

FIRST DEGREE INNER WORK
(Draft 1/98)

The inner work for the Opening and Closing of the First Degree is the same as that given for the opening and closing of the Equinox ceremony in the COTS lodge ritual

First Degree Initiation

A. Introduction of the Candidate

The candidate is visualized, when first brought in, as though wrapped in a egg-shaped veil of murky darkness, but with a sphere of light above his or her head. The two Pillars are very faintly visible at his or her sides; as in the Qabalistic Cross, the White Pillar of Mercy is to the candidate's left, the Black Pillar of Severity to the candidate's right.

B. Purification and Consecration

Each time the candidate is purified with water and consecrated with fire, the veil of darkness disperses and the candidate's Sphere of Sensation becomes clearer and more luminous, with the images of the two Pillars at his or her sides more visible. The effect is slight at the first purification and consecration, substantial at the next two, and complete at the last; at the closing, the veil has been wholly transformed into an aura of light, with the Pillars clearly shown.

C. The Accuser and the Higher Self

These are the two main invisible stations on the floor of a lodge open in the First Degree. The station of the Accuser is east of the Altar, between the Altar and the Pillars; the station of the Higher Self is between the two Pillars themselves, in the station of the Guide. Both of these become visible when the candidate is called to the foot of the Altar by the Chief, prior to taking the Obligation. The Accuser, the Archangel Samael, takes the form of a great angel in dark robes, its face stern and terrible. It bears a flaming sword in both hands. The Higher Self takes the form of an image of the candidate made wholly of light. This latter image first appears in the Sign of Entering, and remains in that Sign while the obligation is taken. When the candidate bows his or her head, the Accuser sheaths the flaming sword, takes on the Sign of Osiris Risen, and disappears. At the same moment, the Higher Self takes on the Sign of Silence.

D. The Descent of the Light

When the circumambulations are complete and the candidate is brought again to the Altar, the Companions visualize the Hidden Sun above the Altar. As the hoodwink is removed and

the candidate received into the Order, a ray of the Sun shines on him or her, illuminating all of his or her aura. When the officers knock and invoke the Light, the group of Companions around the Altar is enclosed in a sphere of brilliant golden-white light, which expands outward from the Hidden Sun; this image is held for a moment, and then expands further outward, merging with the borders of the lodge space. Thereafter, the candidate bears in his or her aura, above and before the forehead, the astral image of a white triangle.

E. The Candidate at the Pillars

When the candidate is brought to the west of the Pillars, he or she stands in the place of the Accuser. When he or she comes between the Pillars for the final purification and consecration, he or she stands in the place of the Higher Self. At this point the aura of the candidate should be seen to blaze like the Sun, and a white monas-symbol takes shape within the white triangle on his or her aura. (These two together make up the astral seal of the Order.)