

Rising on the Planes

Rising on the Planes is one name for a practice carried on in a number of ways in various branches of the Hermetic tradition -- one that in essence goes back nearly as far as there are written records, although in another sense it is constantly recast to fit the particular aims and contexts in which it is to be used.

The following description of a method of Rising on the Planes is meant for those who have already been inducted into the practice in person; certain aspects of the practice are referred to rather than being fully described. This is not because they are secret, but because describing them would make this manual much longer.

Most of what follows is a description of a method for group work. It is followed by two descriptions of Rising on the Planes adapted for individual work. Companions who wish to do so should be able to adapt the first method to individual work without much difficulty.

Rising on the Planes

Preparations

There should be at least five Companions working together. They sit in a circle, one person in each quarter, and one near the center. There should be a candle or other light at the center of the room space, either on a table or altar or on the floor. The Companion at the center functions as the coordinator of the practice.

All stand near their chairs, and begin (after the candle is lit) by opening as usual, and establishing the Middle Pillar in their own spheres.

They then awaken their energy bodies, following the lead of the coordinating Companion. This is done by making the contact with the energetic center of the Earth and allowing its energies to rise (with the appropriate movements) up through each Companion's body. When the energy has risen and stabilized, it is not sent down or dispersed, but maintained. It is at this point that the Companions sit and begin the main part of the practice.

The Ascent

Establishing the Temple.

A light descends from the zenith from a distant star. When it reaches the light on the altar it stops, and then expands into a sphere. Within that sphere formulates the Temple of Malkuth, a large cube within which the Companions sit, at the quarters and in the center. On its floor is a circle within which is inscribed a ten-pointed star, at the center of which is a double cube altar. Above rises a dome, through which descends a pillar of light onto the altar.

On the altar are rose, lamp, wine, and bread and salt. On small side altars at each quarter are a sword, a wand, a cup of water, and a pentacle. The Companions, seated physically, stand in the Temple, and each carries the appropriate quarter emblem to the center and leaves it in the place of the emblem on the altar, which is brought out to the appropriate quarter.

The Companions meditate on the nature of consciousness in Malkuth, turned outward into the physical world, and try to appreciate the nature of that state of mind.

When the time is right, the Companions stand and approach the altar. The beam of light expands to contain them all, and draws them upward, to and through the dome; as they pass it, they become ware that the whole of the Malkuth temple is being withdrawn as well.

Yesod

They enter the Yesod temple at the altar, which is in the center of a nine-pointed star inscribed in a circle. Each of the Companions goes to their quarter seat, and meditates on the nature of Yesod consciousness, which is involvement in images, and tries to gain a sense of engagement with that consciousness.

When the time is right, they rise and go to the central altar; the light expands to contain them, and they are drawn up through the dome to the Tiphareth temple; the Yesod temple is withdrawn from manifestation behind them.

Tiphareth

They enter the Tiphareth temple at the altar, which is in the center of a six-pointed star inscribed in a circle. Each of the Companions goes to their quarter seat, and meditates on the nature of Tiphareth consciousness, which is the experience of the greater matrix of activity from which the conscious self emerges, and tries to gain a sense of engagement with that consciousness.

When the time is right, they rise and go to the central altar; the light expands to contain them, and they are drawn up through the dome to the Daath temple; the Tiphareth temple is withdrawn from manifestation behind them.

Daath

They enter the Daath temple at the altar, which is in the center of an unscripted circle. Each of the Companions goes to their quarter seat, and meditates on the nature of Daath consciousness, which is the experience of the mutual interdependence and collapse of all polarities into unities, and tries to gain a sense of engagement with that consciousness.

When the time is right, they rise and go to the center of the circle; the light expands to contain them, and they are drawn up through the dome to the Kether temple; the Daath temple is withdrawn from manifestation behind them.

Kether

They enter the Kether temple, and there is an altar, which is as though inscribed within a circle centered in a larger circle. Each of the Companions goes to their quarter seat, and meditates on the nature of Kether consciousness, which is the experience of integral unity and distinction, and they try to gain a sense of engagement with that consciousness.

When the time is right, they rise and go to the center of the circle; the light expands to contain them, and they are drawn up through the dome of the Kether temple, which ; the Daath temple is withdrawn from manifestation behind them.

AIN SVPh AVR

They find themselves in the realm of unbounded light, infinitely permeating. They attend to it, allowing it to wash through them.

When the time is right, there is a complementation, and the light is not apparent.

AIN SVPh

They find themselves in the realm of the unbounded, not even distinguished as Light. There is no limitation, no focus, no unity, no dispersion.

When the time is right, there is a complementation.

AIN

They find themselves in the realm of the Not.

The Descent

When the time is right, there is a complementation

AIN SVPh

There is no limit.

When the time is right, there is a complementation.

AIN SVPh AVR

There is Light without limit or boundary.

When the time is right, there is boundary; within it no light. A seed of Light appears, linked to the unlimited light by a thin channel down which the Companions move.

Kether

Through the Kether skylight, into the Temple of Unity. From the altar they go to the quarter stations, and meditate on the new unity.

When the time is right, they go to the altar, and going downward enter the Temple of Daath, which manifests before them.

Daath

They descend through the center; they meditate at the quarter stations. Duality springs from unity.

When the time is right, they go to the Center and look downward. The Light manifests the Temple of Tiphareth, and they descend into it

Tiphareth

They going from the center to the quarters, where they sit in awareness of the development of the structures of mind from duality and opposition.

When the time is right, they go to the center, and realize that the Light is manifesting the Temple of Yesod. They descend to it with the Light.

Yesod

They go from the altar to the quarter stations. They are aware of images, and thoughts and feelings as images.

When the time is right, they go to the center, and realize that the Light is manifesting the Temple of Malkuth. They descend to it with the Light.

Malkuth

They go from the altar to the quarter stations, where they are aware of the manifestation of the concrete, and the impact of consciousness onto and permeation through, the world of objects. Turning outward is the entry into forgetting, but all experience is nonetheless carried along as a changed basis for action.

When the time is right, they exchange the elements from the side altars with the emblems on the central altar. At the quarter stations, they realize that the Malkuth Temple is dissolving into the descending beam of light, and becoming less apparent, as the Light gradually fades.

The Completion

Standing at their places, raising their arms, they are aware of the impact of the descending Light on all their vehicles, and on the energies drawn up from the Earth. Lowering their arms, they return that energy down, by the usual pattern, until they finish by pulsing it back to the Earth's core, establishing the full link from Zenith to Nadir.

They close as usual, and the central candle is extinguished.

Other Modes of Practice

The method introduced above is not the only way in which one can Rise on the Planes. I will mention briefly some other modes of practice, to indicate the kind of thing that can be done by the initiate practitioner.

First, the above method can be adapted for individual use. It can be a very valuable practice, and can be done at various levels of elaboration, and at various speeds. And any of the following adaptations (except perhaps the last) are suitable for group as well as individual use.

Second, it can be performed as a more free-form kind of astral working, in which one rises into whatever is above, or in which one rises along the Paths of the Tree and receives (for example) ceremonial initiation into the successive spheres. One can also (if one has learned all the formulae well) perform banishing rituals as one ascends the Tree, and invoking rituals as one descends.

Third, it can be done *within the body*, starting at the Malkuth center and ascending to the Kether center and beyond, and then returning and reconstituting the body and the bodily centers. This interpretation can be combined with others to very interesting effect, though in its more developed forms it will be most useful to those who already have a great deal of meditative and magical experience.