Academy of Reflection Authorized Guided Meditations

Note: This file will be updated from time to time as we compose and authorize new meditations. Members wanting to compose and submit a meditation for authorization should use the format presented below. Submissions should be sent to superintendent@academyofreflection.org.

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The Alchemical Rose Croix

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: Chapter of the Rose Croix, and the word IAO has a presence in earlier and later degrees. This meditation corresponds with the alchemical transformation of base metals to gold, which is directly relevant to the transformation of the Cubic Stone into the Mystic Rose.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Focus your attention upon your feet. Feel them in contact with the earth. Imagine a feeling of warmth beginning to grow in the earth around your feet. The warmth gradually continues increasing, becoming hot, and eventually very hot, although no harm comes to you in the process. Imagine the earth around your feet beginning to respond to that heat. It begins to smoke and grow darker and darker. Finally, your feet are surrounded by earth that is a solid black hot mass.

Begin drawing that hot blackness up into your feet. With each inhalation, the hot blackness

moves a little further up. It moves up through your ankles and into your shins and calves. It moves up through your knees into your thighs. The hot blackness moves up into your hips and lower abdomen.

In your lower abdomen, the hot blackness begins to collect into a roughly shaped ball of solid black. Feel your body focusing even more heat on that solid black mass. It responds by turning a dark charcoal gray as you focus more heat upon it. The gray gradually becomes lighter and lighter, until it transforms into a pure white stone. Now for a moment simply hold the hot white stone in your lower abdomen.

Pause for few breaths.

Once again, as you inhale, the white stone begins to move up, and it arrives in the middle of your torso, behind the solar plexus, between your lungs and stomach. By the force of your will, the white stone gradually begins to take on the qualities of a cube, until you have a perfectly formed white cubical stone in the middle of your torso. Sit for a moment in contemplation of the cube in that place.

Pause for few breaths.

Once more, as you inhale, the cubical stone moves up into your chest at your heart. It begins to slowly turn in that place. You see its edges and corners moving as the stone turns, gradually spinning faster. With the spinning, it flies open into a cross of white light, it's vertical axis reaching down through your body into the center of the earth, and up through your head into the highest heavens. The horizontal arms stretch out through your chest infinitely to the left and to the right.

Pause for few breaths.

In a moment, you will begin a chant, and each intonation of the chant will bring energy down the cross from the heavens into your body, transforming it into a cross of gold with a beautiful rose at the crux, but for now the cross remains white. Sit for a moment and experience the axis and arms of this white cross meeting in your body.

Pause for few breaths.

The chant is IAO (ee-yah-oh). The first sound, EE, is in a high pitch and felt in the head. The second sound, AH, resonates in the chest in a middle tone, and the final sound, OH, resonates in the abdomen in a lower tone. The three sounds are chanted in continuity with each other, so that EE slides down into AH, which slides down into OH

Begin the chant and continue through at least 10 repetitions.

Now rest. Sit in contemplation of the golden cross stretching out through you, above, below, left, and right, and the beautiful rose at the crux within your breast. Notice any effects of the meditation on your thoughts, feelings, or sensations.

Pause for few breaths.

Now begin to release the imagery as you focus upon the sensations of your body – your feet on the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

Chanting Amen

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: Amen, Hebrew for "so mote it be," has obvious ritual significance to Masons of all degrees. However, there are depths of meaning here that go far beyond a statement of assertion at the end of a prayer. It is both a plea to let something be so, and an affirmation of acceptance about what is. Due to the great familiarity most people have with it, amen is perhaps the very best way to introduce the chanting of sacred words.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

We are about to chant amen, moving gradually through each sound of the word as it stretches out through an entire exhalation. As we chant, pay attention to the vibrations and how they change with the specific sounds of the letters. Note the effects of the chant upon your mind, body, and emotions.

Begin the chant and continue through at least 10 repetitions.

Now rest. Sit in silence for a while, taking note of any effects from the chant.

Pause for at least a few minutes.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences. It is often helpful to ask for a show of hands from those who feel differently from when they started, and then ask what has changed.

Chanting IAO

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: IAO (Iota-Alpha-Omega) has a historical connection with various Masonic degrees, and may be alluded in some cases where only the A (Alpha) and O (Omega) are overtly

revealed. It is a sacred word among Gnostics, and it is regarded by some authorities as a pronunciation for the Tetragrammaton, rather than Jehova, Yahweh, or Yahveh.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

The chant is IAO (ee-yah-oh). The first sound, EE, is in a high pitch and felt in the head. The middle sound, AH, resonates in the chest, and the final sound, OH, resonates low in the abdomen. The three sounds are chanted in continuity with each other, so that EE slides down into AH, which slides down into OH. As we perform the chant, feel these sounds resonating in the respective locations, and notice any changes that may occur in the way you feel. Note the effects of the chant upon your mind, body, and emotions.

Begin the chant and continue through at least 10 repetitions.

Now rest. Sit in silence for a while, taking note of any effects from the chant.

Pause for at least a few minutes.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

A Cryptic Journey

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: This meditation is specifically related to elements of the 13th and 14th degrees.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Imagine that you are surrounded by a silvery gray fog. Imagine that it is all around you, that you feel its humidity, and that it is filled with static electricity. See and feel the silvery gray fog entirely enveloping you.

Pause for few breaths.

Now imagine that you are beginning to descend within the fog, slowly dropping lower and lower. As you do so, the fog gradually gets thicker and darker. It is grayer, with very little silver left in it, and it is thicker in your breath.

Pause for few breaths.

You continue descending, and the fog is getting even thicker, denser, and darker. It is a very dark gray now, dense and heavy on your skin and in your breath. You are slowly dropping down farther into the darkness.

Pause for few breaths.

You are descending even further, and now all the light is gone, and you are immersed in a very dense pitch-black atmosphere, descending lower and lower. Imagine it even becoming harder to breathe now. It is natural for you to feel some discomfort and even some anxiety down here. You are slowly dropping down farther into the darkness.

Pause for few breaths.

Now, as you slowly descend in the pitch blackness, you feel your feet slipping down into cold water, and now your ankles.

The water is rising up your shins and calves, and your knees.

Your thighs begin sinking into the cold water.

You feel the water rising up over your lower abdomen as your feet come into contact with a cold hard surface under the water.

Now you are standing in pitch blackness, up to your waist in cold water, trying to breathe in the dense, black, heavy atmosphere. This is an ominous place to be. It is foreboding, perhaps even intimidating, yet there is something here you must find in the darkness.

Pause for few breaths.

You begin to feel about with your feet and hands, searching in the utter absence of light for some object you know you must retrieve from this place. At some point, you will feel its presence.

Pause for few breaths.

When you feel it, attend to your sense of touch, noticing the object's size, textures, temperature, and shape. Take hold of it and feel its weight.

Pause for few breaths.

With the object in your grasp, imagine that you are beginning to ascend. You feel your feet coming up off of the cold hard floor under the water. You feel the surface of the water descending from your waist, down your thighs. Now your knees are rising up out of the cold water, and now your shins and calves. You feel your ankles, and finally your feet rising up and out of the water as you begin to ascend more quickly.

Already the atmosphere is a dark gray again, and it gets easier to breathe as the fog is less dense. You are rising faster, and the fog is growing more silvery again. It is bright enough now to see the object you are bringing back up with you.

And finally you stop ascending and you are back at the level where you began, holding the object you retrieved. But there is somewhere you must take this object, and so you feel yourself moving forward in the silvery fog. The fog is growing thinner and brighter, transitioning from silvery to white. As you continue moving forward, the white fog begins to faintly glow with golden light. Now you can see through it ahead of you, and you find that you are moving toward the most sacred hidden chamber of a beautiful temple, illuminated by golden light.

The fog is completely gone now as you arrive within the secret place of this temple, and you see before you a place that has been made ready to receive the object you have retrieved. You know that you are returning it to its rightful place as you step forward and deposit the object where it belongs.

Pause for few breaths.

Take a moment to meditate upon this temple and the object you have returned. How might this object represent something about you that you have rediscovered, or might rediscover, and reintegrate into your life? Allow the possibilities of meaning to flow into your mind, attending carefully to them, making special note of any you wish to recall later.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, in whatever way feels fitting to you, express your respect for this temple and this object, and all they represent, with a solemn bow.

Pause for few breaths.

It is time to leave this sacred place, and you feel yourself gliding backward into the fine white fog glowing with golden light. It grows thicker, and soon the golden tinge is gone, and you are surrounded by white as you continue gliding backward. The white fog grows thicker and darker. Now it is silvery and beginning to turn a little gray. Finally, you come to a stop, surrounded by the silvery gray fog as you were at the very beginning.

Take a moment to recall the most significant points of your journey: the descent into the dense, cold, blackness and water; finding the object and starting to become familiar with it through your sense of touch; rising up and eventually being able to see the object as you ascended; then moving forward into the temple and returning the object to its rightful place. Reflect upon any meanings you have found or might find in these experiences, so that you will remember them after the meditation is finished.

Pause for several breaths.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling

your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

Energizing the Plumbline

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: There are many degrees that make note of or allude to the plumbline in various ways. Consider all that we are traditionally taught about its allegorical meanings.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Imagine a plumbline of brilliant white light running into the top of your head from the highest heavens, and down through your body into the depths of the Earth. Try to feel the presence of this plumbline as a magnetic or electrical current flowing between Heaven and Earth.

As you focus on the plumbline, allow it to gradually grow in diameter so that it becomes a column of light with a circumference as large as your own head. Try to feel the pure white light as a warm, relaxing, cleansing and healing energy.

Once the column of light is well established, inhale and imagine that with your breath the energy within the light is spiraling down through your head and body, into the earth below. The spiraling motion is from left to front to right to rear. As you exhale, imagine that the energy is spiraling up around and through your body into the heavens above. The spiraling motion is from left to front to right to rear. As you inhale, the energy within the light spirals down, from left to front to right to rear. As you exhale, it spirals up, from left to front to right to rear.

Repeat this process several times.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, simply breathe naturally and attend to the effect this work has on your body, emotions, and thoughts.

Pause for at least a few minutes.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

The Four Elements

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: The four elements are most overtly encountered in the tests of the 24th degree. Either individually or in some combination, they also appear repeatedly throughout our other degrees, and are referenced in many of Pike's lectures. They are among the most pervasive aspects of our symbolism because they were widely regarded by ancient philosophers as a key to understanding the ways of nature, including human nature.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

We begin with the element of fire and things in the plasma state. Think of your own relationship with fire, and attend to all the electrical and warming processes of your body. Recall what it is like when your body is in need of heat, and how it affects you.

Pause for a few breaths.

Think of all the natural experiences of fire, from a dim star in the night sky, to the warm rays of the sun, to a flashing lightning storm, and even a raging forest fire. Consider the brightness and freedom of fire when it is not smothered by other things.

Pause for a few breaths.

Consider the symbolic relationship between fire and the faculty of will, of your drive and desire to do something or not do something.

Pause for a few breaths.

Now recall how you have experienced fire in Freemasonry.

Pause for several breaths.

Now we turn to the element of air and things in the gaseous state. Think of your own relationship with oxygen, and attend to how your body interacts with it through the processes of respiration. Recall what it is like when your body is in need of oxygen, and how it affects you.

Pause for a few breaths.

Think of all the natural experiences of air, from a calm still atmosphere, to a gentle breeze, to strong and gusty winds, and even tornadoes. Consider the clarity of air when it is not clouded by other things.

Pause for a few breaths.

Consider the symbolic relationship between air and the faculty of thinking, of your mind having

thoughts.

Pause for a few breaths.

Now recall how you have experienced air in Freemasonry.

Pause for several breaths.

Now we move to the element of water and things in the liquid state. Think of your own relationship with water, and attend to all the fluid processes of your body. Recall what it is like when your body is in need of water, and how it affects you.

Pause for a few breaths.

Think of all the natural experiences of water, from a calm still pool, to a gentle stream, to strong and rushing rivers, and even floods. Consider the clarity of water when it is not clouded by other things.

Pause for a few breaths.

Consider the symbolic relationship between water and the faculty of emotion, of you having feelings.

Pause for a few breaths.

Now recall how you have experienced water in Freemasonry.

Pause for several breaths.

Now we turn to the element of earth and things in the solid state. Think of your own relationship with solid matter, minerals like salt, metals, wood, and soil, and attend to the solidity within your own body. Recall what it is like when your body is in need of solid food, and how it affects you.

Pause for a few breaths.

Think of all the natural experiences of solid earth, from a tiny grain of sand, to a stately oak tree, to a great mountain, and even the planet itself. Consider the stability and resiliency of solid matter when it is not diluted or corroded by other things.

Pause for a few breaths.

Consider the symbolic relationship between earth and your physical body, your presence and behavior in this world.

Pause for a few breaths.

Now recall how you have experienced earth in Freemasonry.

Pause for several breaths.

Consider all four elements at once, and the interactions of all the faculties we have connected them with: fire and the will, air and thinking, water and emotions, earth and the physical body.

Pause for a few breaths.

Recall how you have experienced all four elements and faculties interacting with each other in Freemasonry.

Pause for several breaths.

Affirm to yourself that you will attend to the symbolism of the four elements as you experience Masonic activities in the future.

Pause for a few breaths.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

The Hermetic Axiom - As Above, So Below

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: This meditation is relevant to every degree that mentions or alludes to Hermeticism or alchemy, such as the Ancient Mysteries degrees and the Knight of the Sun, but especially the 18th degree where the Hermetic Axiom is explicitly referenced in explaining the signs of recognition for a Knight Rose Croix.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Slowly and with good diction, read the following text, which is The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, as translated by Sir Isaac Newton.

Tis true without lying, certain & most true.

That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below, to do the miracles of one only thing.

And as all things have been & arose from one by the mediation of one, so all things have their

birth from this one thing by adaptation.

The Sun is its father, the moon its mother, the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth is its nurse.

The father of all perfection in the whole world is here.

Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.

Separate thou the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, sweetly with great industry.

It ascends from the earth to the heaven & again it descends to the earth & receives the force of things superior & inferior.

By this means you shall have the glory of the whole world & thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.

Its force is above all force. For it vanquishes every subtle thing & penetrates every solid thing.

So was the world created.

From this, are & do come admirable adaptations whereof the means is here in this.

Hence I am called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

That which I have said of the operation of the Sun is accomplished & ended. Continue sitting in silent contemplation upon the words I have spoken, and in a moment we will proceed with the next phase of the meditation.

Pause for a few breaths.

Imagine a sphere of brilliant white light forming above your head. See it shining very brightly, like the sun, and imagine the feeling of heat it can stimulate on your scalp and shoulders. This is your own little sun, radiating its energy down onto and into your body.

As you inhale, imagine drawing the energies of the cosmos into this sun from all directions, and so it grows even more vibrant and energetic.

As you exhale, imagine the energy shining out into the cosmos in all directions.

Now, just sit for a moment, breathing energy into and out of this sun that you see and feel above your head.

Pause for several breaths.

Next, as you inhale, imagine a powerful beam of the sun's light extending straight down through the top of your head, through your neck and chest, to form another sphere low in your belly.

As you exhale, you see and feel this sphere radiating a softer, pearly light, like the moon.

And so you just keep repeating this cycle, inhaling a beam of light down from the sun above your head into the moon low in your belly, seeing and feeling its soft pearly glow as you exhale.

Pause for several breaths.

Continuing to the next step, with the next exhalation from the moon, imagine it sending a beam of its soft pearly light down to form a third sphere beneath your feet.

You see this sphere as a rough ball of gray stone, sparkling from many crystals within it, like granite, and glowing with an aura bestowed by the moon's light. This is your sphere of earth beneath you.

And so you just keep repeating this cycle, inhaling a beam of light down from the sun above your head into the moon low in your belly, then exhaling to see and feel a beam of its soft pearly light flowing down into the sphere of earth.

Pause for several breaths.

Now cease drawing the beam of light down from the sun into the moon, and from the moon into the earth with your breath, and simply sit for a moment in contemplation of these three spheres, the sun, moon, and earth.

Pause for a few breaths.

Focus your attention on the sphere of earth beneath you. As you inhale, imagine drawing the light of its energy straight up through your body, through the moon center, up through your neck and head and into the sun.

As you exhale, the energy pours out of the sun like a fountain, raining streams and drops of light down all around and through your body, and collecting in and around the sphere of earth beneath you.

Now just continue repeating the process. With each inhalation, the light rises straight up from the earth sphere, through your body, through the moon center, up into the sun, and with each exhalation you see and feel the energy pouring out of the sun like a fountain, raining streams and drops of light down all around and through your body, once again collecting in and around the sphere of earth beneath you.

Pause for several breaths.

It's time to stop the circulation of breath and light, and once again contemplate these words:

Read slowly and with good diction.

Tis true without lying, certain & most true.

That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below, to do the miracles of one only thing.

And as all things have been & arose from one by the mediation of one, so all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.

The Sun is its father, the moon its mother, the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth is its nurse.

The father of all perfection in the whole world is here.

Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.

Separate thou the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, sweetly with great industry.

It ascends from the earth to the heaven & again it descends to the earth & receives the force of things superior & inferior.

By this means you shall have the glory of the whole world & thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.

Its force is above all force. For it vanquishes every subtle thing & penetrates every solid thing.

So was the world created.

From this, are & do come admirable adaptations whereof the means is here in this.

Hence I am called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

That which I have said of the operation of the Sun is accomplished & ended.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet on the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

The Omkara

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Corresponding Degree(s): 3rd, 14th, and 32nd

You may begin the session by reading the following explanation of the Omkara, which is AUM.

The Omkara, which literally means the "Om syllable," is given to all Scottish Rite Masons when they become Grand, Elect, Perfect and Sublime Masons of the 14th Degree. In that degree, this word is offered as symbolic of the Ineffable Name of Deity. It must be stressed that it cannot actually be such a name simply because it can be, and often is, spoken aloud in various ways. Most relevant to our purposes, it is spoken, or rather intoned, as a powerful chant by people of many spiritual traditions. This practice has been conducted for more than three-thousand years in Asia, and through exchanges of wisdom and practice, the philosophers and priests of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultures would have known of it at least as early as the 4th century Before the Common Era. Likewise, we know that in the 18th and 19th centuries, an age in which many of our Masonic rituals were formalized, learned people of the West were also quite familiar with our sacred word and its use. Some authorities have even speculated that our word is the origin for the name of the Egyptian god *Amun*, meaning 'the hidden one,' and the Semitic affirmation *amen*, meaning 'so mote it be,' or 'let it be so.' The most ancient Vedic teachings on this word proclaim it as the very sound of creation and being. Its three parts – ah, oh, and mm – are said to correspond to the three states of consciousness – waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep – while the silence between repetitions corresponds to the essence of consciousness itself.

While this word is dramatically revealed in the 14th Degree, Masons have also found it hidden in the ending of the three Ruffians names in the Master Mason's Degree of many jurisdictions. As Masons, we should attend to the fact that its three sounds have a significant resonance with, respectively, the throat, the breast, and the brow, the three places struck by Jubala, Jubalo, and Jubalum, and in that very order. We know that only one of those three names is genuinely Hebrew, and so we must explore any meaning conveyed by the other two. (In this context, it is exceedingly interesting to note that, according to the Book of Genesis, Jubal is the name of the patriarch of all musicians, and chant is indeed a kind of music.) We cannot now be certain about the intentions of the author of this innovation in the 3rd degree, but we can be certain that well informed Masons of the time would have recognized its parallel with the ancient triune chant we have inherited from Asia.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

In a moment, we will begin to chant together. We will give about the same amount of time and energy to each of the three sounds, throughout each exhalation, smoothly flowing from one into the other. As we make the ah sound, we will focus on the vibrations in our throats. As we transition into the oh sound, we will attend to the vibrations moving into our chests. Finally, as we transition into the mm sound, we will attend to the vibrations moving into our heads at the

level of the brow. After repeating the chant aloud several times, I will invite you to continue the chant silently, imagining the sounds and their vibrations with each exhalation.

After pausing silently for a few breaths, begin the chant:

AAAAAAOOOOOOUUMMMM

Repeat the chant at least 10 times. Immediately after the last repetition, provide the following instructions:

Now rest. Continue the chant silently, imagining the sounds and their vibrations with each exhalation.

After several breaths, if not several minutes, ask the following question:

As the Ruffians slew the Master Hiram Abif with strikes to his throat, breast, and brow, what might you be you slaying with this chant? Continue the chant silently as you hold this question in your mind.

After several breaths, if not several minutes, provide the following instructions:

Now begin to release the chant as you focus upon the sensations of your body – your feet on the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences and the question you asked.

Raising the Principal Supports

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: There are many degrees that make note of or allude to the columns and qualities of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. Consider all that we are traditionally taught about their meanings.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Imagine a brilliant sphere of vibrant white light, the Blazing Star, just above your head. See and feel its presence as clearly as possible. Imagine what it looks and feels like to have a ball of purifying, cleansing, healing light radiating powerfully just above your head.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, with an inhalation, imagine that beneath the Blazing Star, a pillar of beautiful golden light forms between the top of your head and the surface of the Earth beneath you. Try to feel this

pillar of golden light extending through your body and radiating an electric or magnetic energy. This is the Masonic Pillar of Beauty.

Now sit for a moment in contemplation of the Blazing Star, the Pillar of Beauty, and your relationship with them.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, to the left of your head, just outside the width of your shoulders, imagine the formation of the Celestial Sphere, a ball of very dark blue, indigo light, speckled with the silver dots of stars and planets. Imagine what it looks and feels like to have the energies of all the constellations and the planets radiating there.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, with an inhalation, imagine that beneath the Celestial Sphere, a pillar of warm, soft, white light forms between it and the surface of the Earth. Try to feel this pillar of soft white energy radiating warmly to the left of your body. This is the Masonic Pillar of Wisdom, or Jachin, Establishment.

Now sit for a moment in contemplation of the Celestial Sphere, and Jachin, the Pillar of Wisdom, their meanings, and your relationship with them.

Pause for several breaths.

Recall also the Blazing Star, the electric or magnetic, golden Pillar of Beauty, and try to imagine them together with the Celestial Sphere and the warm white Pillar of Wisdom.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, to the right of your head, just outside the width of your shoulders, imagine the formation of the Terrestrial Sphere, a ball of bright blue, with swirls of white clouds and the green and brown patches of the continents. Imagine what it looks and feels like to have the energies of Earth's many forms of life, weather, and geological processes radiating there.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, with an inhalation, imagine that beneath the Terrestrial Sphere, a pillar of cool, black energy forms between it and the surface of the Earth. Try to feel this pillar of cool, black energy radiating to the right of your body. This is the Masonic Pillar of Strength, or Boaz.

Now sit for a moment in contemplation of the Terrestrial Sphere, and Boaz, the Pillar of Strength, and your relationship with them.

Pause for several breaths.

Recall also the Blazing Star, the electric or magnetic, golden, Pillar of Beauty, the Celestial Sphere and the warm white Pillar of Wisdom, and try to imagine them together with the Terrestrial Sphere and the cool Pillar of Strength.

Now sit for a while in contemplation of all three spheres and pillars, their relationships with each other and with you. Attend to the effects this work has on your body, emotions, and thoughts.

Pause for at least a few minutes.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

The Secret Smile

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: There are many degrees that have some measure of pleasant and even humorous sentiments expressed within them, most notably the Revised Pike Ritual of the 25th degree, Sufi Master. Think of all the positive conditions a smile can communicate: happiness, satisfaction, amusement, peace, affection, hope, gratitude, and many other beautiful conditions of the human heart and mind. The state of equanimity can also be communicated by a smile. It is that peaceful little grin you often see depicted on the faces of sages. When we see that smile, it communicates the sense of serenity and harmony that accompanies a profoundly deep awareness of oneself, others and the situation in the present setting. Those people who bear a genuine smile of this nature are able to think and act with great patience, honesty, understanding, and wisdom.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Now, imagine your own face as though in a mirror. See that face smiling warmly and peacefully. If it helps, try to recall or imagine something that naturally brings such as smile to your face, and then see the response on your face in the mirror.

Pause for several breaths.

If you have not already done so, allow that gentle warm smile into your physical face. Focus on the feeling of the smile in and around your mouth. There is an energy that accompanies a smile. Tune into and enjoy that energy as it fills your face.

Pause for several breaths.

Now allow that energy to flow up to the center of your forehead. Focus on feeling the beautiful energy of the smile at that point in your forehead as well as around your mouth.

Pause for several breaths.

Now, with each exhalation, allow that energy to flow up over the top and back of your head, then down through your spine to its base. With each inhalation, it flows up through your genitals, your belly, and solar plexus on the way back to your face.

Exhaling the energy of the smile over the head and down the spine. Inhaling the energy of the smile up the front of your body and back into your face.

Pay particular attention to the way the energy of the smile seems to naturally flow into and out of your heart as it returns to your face.

Pause for several breaths.

Now cease the circulations and simply sit quietly, feeling the energy of the smile in each part of your body, from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. If you wish, play with the energy a little, moving more of it to one place or another in your body. If you have pain or discomfort anywhere in your body, you may be able to relieve it by concentrating the energy of the smile into that area. Also note the effects of the smile on your thinking.

Pause for at least a few minutes.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet to the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.

Three Lights

This meditation can be performed alone or with a group.

Degree Relevance: This meditation is not specifically related to any particular degree. It is meant to activate and integrate the whole spectrum of our subtle energies so that we may be fully present while observing or participating in other activities. As such, it is a good morning meditation before the beginning of degree work.

Begin with silent sitting, and invite participants to silently invoke the aid of Deity as each sees fit. After a sufficient period for relaxation and centering, perform the following operations.

Imagine a sphere of brilliant white light, about the size of a soccer ball, forming above your head. See it shining very brightly, and imagine the feelings it can stimulate on your scalp and in your head. This sphere of light represents your highest point of contact with the Divine Light.

As you inhale, imagine drawing the energies of the cosmos into this sphere from all directions,

and so it grows even more vibrant and energetic.

As you exhale, imagine the energy pulsing back out into the cosmos in all directions.

Now, just sit for a moment, breathing energy into and out of this brilliant sphere of bright white light that you see and feel above your head.

Pause for several breaths.

In a moment, with your inhalation you will draw a shaft of energy down from that sphere above your head, straight down through your head and neck to form a second sphere that you see and feel in and around your heart. Then as you exhale, imagine the light pulsing out into the cosmos from that second sphere. Go ahead and begin this process, inhaling light down from the crown and exhaling out from the heart. Inhaling down from the crown, exhalaing out from the heart. Consider the possible meanings of this sphere in and around your heart.

Now just sit for a while, inhaling energy down from the crown and exhaling it out from the heart.

Pause for several breaths.

In a moment, with your inhalation you will draw energy down from the crown, through the sphere in and around your heart, and into a third sphere at the base of your spine, as if you are sitting on a bright ball of white light. Then as you exhale, imagine the light pulsing out into the cosmos from that third sphere. Go ahead and begin this process, inhaling light down from the crown, through the heart, and into the sphere at the base of your spine where you exhale it out. Inhaling down from the crown, through the heart, and exhaling out from the base. Consider the possible meanings of this sphere, at the base of your spine.

Now just sit for a while, inhaling energy down from the crown, through the heart, and exhaling it out from the base.

Pause for several breaths.

Now stop moving the energy with your breath and simply sit in awareness of these three spheres of light, seeing and feeling them as clearly as possible. You might find it necessary to focus on only one or two at time, but try to to experience all three simultaneously, as you sit quietly and breathe in a peaceful natural rhythm. Consider the levels of consciousness, ways of thinking and feeling, or different perspectives on things that each of these spheres might represent.

Pause for several breaths.

As you go through today's events, from time to time, try to recall each of these three spheres and consider how they might connect with the things you are experiencing.

Pause for several breaths.

Now once again focus upon the breath and the sensations of your body. Feel the gravity pulling your feet on the floor, your seat, the air on your skin, the breath flowing in and out. Hear what you hear. Smell what you smell, taste what you taste. When you are ready open your eyes.

Invite the participants to reflect upon their experiences.