

FIRST DEGREE CEREMONY

of the

COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

for the admission of Initiates by Imputation

Initiate Companion text

OPENING OF THE FIRST DEGREE

(Officers enter in procession and circle with sun to their places. All officers with staves carry them throughout the Opening.)

Chief: ! (one knock)

Herald: (Rises) Procul, procul esti profani!

Chief: Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, assist me to open this lodge in the First Degree. Companion Herald, see that the lodge is properly guarded.

Herald: (goes to door) Chief of the Rite, the lodge is properly guarded.

Chief: Companion Warden, confirm that all who are present have sought and seen the Light of the Stone. !!! (knocks; all rise)

Warden: Companions, give the sign of Entering. (All do so; Warden responds with Sign of Silence.) Chief of the Rite, all have sought and seen it. (Warden gives Sign of Entering.)

During this process the Companions send energy through the Sign of Entering to a point above the Warden's head, where a sphere of energy takes shape. The Warden then sends this in the same way to the Chief.

Chief: (gives Sign of Silence) Let the officers and stations of this Degree be proclaimed, that the Powers whose images they are may be awakened in the Spheres of those present and in the Sphere of our Order --- for by Names and Images all powers are awakened and reawakened. Companion Warden, how many officers preside in this Degree?

Warden: Three officers preside in this Degree: the Chief, the Guide, and the Warden.

Chief: Companion Guide, what stations constitute the Lodge?

Guide: Seven stations constitute the Lodge:

The place of the Chief in the East, the place of the Guide East of the Altar, the place of the Warden in the West: these are the visible thrones.

These are visualized as mighty thrones, respectively red, white, and black.

The place of Water in the North, the place of Fire in the

South, the place of the Gateway to the Outer World: these are the visible bounds.

These are visualized as a pillar of cloud in the north and a pillar of fire in the south, and an archway of black stone at the door.

The place of the Altar in the midst of the Lodge: this is the visible center.

This is visualized as a black cube with a shaft of white light rising upwards from its top.

Chief: Whose charge is the Gateway?

Warden: I govern the Gateway, admit the Companions, and appoint Sentinels to keep out intruders and prepare the candidates.

Chief: Whose charge is the Lodge?

Guide: I govern the Lodge, prepare the furnishings and regalia, and appoint Assistants to work within the Lodge and guide the candidate.

Chief: And the number of Assistants in the Lodge?

Guide: There is one, the Herald.

Chief: Companion Herald, your station and work?

Herald: My station is in the East, beside and below the Throne of the East. My work is to lead and report, to make all announcements within the lodge, and to watch over the reception of the candidates. My lamp is the symbol of the Ancient Wisdom, and my Staff is the symbol of its directing power.

Chief: Companion Guide, your station and work?

Guide: My station is to the East of the Altar, facing toward the Altar and the West. My work is to watch over the sanctuary of the Ancient Wisdom, for I am the reconciler between Light and Darkness. I guide the candidates and assist in their reception among us. My emblems are the emblems of the higher aspirations of the soul which should govern its actions.

Chief: Companion Warden, your station and work?

Warden: My station is the Throne of the West. My work is to govern the increase of Darkness and decrease of Light, for I am the Master of Darkness. I keep the Gateway to the Outer World and watch over the Companions in their work. My emblems are the emblems of darkness and Judgement. I bear

the Banner of the West, which is the Banner of the Evening Twilight, and I am called Fortitude by the unhappy.

Chief: My station is the Throne of the East, in the place where the Sun rises, and I am the Master of Light. My work is to govern the Companions of this Lodge in accordance with the rites and laws of our Order, as That Which I represent governs all who seek the Ancient Wisdom. My emblems are the emblems of uncreated fire and of created fire. I bear the Banner of the East, which is the Banner of the Morning Light. I am called Power and Mercy and Light and Abundance, and I am the Revealer of the Mysteries. ! (knocks) Let the lodge be purified with water and consecrated with fire.

Warden: (purifies) I purify with Water.

Guide: (consecrates) I consecrate with Fire.

During this, the Cup and Censer are visualized as being at the center of spheres of (respectively) blue and red light.

Chief: Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Chief rises, staff in one hand. Guide goes around hall to NE with sun. Warden falls in behind her. Meanwhile Herald rises, and takes his place at the head of the procession when Guide reaches him. The procession then circles clockwise around the hall. The Warden falls out as soon as he reaches his throne; the Guide falls out after passing the Chief twice; Herald passes the East thrice, and then falls out as he reaches his station. When passing the East, each officer makes the Sign of Entering.)

During the Circumambulation, the Companions visualize themselves climbing a spiral stair, the lodge rising with them. As they climb a light from above the altar brightens and finally becomes the Hidden Sun, a blazing sunlike sphere above the altar. It is to this that the salutations are made next.

Chief: The Circumambulation, symbolizing the rise of Light, is accomplished. Let us invoke the Lord of the Universe.

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

In these salutations, the Companions send energy to strengthen the Hidden Sun.

Chief: Companion Herald, proclaim this Lodge open.

Herald: In the Name of the Lord of the Universe, Who works in silence and Whom nothing but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun now rises and the Shadows flee away.

Chief: ! (knocks)

Warden: ! (knocks)

Guide: ! (knocks)

Guide: ! (knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (knocks) Let there be Light.

All three together: And there is Light.

(Chief knocks once, and all officers sit.)

FIRST DEGREE INITIATION

<Herald goes to Altar, and distributes the elements of the Communion to the four quarters.>

Chief: Companions of _____ Lodge #__ of the Companions of the Stone, I have received a dispensation from the Council to admit Companion N. to the First Degree of our Order. Companion Guide, you will prepare the Candidate. Companion Herald, secure the door.

<Guide removes her chair from between the Pillars and goes to the anteroom, taking hoodwink and rope. Herald closes the door behind her and stands by it. Guide binds and hoodwinks Candidate, and prompts him/her to say "Light" when asked what he/she seeks. When the candidate is prepared, Guide knocks once on the door.>

Herald ! (knocks once on door, in answer) Chief of the Rite, the Candidate seeks to enter.

Chief: I give permission to admit our Companion N.

<Candidate enters the Hall.>

Guide: Inheritor of a dying world, arise and enter the Darkness.

Warden: The Mother of Darkness has blinded him/her with her hair.

Herald: The Father of Darkness has hidden him/her under his wings.

Chief: His/her limbs are still weary from the wars which were in Heaven.

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated, you cannot enter this place.

Warden: (makes cross with water on Candidate's brow, and sprinkles thrice) I purify you with water.

Guide: (makes cross with censer, and censes Candidate thrice) I consecrate you with fire.

Cup and Censer are again visualized at the center of spheres of (respectively) blue and red light. This is done at each purification and consecration hereafter.

Chief: Bring the candidate to the foot of the altar. Child of Earth, what is it that you seek?

Candidate: (prompted if necessary) Light.

Chief: Companion N., as a Companion of the Stone, you have accepted the obligations which bind us together in our search for that mystery symbolized, in the language of alchemy, by the Philosopher's Stone. Now, in the name of the Lord of the Universe, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of the Stone, I ask you to confirm those obligations by giving the Outer Sign of our Order.

<Candidate does so.>

Chief: In that Name and that presence, I call you to leave the darkness of the world and seek the light of the Stone. In token of which, you will bow your head.

<As Candidate does so, Warden places the flat of his sword against the nape of Candidate's neck briefly, and removes it.>

Chief: Companion Guide, you will place the Candidate in the northern quarter of the lodge -- the place of forgetfulness, silence and necessity, the door of the Realms of the Night.

<Guide takes Candidate to North and faces him/her East. Herald goes to Northeast to lead procession.>

Chief: The voice of my undying and secret soul said to me: let me enter the path of Darkness, for it may be that there I shall find the Light. I am the only being in an abyss of Darkness; from an abyss of Darkness I came forth before my birth, from the silence of a primal sleep. And the Voice of Ages answered to my soul: "I am He that formulates in Darkness -- the Light that shines in Darkness, yet the Darkness comprehends it not."

Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Knowledge that leads to the Light, with the lamp of the Ancient Wisdom to guide us.

<Herald leads circumambulation sunwise one full circuit, then continues to South and stops, barring the way with his staff. Chief and Warden each knock once when passed by the Candidate.>

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated, you cannot enter the path of the West!

Warden: (purifies as before) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates as before) I consecrate with fire.

Herald: Child of Earth, twice purified, twice consecrated, you may approach the Gate of the West.

<Procession continues to West. Hoodwink is raised; Warden stands

threatening with sword.>

Warden: You cannot pass by me, says the guardian of the West, unless you can tell me my name.

Guide: Darkness is your name, Great One of the paths of the shadows.

Warden: Fear is failure, and the beginning of failure. Therefore be without fear, for courage is the beginning of all virtue, and in the heart of the coward virtue abides not; and he who trembles at the flame and the flood and the shadows of the air has no part in God. You have known me; pass on. (Warden lowers sword and steps from path. Hoodwink is lowered.)

<Herald leads procession around one full circuit, and stops in North, again barring the way with his staff. As before, Chief and Warden each knock once as Candidate passes.>

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated you cannot enter the path of the East!

Warden: (purifies as before) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates as before) I consecrate with fire.

Herald: Child of Earth, thrice purified, thrice consecrated, you may approach the Gate of the East.

<Procession continues to East, where Chief stands barring the way with a scepter. The hoodwink is raised.>

Chief: You cannot pass by me, says the Guardian of the East, unless you can tell me my name.

Guide: Light dawning in Darkness is your name, the Light of a golden day!

Chief: Unbalanced power is the ebbing away of life. Unbalanced mercy is weakness and the fading out of will. Unbalanced severity is cruelty and the barrenness of mind. You have known me; pass on -- to the place of Wisdom at the center of all things.

<Chief lowers scepter and steps out of path. Hoodwink is lowered. Procession goes with Sun to West, and then to the altar, where Candidate is placed due West facing East, Guide to South facing North, Warden to North facing South, Herald standing behind candidate. Chief then advances to the altar from East, saying:>

Chief: I come in the power of the Light.
I come in the Light of wisdom.

I come in the mercy of the Light.
The Light has healing in its wings!

<Chief raises hands; all others bow their heads.>

At this point the Hidden Sun above the altar is visualized by all Companions.

Chief: Lord of the Universe, Vast and Mighty One, we invoke Thee on behalf of this our new Companion. Look with favor upon him/her, and grant Thine aid to the higher aspirations of his/her soul, so that he/she may prove a true Companion among us, to the glory of Thine Ineffable Name. Amen.

<Major officers now join their staffs above the head of Candidate.>

Chief: Child of Earth, I ask you once again, what is it that you seek?

Candidate: (prompted if necessary) Light.

Chief: Then Light shall be granted you.

Guide: Inheritor of a dying world, we call you to the living beauty.

Warden: Wanderer in the wild darkness, we call you to the gentle light.

Chief: Long have you dwelt in darkness -- quit the night, and seek the day.

<At the words "seek the day" the hoodwink is removed.>

All: We receive you and welcome you among the Companions of the Stone.

<Officers lower their staffs one at a time, knocking as follows.>

Chief: ! (one knock)

Warden: ! (one knock)

Guide: ! (one knock)

Guide: ! (knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (knocks) Let There Be Light.

All: And there is Light.

<Herald moves to Northeast of Altar and raises his lamp. Chief points it out.>

Chief: In all your wanderings in darkness, the lamp of the Herald went before you, though you saw it not. It is the symbol of the Light of the Ancient Wisdom.

<Chief and Herald return to their places.>

Chief: Let our new Companion be brought to the East of the altar.

<Guide takes Candidate around altar, places him/her before but not between the two pillars, and stands by the white pillar. Warden goes to the black pillar, so that they and the Chief form a triangle.>

Companion Warden, you will now instruct our new Companion in the Signs and Word of the First Degree.

Warden: (comes around to East) Companion N., this Degree has two Signs and a Word, which are used in the magical work of the Order. The first Sign is the Sign of Opening, and is done thus. (He demonstrates, and has Candidate copy.) The second Sign is the Sign of Silence, and is done thus. (The same.)

The Word of this Degree is EBEN, the Hebrew word for "stone." It is spelled Aleph, Beth, Nun. When used for working purposes, the word will be spelled out by turns, one Companion speaking the first letter, the other the second, the first finishing.

Chief: Let our new Companion be placed between the pillars. Companion Warden, you will superintend his/her final consecration. Companion Guide, you will then remove the threefold cord, the last symbol of the Path of Darkness.

Warden: (purifies) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates) I consecrate with fire.

<Guide removes rope.>

Chief: Let the Circumambulation take place in the path of Light.

<Circumambulation is performed. Candidate follows Guide in procession; he/she is prompted by Guide to salute when passing East, and told to follow Herald when Guide drops out. Herald leads Candidate to a seat on the northern side of the lodge. Guide then replaces her chair between the pillars; Herald replaces the elements of the Communion on the Altar.>

**During this circumambulation the Companions visualize the

candidate rising up from below as if on a spiral stair, while they themselves circle in the presence of the Hidden Sun. At the conclusion of the third circuit the candidate is seen to have reached the same level as the Companions.**

Chief: ! (seats the lodge) The threefold cord about your waist was an image of the threefold bondage of mortality, which has bound the once far-wandering soul into this narrow place. The hoodwink upon your eyes was an image of the ignorance and darkness which has blinded the inner eye of the soul's wisdom.

Every part of a lodge of Companions of the Stone open in this Degree is symbolic, either of that darkness and bondage, or of the path leading beyond it to light and freedom. The lodge is fashioned in the image of the universe, and also in the image of humanity -- for these two mirror one another. As above, so below.

My throne in the East is the Place of the Guardian of the Light; it is also the Place of spirit and of the Sun. The throne of the Warden in the West is the Place of the Guardian against the Hosts of Shadow; it is also the Place of the body and of Fire. The throne of the Guide between the pillars is the Place of Balanced Power between Light and Darkness; it is also the Place of the soul and of the Moon, which reflects the Sun's light upon the Earth.

I call your attention especially to the two pillars east of the altar. They symbolize day and night, love and strife, work and rest, all the polarities of being. The lamps which burn on their summits show that the Path of the Ancient Wisdom is to be found in the place of balance between them.

It was because of this that I passed between them, when you came to the Light, and it was because of this that you were placed between them to receive the final consecration.

There are two contending forces and One always uniting them. Two basal angles of the triangle and one which forms the apex. Such is the origin of creation -- it is the triad of life. And these three have their image in the threefold flame of our being and the threefold wave of the sensual world.

<Chief stands in the form of a cross, and says:>

Chief: Glory be to Thee, Father of the Undying! For Thy glory flows out rejoicing to the ends of the Earth.

<He lowers his arms.>

Chief: Companion Herald, you will announce that our new Companion has been duly admitted to the First Degree.

Herald: In the Name of the Lord of the Universe, who works in silence and whom nothing but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that our Companion N. has been duly admitted to the First Degree.

Chief: Companion Warden, you will give our new Companion the Charge of this Degree.

Warden: Companion N., it is my duty to deliver to you this Charge. Remember your obligation to secrecy and discretion, for strength is in silence, and the seed of Wisdom is sown in silence and grows in hidden places alone. Remember that there is truth in every religion, for each path which has been traced by the human spirit in its journeyings leads in the end to the Light we seek. Remember that the secret of Wisdom can be discerned only from the place of balanced powers.

If you pride yourself in what you have received this day -- if you imagine that the mere fact of initiation, or of membership in this Order, has conferred on you the gifts of Wisdom -- then remember this also: no mortal power can do more than bring you to the first step of the pathway to that Wisdom, which the Lord of the Universe could place, if it so pleased him, in the heart of a child. We can but show you the path; it is yours to walk; it is His to give the Light at its end.

Therefore we invoke Him. Therefore even the Banner of the East falls in adoration before Him.

Chief: Above the First Degree of our Order are four Elemental Grades, which belong to the First Degree but form a bridge to the higher phases of Initiation. Beyond them lies the Second Degree, the highest Degree which may be given in a subordinate Lodge of Companions of the Stone. To be advanced to these higher Grades and Degrees, you must master certain portions of our Ancient Wisdom, and you must take part in the work of your lodge and the Order. A syllabus of the work required will be provided to you.

As you pursue the studies of your Degree, you will find increasingly that the work before you is work upon yourself. I therefore give you another symbol -- the Un-carved Stone. (Points to stone.) This is a symbol of the prima materia or First Material of alchemy, and of your own original nature; it is also the rough mass from which the Cubic Stone of the living temple of yourself must be carved. Work diligently upon it, and seek the counsel and knowledge of others to guide the growth of your own skill.

Companion N., as a member of our Order, you have become a

recipient of our trust. I ask that you remain true to that trust, and remember your obligation; and I commend you to the friendship and protection of your fellow Companions. ! (one knock)

CLOSING OF THE FIRST DEGREE

Chief: ! (One knock) Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, assist me to close this lodge in the First Degree. Companion Herald, see that the lodge is properly guarded.

Herald: (goes to door) Chief of the Rite, the lodge is properly guarded.

Chief: Companion Warden, confirm that all who are present have sought and seen the Light of the Stone. !!! (Three knocks; all rise)

Warden: Companions, give the Sign of Entering. (All do so. Warden replies with the Sign of Silence.) Chief of the Rite, all have sought and seen it. (Warden gives Sign of Entering.)

This is done as in the Entering, with the Companions sending energy to the Warden, who sends it to the Chief.

Chief: (Gives Sign of Silence) ! (Knocks) Let the lodge be purified with water and consecrated with fire.

Warden: (purifies) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates) I consecrate with fire.

This is done as in the Opening.

Chief: Let the reverse circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Chief rises, staff in hand. Procession forms against sun, Herald, Guide, Candidate, and Warden in that order; Warden passes East once and falls out, Guide passes twice, Candidate and Herald three times. When passing the East, each makes Sign of Silence. Guide prompts candidate where necessary.)

During this process the Companions visualize themselves descending the spiral stair, and the lodge descending with them. The Hidden Sun does not rise out of sight, however; it seems to change, becoming more golden than bright, and descends with the lodge.

Chief: The reverse circumambulation, symbolizing the fading of Light, is accomplished. Let us invoke the Lord of the Universe.

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)

Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the Vast and the Mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

Here the salutations do not give energy to the Hidden Sun but receive energy from it in the form of golden sunlight. With the final Sign of Silence the Hidden Sun has vanished.

Chief: Nothing now remains to us but to partake together in silence of the Communion of the Four Elements, and to remember the mysteries we have witnessed and the obligations we keep. (Goes to W of Altar.)

Chief: I invite all beings present, therefore, to breathe with me the perfume of this Rose as a symbol of Air; to feel with me the warmth of this sacred Fire; to eat with me this Bread and Salt as types of Earth; and finally to drink with me from this cup of Wine, emblematic of Water.

(Communion of the Elements is performed: Chief serves Warden, Warden Guide, Guide Candidate, and Candidate Herald, all in silence; all pass to and from altar from West. Candidate is prompted where necessary by Herald and Guide.)

Herald: (finishing wine) It is finished! (Returns to place.)

Chief: Companion Herald, proclaim this lodge closed.

Herald: (Goes to NE and faces W) In the Name of the Lord of the Universe Who works in silence and Whom nothing but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun now sets but its Light remains.

Chief: ! (Knocks)

Warden: ! (Knocks)

Guide: ! (Knocks)

Guide: ! (Knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (Knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (Knocks) Let there be Light. (All three together) And there is Light.

Chief: May that which we have received maintain and strengthen us in our quest for the Stone. Companion Warden, you will permit the Companions to depart. ! (One knock)

(The officers file out in procession, against sun; those officers who have staves carry them out.)