

COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

Instructional Letter
First Degree Series - No. 1

Meditations of the First Degree

The word "initiation" literally means "beginning." The experience of passing through a ritual initiation like the First Degree of the Companions of the Stone is precisely that. It provides a pattern of images and subtle energies which can be developed and explored through further work, done individually and in lodge.

The most important part of this work is meditation. Through the process of discursive meditation on the ideas and imagery of the First Degree, the potentials of this phase of the Companions' work can be opened up and put to use as tools for magical and personal development.

The following themes from the Degree ceremony, along with any others which you may have found striking, should be explored in this way. The instructions on the practice of meditation which you have already received should be used here.

Themes

1. Meditate on the different meanings of light and darkness as they relate to the outer world of nature and to the inner world of human consciousness. Consider what light means to you, and why; what darkness means, and why, and how these relate to each other, and why.
2. Meditate on this speech of the 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."
3. Meditate on this speech of the Warden: "Cowardice is failure, and the beginning of failure. Therefore master your fear. For courage is the beginning of all virtue, and in the heart of the coward, virtue abides not; and he that trembles at the flame and the flood and the shadows of the air has no part in God."
4. Meditate on this speech of the Chief: "Unbalanced power is the ebbing away of life. Unbalanced mercy is weakness and the ebbing away of will. Unbalanced severity is cruelty and the barrenness of mind."
5. Meditate on the Word of the First Degree, EBEN, "stone."

Look up the meanings of the Hebrew letters Aleph, Beth and Nun, which form it, and relate them to the events of the Degree and to the symbolism of light and darkness.

6. Meditate on the two Pillars of the Temple, and on the opposites they represent: mercy and severity, day and night, speech and silence, and all other pairs of opposites. In this context, consider this speech of the Chief: "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."

7. Meditate on the image of the Uncarved Stone, as the symbol of your own original nature, and as the raw material for the work of magical transformation.

8. Meditate on the image of the Staff, the working tool of the First Degree, and on the ideas of quest and pilgrimage.

9. Meditate on any other part of the First Degree ceremony which you found particularly striking or meaningful.

Each of these themes should be developed through several sessions of meditation, at least, and you may find it useful to return to some of the earlier ones with insights derived from the later ones. When you have explored all of them, and any other aspects of the First Degree ceremony which you wish, contact the Lecturer of your lodge for further work.