is a student that most tutors rue the day they ever became involved with. They are endless trouble, for their attitude is one where they consider, consciously or unconsciously, that their ability to navigate is superior to their tutor's. When the fact is, if this were true, then why did the student decide that he needed a tutor in the first place?

The student may insist, for example, often secretly at first, that they should tamper ... ever so gently ... with the explicit instructions of their tutor. Using the excuse, while they do, that they are better off or safer for these alterations in the instructions. The most common form this kind of tampering takes at the outset of this problem is the withholding of information by the student that he knows or strongly feels may have an important impact on the success or failure of any present training campaign. Such tampering seems to the student relatively impotent at the outset, but quickly, it is noticed, develops into a monster that is out of control. Without accurate knowledge of the internal and external changes and motivations of the student the tutor cannot navigate the treacherous reefs of the occult sea.

What the student does not understand, often, in this situation, is that the tutor has developed his own 'knack' of guiding his students through the vast ocean of soul maturation. Once the student decides to leave the path that the tutor has become so familiar with he actually removes responsibility for his safety out of the experienced hands of his guide and assumes it for himself ... in a land he is not at all familiar with. This is a very dangerous situation that is very, very, easy to fall into. Of course, because the import of this misguided interference is often not recognised by the student, when confusion begins to develop, as a result of such tampering, he is quick to blame the tutor for the mess he himself has subtly engineered, and further endangers his position rather than attending to his mental safety first.

The only cure for this problem is honesty and openness. This, then, brings us to the issue of just how much should a student share with his tutor about his personal life and just how much has the tutor a right to inquire about or interfere with in that area? This is, of course, a very sensitive area to broach. Most occult fraternities stand by the general rule that they have no right at all to interfere in their member's personal lives. On the surface this seems like a very logical, practical and safe approach to the problem. To compound the difficulties of the problem the average student is relieved that their chosen fraternity is not going to know what goes on in their private lives, or that their private lives will remain reliably unchanged as they move through the training process.

As we have said 'on the surface' this seems like a very good approach to the problem. But as occultists we are not to be fooled by surface appearances. If we think seriously about the above approach it has a very obvious and fundamental fault. The results of occult training are not something that only manifest in lodge rooms or at chosen times when we might feel like 'playing'

with them. Real Spiritual change affects the whole of the aspirant's life. Every attitude and belief that a successful student holds dear when they enter Training at some point may be, and likely will be, overturned. The important changes we create in our lives because of the training process will therefore effect every major and most minor decisions we make in our lives. Every little corner of our reality in some way is affected by the process. If this were not so then how could we claim at the end of the day that we are completely changed and are masters of our entire reality?

Taking this for granted, then, we can see that if Magick is going to effect our entire lives then at some point anything and everything we are may become a subject for consideration between ourselves and our tutor. Natural laws that govern every department of the outer world must also be applied to every area of our own lives if we are to be successful in our endeavour. Our personal attitudes about ourselves, our philosophy of life, our financial situation, our social lives, our intimate relationships, our careers, our hobbies, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs must all be brought within the exalting influence of higher law.

Subjecting these ideas to the degree of contemplation they deserve you might then come to understand why we demand that trust and honesty, respect and a strict regime of rules to ensure our personal safety and privacy are our greatest concerns as a fraternal body involved in the execution of the process of soul maturation.

Such trust, honesty and respect must come from both the tutor and the student. Where the pupil is concerned, for example, the tutor is not going to respect his approach to the work if he does not display due respect to the process, the system which embodies the process and the tutor who is the system's representative. If his student displays a predisposition towards not discussing important issues that are affected by training with enough care and depth then the tutor is going to want to stop, as soon as possible, his students further exposure to what is becoming a potential danger.

Lastly, we wish to make the point that this discourse is designed to enlighten the student about his (or her) responsibilities where serious training is concerned. That he should not make the mistake of being passive about the need to be on guard concerning the condition of his attitude and the demands training makes on him. He should maintain a constant awareness of the fact that training is an interactive - give and take -relationship between two people - tutor and student. That it is foolishness to think he might be able to just take the knowledge the Guilds formal tuition offers and use it as he will thinking he has the capability to calculate properly the condition of his progress. Or worse, that no real danger can arise if he approaches tuition with such superficial stupidity. Success in Training almost always relies on the health of the tutor-pupil dynamic and it is almost always (in our experience) the student who fails to uphold his end of the bargain where the most serious issues arise.

We advise those of you who desire to advance into formal training to give the material presented in this document good consideration not only now but a number of times before the end of this course of tuition.

Probationers Lesson 17

Astral Influences in Initiation

(Ritual and Ceremonial)

"The rite is so constructed that the iMages which are built in the minds of the participants correspond to the ancient and archetypal iMages in the mind, and these iMages, charged with power, are brought nearer to the surface of the personality and powerfully affect it."

(W.E.Butler - Apprenticed to Magic)

As we pointed out in the previous lesson, Qabala is that philosophy that presents the direction we should take in our aspiration towards improving ourselves spiritually, based on certain conclusions arrived at by the past masters of our arte. It also suggests the best methods for reaching our esoteric goals. Taking this into consideration we can easily suggest that one of the primary focuses for Qabala is the process of initiation and advancement. This process we refer to as the maturation of the soul. More specifically the deliberate or forced maturation of the soul.

One of the things those past Masters discovered about the human condition is that nature only has the ability to move us along the path of soul advancement so far and then no more. Once we reach that critical point where nature has lost the ability to take us further we require a shock from outside of ourselves to help us jump the gap into the next stage of our growth. The recognition of the need for such a shock is the motive for organised occult training and the teacher-pupil relationship. According to these criteria those individuals who think that they do not need a tutor at some point, therefore, can be assessed as either not having reached the 'shock point', or are resisting serious change.

In the western tradition one of the tools used for creating such change is ritual. There are mixed reactions to the practice of occult ritual by students of the hidden artes. Some take to it immediately, possibly feeling comfortable in such a situation because of their experiences in this realm in other lives. Others do not like to be involved in ritual because they harbour beliefs about the practice that make them uncomfortable. It is common in the popular mind to associate ritual with black Magick or witches orgiastic sabbats, for example. Some individuals simply do not have an affinity with organised ritual or have advanced so much that they have grown past the need for such stimulation.

Many occultists practice this arte without really knowing the mechanics behind it and many others avoid it for the same reason. So in this lesson we present some basic ideas about Magickal ritual and ceremonial in order to throw some light on the subject. We desire to ensure that each of you who wish to rise to the challenge of formal training have a good understanding of this subject because it forms an important role in our later work.

Ritual is designed to take advantage of certain functions of the unconscious and subconscious minds. We know, for example, that these mental faculties are very habitual in nature. Ritual is a form of habit and therefore speaks to the un/subconscious on their own terms. Through ritual we seek, by calling on the aid of the subconscious, to habitualise certain thoughts, beliefs and activities that are not necessarily part of the ritual themselves. The subconscious speaks the language of the unconscious - which is symbolism, and the conscious mind - which is verbal. It is therefore the perfect medium of communication between the physical (concrete) world and the deep psychological (abstract) world.

In a ritual we seek to emulate and stimulate the conditions that exist in the subconscious. One of the primary functions of the subconscious is dreaming. The average dream is a mocked up drama whose images and events are constructed from bits and pieces of our past. Each of these 'bits' of our past is a symbol, that is, it is chosen for the specific meaning we have imbued it with. The face of an old adversary conjures up 'fear', and that of an old girlfriend or boyfriend the desire to experience love - for example. A dream is, therefore, an attempt, on the part of the unconscious, at trying to communicate with the conscious mind. This communication takes the format of a mental drama that is pieced together from carefully selected bits of memory, each of which is a word in the language of a dynamic symbolism.

A dream is therefore not unlike a stage play. The play, overall, has a story or plot. Behind the plot there is an underlying message. During the process of the play we notice that the script is full of subtle innuendo. Each player is not just a character in a story but he also symbolises an idea, attitude or belief that is demonstrated or played out during the course of the drama. The various locations in the play/dream are not just nice looking stage sets - they also have subtle symbolic meanings. The shapes of objects, their colours and their position-relationships to other dream object-symbols is also symbolic. Everything is pregnant with meaning. This is the language of the unconscious as it is expressed through the medium of the subconscious/dream state.

Ritual, as we begun to point out, is an attempt to emulate this process. Every true occult ritual is full of symbolism and therefore meaning. The stage is set in the ritual Lodge or Temple. The Lodge is painted (or curtained) in a particular colour, is populated with special furniture that holds, in design, a very definite meaning. The ritualist wears clothing and jewellery that in shape and colour express certain specific ideas. The spoken words, the invocations, performed in the ritual are full of well-chosen analogy, metaphor and poetic meaning. Particular incense is burnt because of its subtle relationship with the meaning of the rite. In short every sense of the Mage is bombarded with stimulus and no object or idea is present that does not conform with the intention of the rite. All of these things are synchronised together in the format of a dramatic ritual in order to powerfully focus and impress an idea onto the unconscious and therefore to stimulate it to react in a certain direction.

The Mage, then, through the use of ritual, is attempting to speak to the unconscious in its own language. The true 'Language of the Angels' as it is often referred to. This process of effecting a communication between the conscious and unconscious minds works immediately but takes a little time to manifest obvious effects. The unconscious, who has been using an arbitrary symbol system developed from bits of our life's experiences learns quickly that the Mage's Qabala, his symbol system, is another dialect of its own language and slowly, during tuition, begins to feed these new symbols back to the aspirant. They are most often found appearing first, for the average student, in meditation. Eventually they trickle into the dream life of the initiate - a sign that the unconscious has become saturated to a very deep level with the new dialect.

This, then, is the first part of the process of ritual - repeating over and over instructions to the unconscious, through the format of living symbolism (dramatic occult ritual), which outline a plan for higher development. It is like acting out a manual of instructions that provide very accurate guidelines for the maturation of the Soul. This process is seen in a very general way in group ceremony. The types of ritual that make up both the cycle of ceremonial initiation and advancement and the cycle of seasonal rites. One is a microcosmic, the other a macrocosmic dramatisation of occult formulae.

The other form of ritual is that type which is carried out by an individual, two or three persons, for some more specific purpose. We might liken this type of ritual to the taking of a single instruction, from the previously mentioned metaphoric manual, and intensifying the directions given on a specific point. Such a ritual usually involves the invocation of a single definite force, rather than the more general array of forces called upon in initiation, advancement or seasonal rites.

The second level of this process, that of attempting to initiate a communication with the unconscious mind, is to learn to 'read' the communications which come back in dreams and in trancework or meditation from the unconscious. This is by far the most difficult but most rewarding part of the process. The unconscious' primary concern is with our spiritual development and therefore is constantly trying to provide us with hints about the best actions to take in order to perfect our being. Ritual, and the Qabala which is its basis, is the first and best method of effecting such a necessary and productive communication.

With all of this under consideration the past masters of the arte of initiation, when considering and building the fundamental structures of the early mystery colleges, wove into the fabric of esoteric training a cycle of rituals. These rituals together completed a dramatic history of the souls journey upon the path of soul maturation. Many of the ancient mystery play cycles had three 'acts', one for each primary grade of advancement. Often these mystery dramas told the story of some spiritual hero, such as Osiris, Mithras or Hiram Abiff, who had struggled with the process of seeking enlightenment. The hero's true life story, then, became the platform around which was built a

more elaborate tale, told in the traditional symbology of the system it resided in, of the archetypal soul journey from ignorance to wisdom.

over a period of about 3000 years the original ancient mystery dramas have been expanded and elaborated upon as each new school of esoteric wisdom in various different cultures established its own particular way of telling the original story of the journey. In more recent times, particularly in the last 500 years, these mystery dramas have become very elaborate, until, as we see today in the likes of Freemasonry and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the dramas are no longer confined to three acts or *degrees* or *grades* in the cycle, but can amount to a dozen or even as much as 33 or 99 individual aspects of a whole drama.

It should be understood that it was not the purpose of these dramas, in which the candidate was to take the central role, was not simply to tell a story. The way in which the ritual enactments of these stories were constructed and presented allowed the school to have a powerful psychological effect on the candidate. This is where the ideal of initiation, the ability of an adept Mage or group of Mages to change the spiritual condition of an aspirant quickly and in one action, is most potently focused by the modern seeker. It is believed or considered today that the primary purpose of the initiatory drama should have the effect of spiritually awakening the aspirant for whom the rite was being worked. In ancient and classic times such effects were very likely the exact intention of these dramas. Historical records describing such events certainly would have us believe this. Today, though, sadly, if such a candidate is affected in this manner by the usual ceremonial initiations given in mainstream Orders he or she would be most fortunate indeed. While it is not unusual to feel powerful currents of energy invoked during such rites it is very rare for a candidate to be spiritually altered by such a drama. This does not, though, negate the need or complete rationale for using such rites. As the need to mark the degrees of a spiritual journey and to impress important ideas on the mind is still productive.

On top of this it can be seen that some of these mystery dramas, or rituals, are no longer simply concerned with the telling of the story of some hero's bid for enlightenment, but often specialise in describing strange esoteric histories, details about occult secrets, or the dramatic presentation of morals, rules or laws. All of this is done keeping the idea in mind that the mystery drama, an elaborate ritual of music, colour, poetry and motion, all tied up in a package of symbolism, is one sure way of making a strong impression on the prepared mind of the candidate.

Today, while there are still a number of esoteric colleges or Orders that make extensive use of initiation ceremonies, there is an increasing trend within the main stream of the occult community to downplay, ignore or abolish altogether this ancient form of tuition and Magickal technique. We understand that this is not so much because the method is no longer effective, as some would have it. Or that it has simply gone out of fashion, for fashion has never been a concern of occult training. Rather it seems that the present trend towards the belief that training can be successfully and completely effected alone without

the aid of tutor or fraternity has created a condition of self delusion that has breed a kind of distaste for any area of training where commitment and reliability are required.

The Guild itself has made use of solo ritual and ritual initiation in the past, and still does at the present time when conditions allow it. It does so for simple reasons. The dramas themselves provide key points of instruction that are effectively driven home when taken under the condition of a rite of entrance or advancement. They help to complete and round-out the instruction given in other areas, so as to ensure that the process is more organic, and not so burdened by intellectual concerns. This aspect of our work should be given due consideration for if you have no stomach for the persistence and discipline that the completing ritual cycles demands our process of training is not one you should begin.

Probationers Lesson 18

Initiation and Alchemy

"... there are many who have a stiff neck, void of ingenuity in every perscrutation; and who can scarcely understand common speech, and likewise with difficulty learn works vulgarly common. Besides these we also find many who have a soul easily opinionating every phantasie; but what they believe they have found true, is all phantastick, deviating from reason, full of error, and remote from natural principles: Because their brain, repleat with many fumosities, cannot receive the true intention of natural things.."
(Gerber - Of the Sum of Perfection)

In the previous lesson we spoke of the idea that the process of ritual was likened to acting out instructions from a manual to the unconscious mind. We mentioned that the instructions in this manual were a type of formulæ used for the maturation of the Soul. In this lesson we shall look at how that formulæ was discovered in the past and how we might re-discover it for ourselves, again, today.

The first idea to explore here is that the process of initiation and advancement is not some make-it-up-as-you-go series of events. We do not stumble into that point in our soul growth where we find ourselves introduced to a reliable tutor or system which has the ability to prepare us for the true Initiation of our soul into the mysteries of being. On the contrary, our entire progress is mapped by a cosmic process that we, in the Guild, refer to as the formula of 'Light Dawning in Darkness' (LDD).

There are, initially, certain concerns about this idea - we agree. The first that comes to mind for most is an objection to the idea that our life is already mapped by some predestined fate. The argument as to whether or not predestination exists is a long and complex one that we do not intend to enter into at this stage (see here for more detail). We will, however, explain the Guild's understanding of this matter. Predestination presupposes an underlying order to things. A plan that has a starting point, a journey and a goal. A lack of such an underlying order suggests that life is based on chaos. A set of random events with no purpose. To believe in the latter ideal is to undermine the entire point of initiation and advancement. For that process is one that is designed to guide the Soul through a series of experiences that point towards the real-isation of a definite goal.

There is, we should point out, the idea that through the chaotic progress of life, that eventually, through the laws of probability, a proper mature state for the Soul will be attained. This is not true chaos though - for it presupposes that behind the chaos there is intention, a plan to reach a desired end.

There is also the ideal that there is no point at all to existence. That we simply 'are' and will continue to be so infinitely, or not, depending on ones point of view. If this were true, though, why bother to bring things into order at all then? If chaos, a lack of destination or planning, is the primary underlying law of the universe then to attempt to establish order is contradictory to this primary law and therefore doomed to failure.

Taking this into consideration the Guild suggests that the primary, omnipotent law that governs every structure and interaction in the universe is one of Order. That is, that there is a reason for the universe's existence and for the existence of everything in creation. This 'reason' we assert, is the primary motivation behind every activity in creation - no matter how un-obvious it is.

Now, the reason for our pursuing this thread of ideas is to point out that if we were to accept the idea of underlying order in the universe then by knowing this order we would be a long way towards mastering our reality. This is one of the primary motives behind initiation and advancement. The logic explaining the necessity of occult training - *effective* occult training. For it goes without saying that if we do not know the reason for our existence, which 99% of humanity do not, then it is far more difficult to attain constructive goals.

The point to formal esoteric training is, then, to provide the student with the tools necessary to know that order which exists behind creation. By knowing this order one can then take one's part in the greater plan. Being enabled to act thus we align ourselves with the greatest force in the universe - the Will of the Creator. Success in this venture therefore, logically, manifests knowledge that one has purpose and that knowledge invites a greater happiness, healthiness and enthusiasm for life and the ability to attain that that previously seemed impossible.

So how do we discover the nature of that order which exists behind creation? The key to the Guilds approach to this problem is to be found in the idea that this order pervades every aspect of creation. If all-that-is exists only because of this underlying plan, that which we call 'The Will of God', then it is reasonable that we should be able to find clues to this 'order' in anything and everything we can grasp with our hands or our minds! In other words all things in the universe are holographic representations of the greater universe itself. This is the meaning behind the well-known Hermetic axiom taken from the Emerald Tablet ... 'as above ... so below'.

Here, then, was the primary motivation for the establishment of the alchemical, the operative alchemical, tradition. It is the rationale of the Alchemist that if we remove all that is superfluous from 'matter' and take hold of that which is most permanent, homogeneous and pure in matter, that we would have a substance that contained in its physics the simplest, most radical laws of nature. By studying this pure radical substance we should, by the process of analogy, be able to ascertain the most fundamental laws, the primal 'formulæ' contained in creation.

As it turned out their rationale was correct. Nature's most fundamental laws do exist in all departments of nature. That means we can find them all within the realm of chemistry - al-chemistry that is. Through their analysis of matter the Alchemists discovered and catalogued the most important knowledge we have about the nature of our reality. It is important for a number of reasons, but the most significant is that the Alchemists, having discovered such, can demonstrate these laws in a manner that is most appealing to reason. All of the true ideals, practices, principles and lore's of Magick and Mysticism can be demonstrated by the Alchemist, for all to see, under laboratory conditions.

The most important of these laws is that which we began our discourse upon. The formulæ of light dawning in darkness. That process which takes corrupted (fallen) substance or idea and transmutes it into its opposite. For the Alchemist this process is Alchemy itself. This process is described in the traditional alchemical literature as:

Separation - Purification - Cohobation

These three principles are the basis of all evolutionary processes and nothing in nature is unaffected by them. All matter is at any point in time under the direct influence of one of these three operations. Through the dissection of matter in their laboratories, and by carefully contemplating other greater natural dynamics in the world about them, Alchemists learned all of the details concerning these universal operations. They took what they saw in nature and perfected it. Improved upon the process and watched each layer of activity unfold in the microcosm of their hidden laboratories. Later, as the consequences of their knowledge was understood they applied what they had learned to other departments of nature - most importantly that of the human mind and soul.

The Alchemist, in this manner, created a complete science of the soul which gave Initiates the ability to effectively and quickly mature his or her own spiritual nature ... thereby awakening the souls latent potential. It is through their knowledge, which we in the Alchemist's Guild have inherited, that we understand the analogical relationship that exists between esoteric physics/chemistry (operative Alchemy) and esoteric psychology (Magick) and can reap the benefits that such knowledge provides.

Now when considering the Guild's ability to accurately assess and pass on knowledge concerning the hidden laws of nature, and thereby to affect the process of initiation, we must make this point quite clear. All that we now know has been learned, firstly, through the application processes, and secondly, through comparing the results of experience with the findings recorded by the Alchemists and Magickians of earlier ages. The first process involved learning the details of mental structure and dynamics (that is of the laws governing the astral universe) and how to manipulate astral (psychological) material. The second process involved the discovery of natural process through the methods of laboratory Alchemy. What our founders discovered in the laboratory they applied to the mind through a process of analogy, in the same manner that the ancient sages had. Thus wise did the Guild manage to create

a quite novel (in our times) system of initiation and advancement, effecting its goals so quickly and effectively!

Probationers Lesson 19

Qabala

"The workings of the Merkava should not be taught even individually, except to one who is wise, understanding with his own knowledge."

(Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai - 1st century)

Qabala is primarily a philosophy that outlines the motives supporting and processes involved in the maturation of the human soul. This is the core idea, as far as the Guild is concerned, that one should hold in mind when contemplating the role Qabala plays in the field of higher human endeavour.

We also point out that along with a philosophy concerning the occult worldview the Qabala presents a number of methods whereby the goals of this philosophy might be attained.

The focus which the Mages of the Qabala have put on a favoured method for attaining the goals which this philosophy delineates have changed a number of times in 4000, or so, years of its use. The Babylonian Magi, whom history recognises as the ancient originators of Hebrew Qabala were partial to the use of Magick. In fact the terms Magick and magus were coined to describe the arte of the ancient Babylonian priests. In later times Qabala was used to support popular religious movements in both Egypt and the Semitic nations. The pre-Christian Qabalistic Rabbi (a sub-sect of Rabbinic Judaism) were more inclined toward a Mystical approach to Qabala's aims. This form of mysticism, often said to be the proto-type of the modern Orthodox Hebrew Qabala, was called Merkabah (mer-car-bah) Mysticism. In Modern times both the mystical and the Magickal techniques are wide spread, with, we believe, a great emphasis on the latter in more recent times.

The Guild's approach to practical Qabala could not be said to be wholly mystical, in that it does not seek to teach its students to reject the physical realm in preference for unity with Godhead in some abstract spiritual reality. Neither can it be said to be wholly Magickal, in that we do not make much use of the sundry archaic medieval Magickal practices of the type touted in the Magickal grimoire's (books) of the classic ages. It is not that we do not see any value in either of these paths. The mystical approach to attainment of Qabala's aims has its place - under certain circumstances - specifically, for example, the monastic life. But we are not advocating a traditional monastic approach to soul maturation and we do not aim at teaching those who would seek such a path. The medieval Qabalistic Magickal tradition has its benefits too, but we feel that much corruption and garbage has adhered to that system in the intervening years between its inception and our age that it is time that a Magickal system that takes advantage of the present stage of human soul maturity in scientific knowledge was formulated.

Qabala has evolved over thousands of years into quite a different discipline than that which it was at its conception. In our time the greatest alteration to the proto-Qabala that we have to contend with is the massive pollution with religious material it has undergone in the last 2500 (and more) years.

Much of this unnecessary religious overwriting was applied during that long period in which the Qabala was in the hands of the early Jewish Rabbi's. Of course the Qabala has also undergone some Christian pollution as well, but, compared to the adhering Judaic overtones, the Christian flavour is a much smaller, later, addition. The point we wish to make here is that Qabala, at least as far as it appears to the eyes of the novice, seems to be a wholly Hebrew/Jewish invention. Its outer language is Hebrew and the eternal and universal spiritual concepts it presents are veiled in the garb of Judaism. But it is important for the novice to understand that this is only the outer manifestation of the Qabala. A more scholarly investigation of its works reveals that there is also much Chaldean (ancient Babylonian) in its makeup. That many important concepts, some legends and one or two important individuals mentioned in Qabala have been taken directly from early Babylonian sources. That Moses himself, the 'modern' father of the Qabala was, very likely, an Egyptian - Initiated into the ancient mysteries within the hallowed halls of the temple system of that culture.

In this way, once we become more familiar with Qabala, we see that in fact it is a very ancient universal system that was adopted by the Sumerians, Egyptians and the Semites previous to 2500 BCE. That it belonged to none of these cultures originally, but instead was inherited from a culture that predated these three by some extra thousands of years.

We have mentioned the fact that Qabala is a philosophy, but as yet we have not gone into any detail concerning this matter. So let us now take a brief look at just what Qabala tells us about the nature of our reality.

Firstly Qabala recognises that the Universe, creation itself, had its origin outside of creation. In some unknowable, eternal, unlimited source-state. Within this unknowable source-state, we are told, is some form of divine intelligence. Qabalists believe this because they assert that something within the source-state must have been responsible for launching the process of the creation of the universe. This divine intelligence, this motivation to create, they refer to as the ultimate, all encompassing, omnipotent power/consciousness in the universe. It is the Qabalist's ultimate God if you like. The real nature of this deity is not debated, for, it is recognised, that attempts to attain knowledge of this ultimate deity in past ages have always failed. It is simply stated as being No-thing.

So here we have the first important concept in Qabala, belief in a Supreme Being which exists outside of the universe and which is responsible for its creation and maintenance.

The second important subject in Qabala is the creation itself. What we might call the universe or macrocosm - the manifestation of God's Will. The third important concept is man, the microcosm. We often read that the work of Qabala is to delineate the proper relationship between God, Man and the Universe.

Although it is done in a very cryptic manner the teachings of the classic Qabala present this relationship in such a way that we can see that both God, Man and the Universe share, analogically, the same structure and dynamic. The ancient Qabalists who knew this in detail also knew that a clear explanation of the facts of this analogical relationship allowed, too easily, a comprehension of some astounding knowledge concerning the nature of reality. Knowledge that could be used for extreme evil or good. Therefore they presented the entire story on three levels, revealing certain parts when describing the nature of God, other parts when describing the nature of man, and the remainder when speaking of the nature of the universe.

It was left to the serious student to, firstly, discover that the entire story was divided up thus. Then to collect together the relevant important portions of the story from the three levels of understanding, and piece them back together in a format agreeable to all. This reconstitution of the original message provides a clear understanding to the adept of the true relationship between Man, God and the Universe ... that is, of the true nature of reality.

An important part of this unified theory about reality is the doctrine of the tripartite structure of the human subtle constitution. That is ... of the psyche or Soul. The Qabala tells us that as far as man's higher evolution is concerned there are three portions of the soul which play the most important role. One of these portions is transcendent, that is, it survives death and rebirth. It is called the Neschamah (nee-sha-mah) or Life Breath. Its function might be understood as both higher intuition ('knowing') and love (the force that reconciles opposites). In Qabalistic terminology she is the Divine Mother or 'Aima'. As far as esoteric science is concerned she is the manifestation or presence of the Higher Self - the spark of God in man. The Higher Self, because it lives in a state of equilibrium, cannot manifest itself in its pure state, therefore it uses the Neschamah as its vehicle. We could therefore say that when considering the average occultist's relationship with his highest functions he is most likely to commune through his Neschamah when communicating with his Higher Self or 'Yechidah' (yee-key-dah).

Therefore the Neschamah might be considered an interceder between man and his Godlike self.

The remaining two of the three primary aspects of the soul the Qabala calls Ruach (roo-are-k) or Spirit, and Nepesch (knee-feh-sch) or animal soul. The Ruach is to a degree the equivalent of the Jungian Animus (masculine psychological functions) and the Nepesch is, in a similar way, is the equivalent of the anima (or feminine psychological functions).

Both of these parts of the human psyche/Soul are temporal in nature, that is, they are constructed at the outset of every incarnation anew, and decompose at the end of every incarnation. These two parts of the human mind are in constant conflict with each other in the average individual. It is the psychological tension between these two states of mind that creates and maintains an individual's human personality.

The key to the psychological health and the higher development of the Soul is to be found in the interplay between these three psychological archetypes, then. In the Zohar, a very old Qabalistic text, we are informed that the occultist must establish and maintain a link with the Neschamah (the reconciler between opposites), if he is to ensure that he does not lose his way or become the target of evil. It is the presence of the Neschamah alone, within the field of personal psychology, which calms and equilibrates the two fighters who live in our bodies, the Ruach and Nephesh.

This, at least in the simple form we have presented here, is the key to the Guild's formal training. It conceals the formula of initiation and advancement. It is our philosophy, our aim and our practice all in one.

We have said in the past that we base our system on Magick, Alchemy and Qabala. Now we might elaborate on this by suggesting that Qabala provides us with a plan and a motive and postulates a goal for the Great Work - attainment of enlightenment. Magick, through the channel of trancework, is the means of accessing and manipulating the media we require to carry out our Work. Alchemy provides us both with a measuring stick and a method of inspiration to round off the corners and extend the fundamental possibilities provided in the basic plan learned through Qabala. The school is the work place. It is the laboratory wherein we find the tools and expertise through which we access the macrocosmic forces we require to Initiate, advance and complete the work. It is an important source of research material, advice, support and a vehicle through which we may give back some of what we have gained through its assistance.

All of this is organised according to a Qabalistic plan. Qabala provides the blueprint through which we can find our way in the labyrinth of occult education. It is that mechanism which pulls together all the various resources we need in order to succeed in our quest. That it is one of the greatest gifts the ancient seers have left us there is no doubt.

Liber
Probatur Totus

Vol II

Edited by Brother **AMB**



Probationers Lesson 21

Towards Formal Training

Part 1

"Silence, secrecy, and calmness of temper, are the unmistakable marks of a true Mason. He who incessantly boasts of his knowledge may be set down as an empty chatterer. Noise is not Wisdom. Those who ostentatiously proclaim their own merits, may, for a time, enjoy the satisfaction of deceit; yet, in the end, their pretensions are sure to be exposed."

(George Oliver - The Book of the Lodge)

We now begin the last lesson in probationary tuition. This last lesson is designed to sum up all that we have said previously on the subject of occult education and the Hermetic tradition – especially where it relates to the Guild's approach. These final comments, then, are our last opportunity to have our say before you make the choice as to whether you would like to continue onto formal tuition or resign from further progress here. It is also your last opportunity, with your tutor, to question and discuss the subjects covered in probation and the choices that are now facing you.

We urge you, therefore, to take your time with the following material and ensure yourself that you have covered it carefully, and with the degree of contemplation to which it is due. For those who desire to stop here and go no further with our training course we thank you for your patience and point out that the information which follows is presented with the graduate who intends to continue on to formal training in mind.

The Alchemist's Guild is a fraternal institution, a brotherhood, composed of one noviciate Grade, probation, and three Grades of formal instruction, entered apprentice, adept and master. The noviciate Grade is designed to present to you:

- (1) Some basic information about Hermeticism in general,
- (2) Some of the Guild's fundamental points of view concerning training and occultism,
- (3) Various exercises that form the basis of study discipline, and
- (4) An opportunity for you and your tutor to get to know each other.

It is expected that by this point in your probationary tuition you have gained at least some rudimentary insight into the worldview of Hermeticism and therefore can decide for yourself as to whether you agree with such a philosophy.

At the same time some of the Guild's attitudes, beliefs and their expectations have been presented and you should be aware of whether you accept these or not and whether you can accommodate the basic demands of study in your life.

More importantly, you should now, after having communicated with your tutor for some months, be ready to consider whether you are ready to accept this person as an authoritative source of the Guild's training and that you are willing to *obey* where matters of instruction are concerned. This subject deserves much consideration, for, it is very likely, at some point during formal training, that you are going to be given instructions that you either can't understand or feel you can't agree with, or desire to resist carrying out ... for whatever reason.

When we consider that alchemy, whether it involves working with chemical substances or with the substance of the individual psyche, is an enterprise that involves a certain degree of risk, you need to be aware that the Guild recognises and accepts this risk factor and is willing to quickly and effectively act upon any breach of any rule of practice in order to reduce potential disasters. For this reason we insist that a student who has accepted an invitation to begin formal tuition also accepts his portion of the responsibility of taking due care to safety by agreeing to *obey* the instructions of his tutor.

Any student who is under the illusion that the Guild will not act quickly in the subject of a breach of obedience towards an instruction given to him by a superior will not last long in training.

Taking this into consideration it is a good idea that we explain here from where a tutor derives his authority.

Firstly, each tutor in the Guild is appointed by the Master of the lodge to that he belongs. Such a decision is based on the conclusions of a discussion held between the members of the management group of the lodge in question. The management group itself is composed of those members of the lodge who both individually and collectively have the greatest interest in, and experience with, the teachings of the Guild. In this way the choice of whether or not to appoint a tutor is made with consideration for the Guild's *standards for training* requirements and whether or not the proposed tutor can meet such standards.

In this way any act of defiance against the instructions of a tutor, who is appointed by his lodge master upon the recommendation of the most knowledgeable members of his lodge, is in fact an act of defiance against the integrity of the lodge itself, and against the Guild as a whole, which supports the lodges right to function.

To put it simply, then, it is considered quite appropriate to question tutors instructions, but it is considered grounds for expulsion should a student defy a direct request to obey an instruction issued by a tutor concerning tuition, especially where safety is an issue.

Now, while any student has the right to defy a request to obey an instruction, if he does so the Guild does not question the rule that such defiance betrays the student's unsuitability for further instruction. Safety cannot be compromised.

So we have established that the tutor is chosen by his lodge master for his ability to maintain the standards for tuition laid down by the Guild itself. Nevertheless it is likely at some point that the student will question the compatibility of these standards with his needs. Therefore when we talk about the Guild's standards for training what exactly do we mean?

The Guild's training course was designed with a number of important requirements in mind:

- (1) The system is designed to aid the student in obtaining an advanced degree of enlightenment, which we see as being the result of combining the powers of the unconscious and conscious minds.
- (2) That the system be as simple to teach and to learn as possible, in order to decrease down time from study and increase progress through practical application.
- (3) That progress can be made as quickly as nature will allow.
- (4) That the process is workable within the confines of the demands imposed on the individual living modern western society.
- (5) That the process must take into consideration the individual needs of each student.

Individual lodges, and the Guild as a whole, through the research and work carried out within their core groups, are in a constant process of adjusting and renovating the training system in order to more effectively align it with these five basic requirements.

Self motivation

Part 2

After accepting the authority of the tutor, the next situation that the graduate into formal training must consider is the study program itself. There are three habits that we have tried to instil in you during the course of this introductory instruction:

- (1) The necessity of regular study nights that are ritually adhered to.
- (2) The necessity of regular and formal communication with your tutor.
- (3) The necessity of keeping a detailed journal record of your progress.
- (4) The benefits of ongoing reading.

As soon as your formal training begins the way in which study is dealt with will change. You will be given certain assignments to complete within a definite time period, but you will not be pushed to maintain all of the study habits we have listed above. How you complete the work required of you is, then, up to you now (generally speaking.) If you feel you have a more productive way to carry out your assignments you are now at your liberty to alter your study process to suit your needs. Self-motivation is the key phrase here. It is not

your tutor's job to harass you to study. Only those who desire success strongly enough to be pro-active about their tuition will succeed. If your tutor is reduced to pushing you to meet deadlines then success is obviously not important enough.

Your tutor's job is to offer advice, primarily, advice that is designed to speed you forward as quickly and as easily as nature will allow as safely as possible. Your job is to ensure you read all instructions carefully, abide by the rules that govern your tuition and to meet deadlines. You are also required to advise your tutor immediately if you are having, or predict, trouble with any aspect of training. Prevention is the far better option than cure and our training process is designed with this in mind. To believe you can fix problems once they are big trouble is foolish.

Honesty is your next care. You must always endeavour to answer you tutor's questions as truthfully as you can. When giving you advice you tutor must make judgements based on all available information. A big part of this task revolves around conversations you have with your tutor. If you are confused, are predisposed towards wanting to keep certain things to yourself or have an urge to falsify information or give the wrong impression in any way your tutor may give you advice which is dangerous. This is particularly important when difficult situations are being dealt with.

The urge to lie or to tailor information is strong in most students during the crisis stages of the process. Refusal to cease such unproductive habits is the most common reason, next to laziness, for students being asked to resign from training. Therefore we warn you loudly that if you prefer to keep certain things private to yourself that might crop up in training, then rather than modifying the information you return to your tutor, in order to conceal things, tell him that you prefer not to discuss the issue. In this way your tutor can take into consideration, when organising advice, that he does not have all the facts.

This issue is so important to the success of the process of occult initiation that the Guild has cautions its tutors never to allow the types of game playing that average people in mundane society play with each other in order to get by with the minimum responsibility for their behaviour. A Guild tutor has undergone some unusual changes in his understanding of human nature in the course of his training. These changes have taught him the value of honesty with self even if not with others. Therefore you should understand that if your behaviour encroaches over the boundary of acceptable and safe then you will be warned clearly and without malice. If you do not choose to alter your course at the first warning there will be no risk taken with further misconduct and the privilege of tuition, for you, will be brought officially into question. Under such circumstances the individuals who are responsible for judging your situation will prefer greatly, to err on the side of caution rather than risk and further difficulty.

It is our intention to provide everyone who works hard with the opportunity to succeed here. But we will not compromise safety or effectiveness in order to save embarrassment or a messy scene. This having been said understand

that we expect everyone to fall on occasion. But at the same time we expect a polite warning to be heeded immediately. Help is always at hand for the individual who is struggling with his behaviour so do not hesitate to admit you are having trouble controlling your passions if that turns out to be the case. In fact, this, as you will see, is a greater portion of the focus of training.

While we are discussing personal discipline and the need to be self-responsible with study and behaviour, we will say a few words about the judicial process within the Guild.

There are three sources for authoritative rulings within the Guild. In other words there are three places where rules are established for the governing of your tuition relationship with your tutor and with the Guild itself.

The first source of rules are the various obligations you accept, in the manner of a set of oaths, before the start of each stage of training. You have already accepted the first of these obligations, that of probation, and the next, that of apprentice, will be given to you before you advance, if you accept an invitation to enter formal training. Each successive obligation you take is binding on you, none are cancelled out by those proceeding. The obligation is the binding contract you have with the Guild in general.

The second source of rules is your lodges 'regula'. This is a form of by-laws that each student must accept before entering the Guild proper. You will also have a chance to look this over before making any choice to advance. The regula is the contract you have with your lodge specifically.

The third source of authority in your training is your tutor. ... Acceptance of your tutor's authority is the rule that governs the actual tuition process itself.

Apprentices Obligation

Part 3

Before making any decision to request advance into formal training we insist that you carefully consider the conditions of the apprentices contract of obligation.

The Alchemists Guild

Apprentice's Contract of Obligation

- (1) As an Apprentice student and member of the Alchemist's Guild, I do *agree* that: I have carefully read, and understood to the best of my ability, and accept the conditions described in this document.
- (2) To continue to abide by the obligation I accepted as a probationer and apply the same principles to this grade.
- (3) To unconditionally demonstrate **obedience** towards the authority of my tutor, of the Guardian and of the Master of my lodge, in matters concerning the lodge and/or my tuition.

- (4) That the purpose of the Alchemist's Guild is research, preservation and training in Hermetic science, and that if I fail to actively and productively **labour** in one of these areas within the Guild, then it is my duty to forward my resignation in writing, to my lodge, politely and with haste.
- (5) That the light of wisdom being founded in **truth** I understand that I must at all time endeavour to be strictly honest with myself and in my dealings with other Guild members.
- (6) That because the Guild is a fraternity I am expected to partake with zeal in all fraternal (lodge) activities, and not avoid my responsibilities as a member of this brotherhood.
- (7) I accept that I am *not* at liberty to discuss *any* detail concerning *any* Alchemist Guild's lodge meeting I am invited to attend, with any person who was not themselves in attendance at the same meeting, without written permission from a superior in the Guild.
- (8) After having informed my tutor, in the presence of a witness, that I have read and accepted this oath, I accept that it will be taken for granted by each member of the Alchemist's Guild that I intend to do my best to abide by each and every clause of this my obligation to this fraternity.

Probationers Examination

Part 4

We now begin the last stage of probationary tuition. For some of you this last stage will mean informing your tutor that you no longer wish to continue on into formal training and that you wish to be excused from any further work. If this is you desire we caution that resignation from training at any point removes the possibility of reapplying again in the future.

If you choose to not continue we hope that this probationary process has been of some help to you and that your journey from this point is fruitful and leads you toward the goal of your desire.

The remaining information is intended for those students who desire to continue to advance into formal training within the Alchemist's Guild.

The final stage of probation for these students is the probationer's entrance examination. Each degree of study in the Guild, from this point, culminates with an examination that takes the form of a thesis composed of *at least* 2000 words describing your understanding of the subject material.

If you intend continuing on to formal training, therefore, you should inform your tutor now, if you have not already, that you intend sitting the entrance examination. Once you have informed your tutor of this intention you have 14 days to complete your thesis on the probation study material.

This thesis should include the following material:

- (1) Your initial impressions of the study course (before beginning).
- (2) A report on how you coped with the magick journal exercise.

- (3) Your opinions, thoughts and concerns about the trancework.
- (4) A consideration of those pieces of information in the course that you feel are likely to be of vital importance to the formal student.
- (5) An in-depth personal criticism about your performance as a probationer.
- (6) What you hope for from formal training if you are accepted.
- (7) Any further information you feel may be of interest to your tutor or the Guild examiner who marks your thesis.

This thesis should not include:

- (1) Excessive quoting from the lessons (any such quotes will not be included in the final word count)
- (2) Excessive quoting from books.
- (3) Excessive intellectualisations, especially those based on other peoples opinions.
- (4) Off subject material.

The entire point in this thesis is for you to help your tutor and the examiner to understand what you have got out of the probationers study course. They want to see what think about the course, how your feel it may or may not have effected you. Your opinions on the subject material, therefore, are very important.

The thesis is not examined on the basis of scholarship, grammar, spelling, etc. This is not high school or university. Its not the intelligent and learned format that the thesis takes that matters to us, but rather your ability to get your feelings, thoughts and opinions across clearly to your tutor. Honesty and depth are also very important. Superficial skimming over important aspects of the subject material will be treated as non-existent content.

What should be foremost in your mind while composing your theses is that the quality of the communication you can provide your tutor about your experiences and thoughts is of the utmost importance in a personal tuition relationship. The quality of the service your tutor can provide for you lies heavily on the effectiveness of the communication you are both engaged in.

While you are in the process of working on your thesis and while it is at the examiners you should continue to meet your tutor for study sessions as normal.

Once the thesis is complete you should arrange to send it to your tutor as soon as possible. Whether or not you are invited to continue on to formal training will not rely totally on this entrance examination. Your entire performance during probation will be taken into consideration. The Guild is a fraternity, and therefore you past and present willingness to share fraternally with other Guild students will be given great consideration. Largely the Guild is not interested in catering for individuals who desire to remain aloof and distant from the general activities of his lodge.

An important factor in success in the alchemical journey is the development of character and the demonstration of goodness. This cannot be done alone, but instead these faculties are the product of a social interaction.

Tutors Note:

Completion for graduation

(7) Examination complete and marked

(8) Witness to obligation

(9) Motto list

(10) Catechism

Liber
Ars Imperium Mens
Vol III

Edited by Brother AMB

Caution: Do not attempt these exercises until instructed by your tutor.



Probationers Trancework Exercise 1

Wilderness of Ignorance

" Existence and the ordinary turmoil of life, the struggle and confusion which sooner or later binds consciousness by manifold links to an unevolved infantile and emotional attitude towards life, create anxiety and deep-seated fears ... Fear and anxiety give rise in early life to automatisms and compulsive behaviour, to what might be called a shrinkage of the sphere of consciousness."
(Israel Regardie - The Philosophers Stone)

The activity we refer to as trancework is one of the most important processes in our system of formal training. Many systems of occult development consider it an extra bonus if their practitioners develop a good working knowledge of what has been called 'active imagination' by Jungians, 'skrying the astral' by medieval magi, and 'pathworking' or 'guided meditation' by new age adherents. But they often give little deep instruction in the matter. Rather, due to the great lack of experience in this realm, it has become, to the detriment of these systems, a much neglected arte.

The strange fact of this state of affairs is that it is well known, by those who care to seriously master the secret forces of nature, that the ability to work Magick consists (as far as western Mages are concerned), of the development and mastery of two forces only (1) imagination, and (2) will-power. Through a combination of, and intimate experience with, these two functions only can the Mage control every force in nature.

Taking this as the rule of thumb in these matters it seems unusual that one finds it quite difficult to meet, amongst ones many and various occult acquaintances, any individual with even the slightest adequate knowledge of the function and development of the imagination. With a degree of experience in that Magickal other-world that can be classed as adept - we might say. Do not get us wrong though. There are, it is warranted, a good number of individuals who have had regular self-willed conscious astral experiences. Our assertion is that few of these individuals have any idea of just how powerful that medium is through which they travel in their mind. Nor do many understand, technically, the substance and dynamic of that secret universe, nor the great importance of mastering that medium. There is little wonder in it though, for detailed knowledge of the sidereal universe (as the astral was once referred to) was carefully kept from the uninitiated as a most dangerous secret to reveal. As Eliphas Levi said, the astral light is the 'Great Magickal Agent' through which all control of the mundane universe is acquired. What one is, or can be, then, is truly only limited by one's imagination!

For this reason our system of formal training has swept aside much of that which is considered common-place in occult education by contemporary standards. We, instead, have focused much of our time and effort into the mastery of the 'Great Magickal Agent' in order that our students can reap the greatest benefits from this rare instruction.

The act of acquiring skill and accurate knowledge of the astral universe, its forces and inhabitants, is not an easy matter though. To speak of it seems a simple thing. Even to travel in that medium and experience some of its wonders is, in fact, a lot easier than many would have us believe. But to maintain our integrity, to work safely and to truly understand the forces of the sidereal universe is quite a difficult matter for most us. To gain good control over the Great Magickal Agent one must enter deep into personally uncharted territory. Such an adventure is not without its dangers, no less than the degree of danger that accompanies such activities as mountain climbing, deep sea diving or such like, which we would not begin without proper preparation and training. Therefore training in this matter must continue with care and one step at a time, continuing instruction being held back until the present work is understood.

Our present task, then, is to introduce you to the first exercises which allow to you begin to experience the sidereal universe. Through these first experiments we can begin to understand how it is each student reacts to this work. From these reactions we can then map out the path tuition will take from here.

So lets begin.

Stage One:

Choose a time and place to begin this experiment that is quiet, undisturbed for about an hour. Ensure that you are not tired. Have a pencil (or pen) and a clean sheet of writing paper at hand.

Make a list on your paper as follows:

- (1) Sand
(space)
- (2) Water
(space)
- (3) Palms
(space)
- (4) Rock
(space)
- (5) Staff

Leave some space between each item on the list so you have plenty of room to make notes.

It is advisable that you do not read any further in this lesson until you are ready to begin performing the exercise properly, i.e. you have your list written on your paper and you know you will not be disturbed or interrupted.

It is important not to guess the solutions to the following questions. You are looking to be prompted from within. The rule is that the subconscious, where your imagination resides, will produce imagery, feelings, etc., very quickly. The correct image or sensation you are looking for is always the first one! No matter how foolish it seems.

Read the preceding paragraph again, and think about it, before continuing.

Next close your eyes, relax, and imagine yourself walking across the floor of a desert.

Question: Is it day or night in the desert?

Write the answer above point 1 (or at the bottom of the page if there is no room) on your list.

Begin again. Close your eyes and relax. Feel your feet walking on the desert floor.

Question: Are you wearing anything on your feet in the desert?

Write your answer above or below your list as before.

Begin again. Walking in the desert.

Question: What colour is the sand(?) on the desert floor?

Write your answer next to (1) sand - colour.

Begin again.

Question: What tactile sensations do you experience from the sand.

List these next to item 1.

Stage Two:

Begin again. This time see (or feel) yourself approaching an oasis.

Question: What colour is the water at the oasis?

Again - **Question:** What temperature is the water?

Again - **Question:** Is there a sound associated with the water?

Write your answers next to item 2 (water). Include as many sensations as you can pick up.

Stage Three:

Begin again. This time notice the Palm trees beside the water.

Question: What do the trunks of these trees feel like when you imagine touching them?

Question: How do they smell when you imagine sniffing them closely?

Question: If you imagine licking the trees how do they taste?

Question: Are the trees making a sound?

Again, write your answers, and any other sensations you pick up, next to item 3 on the list.

Stage Four:

Look for a large rock, about seat height, next to the shore of the water on a flat expanse of sand. Take yourself through the same steps as above, feel, smell, taste, hear and see the rock listing colours, tactile sensations, sounds, etc.

The important point here is to not allow yourself to be swayed by any preconceptions about any of these items. If the rock is pink and tastes like wood then do not question it, but accept the fact and add it to your list. This might seem absurd but there are two facts about the imagination and the realm it operates in. (1) it is not subject to the laws of logic or rationality that you are familiar with in this world, and (2) it is only possible to get to the greater truth through the imagination if you exercise the ability to accept the images that arise in the mind without judging them. The reasons for this will become clearer as we go, later during instruction.

Stage Five:

Now look around behind your rock for a Magickal staff, a long wand, that will be lying on the ground or leaning against the rock, for example. Run through the above steps again with this staff. Touching, tasting, smelling, etc. Then take the wand and walking around the rock, mark out a circle on the ground until you and the rock are enclosed in it. Feel the staff grating in the sand. Hear the sound it makes as you mark out the circle. Is there a smell released when you do this?

Once you have completed this last exercise write your impressions about the wand and the circle next to the last item on your list.

This exercise should be repeated every day for one week, or every other day for two weeks, as you please. The idea is that you are considered proficient when you can add at least 10 impressions, at least one from each sense, to your list about each item. Then graduate to writing a detailed description, in the manner of a short story, about the whole oasis scene. Once you can do this with little effort you are ready for the next step.

Some individuals have the ability to perform this exercise without closing their eyes. It matters not either way, except it is obvious that some persons can gain more accurate impressions from within themselves with eyes closed, in the quiet, in order that no external sensations distract them. An adept Mage should be able to perform a more complex version of this exercise in a public place, eyes open, without being distracted. Careful: this is the goal, not the aim of our present practice.

Take notes on all your efforts and email them to me at the soonest possible time before lesson 5 at the latest. It is best to contact me quickly with any problems you might have rather than letting yourself get too concerned or let down by temporary failure. All problems can be overcome.

Probationers Trance Exercise 2

Calling Down the Sun and the Moon

"The Sun is the Father, and the Moon the Mother of this Stone, and the Stone unites in itself the virtues of both its parents. Such are the peculiar properties of our Stone, by which it may be known. If you understand the operation, the form, and the qualities, of this Stone, you will be able to prepare it; but if you do not, I faithfully counsel you to give up all thought of ever accomplishing this task."

(Robert Valens Rugl - The Glory of the World)

Here we have your second exercise in trancework. As has already been pointed out the first exercise was designed just to ensure that you can get into a simple light trance and move around in and recognise a 'mocked up' astral scene. We are progressing onto the second exercise now because you have shown that you have mastered the first.

The next step in the process is to learn how to communicate with non-physical intelligences, that is, with parts of your own psyche, with past life selves, archetypes and such like.

Caution: Remember to combine every trancework session from now with a similar process with which you delineate a study session - opening prayer before trancework, then after the session completion with the meditation and the closing adoration. Whatever we will do from now on in trancework the second step (after the opening prayer) is to take yourself down into the astral oasis, find your rock and mark out the Magick circle with the Magick wand or staff. How long you take to get yourself to the circle, how much time you take, for example, to concentrate on relaxation and interiorisation of your senses into your astral vehicle, is entirely a personal matter. All that matters is that you, without too much effort, become proficient at getting to the circle and can clearly feel and/or see the landscape around you. With practice it should only take a few moments to move from full waking consciousness into light trance (or deeper) standing in the circle by the oasis wand (staff) in hand.

It is insisted that you do not add to or remove from this process of trancework without asking your tutor first. In other words to do add material you have used in the past taken from other systems.

This whole process, covered in the first trancework exercise, we will from now on refer to as 'Opening Trance'.

So lets begin.

- (1) Start by considering, before opening trance, that in the astral desert it will be daytime. This is like a primer to ensure that the subconscious will align the session in the direction we desire to go. We call this 'targeting'. Every session must have a target. Once you are comfortable and relaxed 'open the trance'. When you are centred in your circle and perceiving the astral scene clearly scan the sky and look for the Sun.
- (2) Once you know where the Sun is imagine yourself cupping your hands to your mouth and calling up to the Sun to ... "come down from the sky and take on a form, at the outside edge of my circle, which I can communicate with easily, and which is symbolic of your 'true' nature". It is important to imagine your voice vibrating the entire atmosphere including the Sun as you call. Repeat the call three times, then tell the Sun ... "as I count from 1 to 5 you will begin your descent. When you hear the number 5 you will be standing in your new form outside my circle".
- (3) Now begin the count and between each number encourage the Sun to descend by repeating the commands. As you are counting it is not necessary to 'watch' or 'feel' the Sun descending. Just concentrate on the count and on repeating the commands. At the close of the count then scan outside your circle until you locate the 'Solar Intelligence' in its new form. Do this with all confidence that it will be there when you look for it.
- (4) Now follows the protocol for tuning into an astral intelligence so that you can visualise, feel and communicate with it clearly:
 - (a) Scan it in order to ascertain its: gender
 - (b) Scan it in order to ascertain its: age
 - (c) Scan it in order to ascertain its: clothing/form
 - (d) Scan into it in order to 'feel' with your gut its inner or: core ideal
- (5) These scannings should always be followed just as laid out above. Even if you think you already know what or who you are dealing with. This is very important. Astral entities are renowned for taking on 'masks' or forms that do not accurately symbolise their true nature. In other words they may try to deceive you. The above scanning exercise ensures you obtain as much information about the creature as possible in order that you get a very clear 'feeling' for its true nature. Accurate scanning takes practice. When you scan it for gender and it, say, appears to be a woman, does it really 'feel' like a woman? When you scan for age recognition, and it appears to be very old, does it really 'feel' old? The last scan exercise, that of scanning its interior nature or ideal, is the most important. This scan is designed to go beyond outer appearances, which can be very deceiving; in order to learn the entities true inner nature.
- (6) The idea here is that many species of astral being exist as a living entity whose life and form have coagulated around a central idea or

theme. For example, an evil being when scanned internally will be found to hold some idea such as 'violence', or 'corruption' or 'lies' at its core. This core ideal can be 'felt' as an emotion, 'heard' as a word, or the word itself can be 'seen' in its core like a label. In some cases all three sensory channels receive the message at once. A positive being will hold within itself ideas like 'love', 'peace', 'calm', 'wisdom', etc. Each being only has one 'core' idea.

- (7) Further, astral beings who are counter-productive to your accurate attainment of the session 'target' will avoid answering questions, fade in and out of focus, attempt to disappear when commanded to prove their good intentions. They will try every trick in the book to distract and confuse you. While positive beings will always answer, in some way, any requests. They will offer help where they can when asked, and will not disappear from the scene in order to avoid communication.
- (8) During all of this you must remember not to step out of your protective circle, or touch these beings, until you are as sure as you can be that you are dealing with a constructive, positive being. When one astral body touches another that contact forms a link that is relatively permanent. It is, therefore, not a bad idea to form links with powerful positive beings, but unwise and often dangerous to form links with negative beings.
- (9) Once you know what kind of being you are dealing with then you may question it. If it is a dark creature you might want to ask it why it has come to you. If it is positive in nature the most productive questions to ask are of the kind that you might learn something about yourself, and the training, in asking.
- (10) Once the questioning is over:
 - (a) If the creature is dark then imagine a trapdoor opening under its feet and
 - (b) 'feel' it dropping into the underworld. Close the door behind it.
 - (c) If the creature is positive then thank it for its help and allow it to return to where it belongs.

(11) To finish the session scan the landscape and feel around yourself to calm, relax and centre yourself again.

(12) Remind yourself that you will remember everything that happened in trance once you are awake again.

(13) Tell yourself you will return to full physical awareness on the count of three. Once awake you will feel refreshed and well. Then count to three.

These final steps are most important. It is easy to assume you are not in deep trance by the time you are ready to return to waking, but this is often not the case. Sessions tend to increase their depth of trance automatically and imperceptibly. If you wake yourself from deep trance without telling yourself beforehand that you will remember everything you may, without even noticing it, lose the details of what went on.

The suggestions to feel good, refreshed, etc., are also important. Long sessions, and it is easy to lose sense of time while in trance, sometimes sap

enough energy to cause mild headaches or nausea in some people. These side effects can be stopped by simply repeating the 'refreshed and well' commands before waking.

It is important to repeat 'all' commands in trance at least three times. This is because human consciousness usually does not pay attention to ideas that are given less than three times.

Immediately upon waking note 'every' detail of the session in your journal. There are important reasons for doing this, the least of which is not the fact that it will ensure that you do not lose any important symbolism that appeared in trance.

Everything that happens in trancework, no matter how ridiculous or unrelated it *might* seem, has meaning! The universe does not produce meaningless phenomena! That means you do not either. Some aspects of any trancework session you work may not hold meaning for you now but may turn out to be very important pieces in a more complex puzzle at a later date, which is why accurate journal records are absolutely necessary.

Repeat this exercise until, at the least, you manage to succeed in calling down the Sun, obtain scan-perceptions of its nature and ask it questions and get 'any' kind of answer. These are the goals of this exercise:

- (1) To manifest a personification of a living force/idea.
- (2) To obtain information from that entity.
- (3) To dismiss the entity successfully.

In Magick the first point is called 'invocation' or 'evocation' depending on whether the entity exists above or below human awareness. The second point is traditionally divided into two acts. The first is called the 'charge'- it is a statement of intent. The second is the 'pact' - it is a contract or some kind of agreement between yourself and the invoked entity. These are narrow guidelines though, because in practice there are many more types of activity that can happen at this point. The third point is traditionally called the 'licence to depart' - it is a simple command or a more authoritative banishing.

Once you have succeeded here then try calling down the Moon. Remember in this case to remind yourself that it will be nighttime in the desert when you get there.

Please ensure that you let your tutor know as soon as you have had some degree of success with either or both exercises. Certainly inform him immediately if you managed to call down a dark entity from the Sun or Moon so that the session can be discussed fully.

What kind of entities can you expect to find outside your circle by calling down the Sun or Moon?

- Subpersonalities or parts of your own psyche (aspects of your personality personified)
- Personal archetypes (similar to subpersona)
- Relatives who have died
- Friends or enemies
- Angelic type beings
- Spirit (totemic) animals
- Universal Archetypes (such as warrior, teacher, healer figures)
- Demonic creatures (although this is rare. Often they look demonic but are actually benign tricksters such as Elementals)
- Elementals (Gnomes, Sylphs, Undines and Salamanders, etc.)

The most common entity we might expect from using the Calling down the Sun exercise is an Angelic type being, a relative, or acquaintance.

Caution: If you happen to call down a dark force that concerns you and which refuses to heed the 'licence to depart', which is unusual, the best method of approach is as follows.

- (1) Imagine a star in the sky (it does not matter if it is day) and remind yourself that such a star represents your Higher Genius (self).
- (2) Imagine a beam of light reaching from that star to the crown of your skull.
- (3) Draw that light down through your head, neck and into the centre of your chest.
- (4) Imagine that in the centre of your chest is a miniature sun about the size of your fist. See it burning. Hear it like a furnace. The fuel for this furnace comes from the star via the white beam of light!
- (5) Remind yourself that this sun is the force we call love - a force that neutralises conflict/opposition.
- (6) Extend a beam of golden light from this sun towards the entity until it is completely wrapped in a cocoon of golden Light.

The motive behind this exercise is that all negative forces exist because they are in conflict. Love neutralises such conflicts. A neutralised conflict is once again in harmony.

Remember that it is not good enough just to perform this exercise. You must think each step of the way what each symbol represents.

Do not attempt any of the exercises in this lesson until you have read the lesson at least 3 times and memorised the salient points. It is 'totally' unproductive to find yourself in trance with a situation that you cannot remember how to deal with.

NEVER leave an exposed conflict unresolved! If you must come out of a tranceworking to check procedure in a difficult situation you do so with the intention of getting back in there and completing the task as soon as possible! These things do not just go away by ignoring them!

Ignorance is for homo normalis. The Mage seeks knowledge and that most often means by confronting difficulties head on.

Having completed this lesson successively you have managed to master one of the most difficult exercises in the Magickal use of the imagination. From here, everything we do is building on the skills you learnt in lesson 1 and 2 of the trancework exercises.

Probationers Trance Exercise 3

The Roots of the Tree of Knowledge

"Although time is not in fact linear but will be found to be cyclic in fashion, once we see it outside the space continuum, we nevertheless, for convenience sake speak of 'past' lives. Considering the enormous reservoir of experience we have left behind us in the memories of those lives it should not be underestimated the wealth of aid we may find there if we retrace our steps into the secret places of the unremembered."

(Fratr C.H.A. - On the power of regression)

The next step in the process of mastering the astral universe is to be able to travel through time and astral space. We provide an exercise in past life regression as a method of experiencing this aspect of astral work. Past life regression is one of the easiest internal exercises to perform. This is because it is simply (generally speaking) a species of recall.

Here is the protocol:

- (1) Decide on your target. This should be a 'time', 'culture' or 'skill' you think/feel you may have been involved in in the past. Be as general as possible in order to leave yourself open to greater possibilities. It does not matter if your assumptions about the target are not correct because the unconscious will make up any adjustments needed. The central idea is the strong intent to recall a previous life.
- (2) Open trance.
- (3) Create a doorway to the 'west' of and outside your Magick circle. This door can be floating in the air. It is the symbolic door which gives access to distant memory.
- (4) Command yourself that you will count 'backwards' from, say, 5 to 1, as you step through the door. This count will take you back into a life which is in line with the desired target. Repeat your intentions thrice. Step through the door while counting.
- (5) Whenever you move yourself to a new scene in the astral you must begin the orientation and stimulation of your astral senses again, just as when you first come into trance. So once on the other side of the door feel, for example, your feet on the ground, smell, the air, listen for noises, focus your sight, until you know exactly where you are. Ask yourself questions like; 'Is it day or night here?', 'Am I inside or outside?', 'what kind of clothing am I wearing?'. In this way slowly piece together the scene bit by bit until the entire picture is constructed sensory experience by sensory experience.
- (6) Once you know where you are, you want to travel to three kinds of experience:

- (a) The primary kind of activity you were involved in during this life (that you want to remember. E.g. being an artist, warrior, teacher, whatever).
- (b) The high point of that life. (i.e. the most stimulating experience you had as, artist, warrior, teacher or whatever)
- (c) A time towards the end of that life when you were alone, undisturbed, and in contemplation.

In the last instance 'c' you can then step out of your past life personality (count yourself out if necessary) and stand next to yourself now being as you are in this life. This situation gives you the opportunity to question your past life self about salient points of interest in that life, or to receive an inspirational message from the past life self.

- (1) When you are finished the session simply reopen the 'time door' (wherever you are) and step back through it into the Magick circle in the desert. Ensure you thank the past life self (and any others you meet) for their assistance before returning.
- (2) Close the time door with a sweep of your hand. Remind yourself that as you do this the connection between the activities of that past memory and your present life are now sealed off again.
- (3) Take a few moments to re-centre yourself before performing the awakening protocol.

We remind you to read the preceding instructions carefully and if necessary read the previous lessons on trance work, or question your tutor further, to ensure that you are aware of all the proper operating procedures before beginning your first attempt.

Record every detail immediately in your journal.

Probationers Trance Exercise 4

The Language of the Birds

"Finally I would add that argot (cant) is one of the forms derived from the language of the Birds, parent and doyen of all other languages - the one spoken by Philosophers and Diplomats. It was knowledge of this language that Jesus revealed to his Apostles, by sending them his Spirit, the Holy Ghost. This is the language which teaches the Mystery of things and unveils the most hidden truths."

(Fulcanelli - 'The Mystery of the Cathedrales')

Trancework exercise four involves learning a process that allows you to analyse and understand your dreams in a deep significant way. Going into the desert and working there with subpersonalities and archetypes is one way of gaining information about yourself, but to a degree that method is artificial and requires much skill and knowledge to work effectively. Accessing dreams, on the other hand, provides another very important point of view of your internal mechanism. Dreams are a natural product of the unconscious and therefore their analysis allows us to see into the deepest levels of our minds and to look at things as they are developing in their natural state.

It should be understood, though, that both the wilderness process nor dream analysis is 'better' than the other, and we should never develop exclusive preference for one over the other. The use of both these methods alternately allows us to see ourselves from different angles providing us with a fuller understanding of our progress.

The basic process of dream analysis through trancework is simple. You select a dream that you have had recently whose contents you are curious about, or which you feel is significant in some way. If you are keeping accurate notes about your dreams it should not be too difficult to choose one from your recent past on which to experiment.

Begin the trancework by entering the circle in the desert. When you are fully in the astral environment imagine a door outside, but close to the edge of, your Magick circle. Tell yourself that this door leads through into that part of your mind where memories of all your dreams are stored. Feel that storehouse of dream memory behind the door. Next tell yourself which dream you desire to relive. Remember the basics of the dream and label it, based on some significant event in it, for example: I want to go back to relive the 'death of a friend' dream.

Now, focus on the door, tell yourself that on the count of, say, five, you will step through the door and back into the memory of that dream. Will yourself to

go back to the beginning of the dream. As with the past life work, when you find yourself on the other side of the door, stop and take a moment to re-enforce your senses in the dream environment. As soon as the dream is strongly built up around you again allow the progress of the dream to begin to unfold.

As you move through the dream again choose significant objects, scenes, people, etc., that you feel may help you to understand the message of the dream. Remember that everything in a dream is a word in the language of the unconscious. Dreams are, therefore, types of books where the details of our spiritual lives are described in minute detail.

As you come to interesting objects, etc., ask them (and yourself) "what does this mean to me?" The idea of this question is that we understand that all objects/symbols/metaphors, etc., we become aware of in dreams have a specific meaning that our personal unconscious gives them. For example, a tree may represent 'shade and protection' to one person (in dream language), but to another it might represent 'life'. We should, then, never assume we know what any significant symbol in a dream represents for us. We must, in order to understand accurately, re-investigate every symbol impartially, piecing each idea together in a chain until we have reconstructed the entire (or a greater portion of) the story the dream was trying to convey.

The basic rule, where choosing symbols to investigate in dreams, is that anything that attracts your attention requires understanding. Sounds, pictures, colours, the meaning of a room, position of objects, shapes of things and the reasons why objects keep reappearing are ideas fit for investigation.

If simply asking yourself of the object "what it means" to you does not provide enough information, then touch or pick up the thing while asking the question again and scanning deep into it. The deepest level of identification with a dream symbol is to 'become it' while seeking to understand its meaning to you ... and through its place in the dream sequence.

It is advisable that you attempt this process with at least one significant dream and provide your tutor with a detailed record of your findings. Then if your tutor deems it necessary s/he will ask you to repeat the process with the same or a new dream providing you with some tips on how to possibly improve on your analysis. Please ensure that you include in your dream record all of your impressions, opinions and conclusions about what you believe the dream was designed to convey to you.