



On the Relationship between a Probationer And His or Her Neophyte *Epistola Publica I*

“The Chancellor of A.:A.: views without satisfaction the practice of Probationers working together. A Probationer should work with his Neophyte, or alone. Breach of this rule may prove a bar to advancement.”—Official pronouncement, The Equinox, I:5.

At the very beginning of one’s approach to the Order known by the initials “A.:A.:”, one is confronted with the daunting Task of studying what, at first, seems to be a rather hefty set of books for a minimum of three months. After this time, the Student may request his or her Exam (which is “open book”, by the way) and, should he or she apply him or herself in answering the questions to the satisfaction of the Brother or Sister appointed to evaluate these matters, the Student is then immediately passed on to a member of the Order of the Grade of Neophyte 1°=10° who shall receive him or her as a Probationer 0°=0°.

As all Probationers know, the Ceremony of Reception is a simple one, the general characteristics being that he listens to the reading of *Liber LXI (Causæ): The History Lesson*, the Task of a Probationer, and after considering the matter for a time, takes and signs the Oath of a Probationer. No other single action at this grade is as significant, and some hold it to be the only *necessary* initiation one must take within the Order.

The principle business of the Probationer is to “begin such practices as he may prefer, and to write a careful record of the same for one year.”¹ While there is an extensive curriculum from which the Probationer may choose, and even further *all* potential practices are open to him or her, it is suggested that one choose from the curriculum given as that material is what the Probationer and his or her Neophyte have in common: It is nearly impossible for one’s Neophyte to gauge the merits or demerits of a practice of which he or she has not even heard; hence the injunction

¹ From ‘One Star in Sight’, found in *Magick: Book IV, Liber ABA* (Weiser, 1997), p. 489.

that the very first time the Probationer enters such a practice into his or her Record he or she describes it fully, so at the least the Neophyte has some clue to what is even being done.

Frater O.M. 7°=4° (Aleister Crowley) referred to the Instructor² as “the sparring-partner of the pupil”. This implies that the Instructor may not always say what the student wants to hear...in fact, he shouldn't! For if all he or she tells the student is what the student wants to believe, is not the student living in a room full of mirrors? What effect, then, has the Instructor had on the student, other than to more fully involve the student with him or herself in a narcissistic way?

At the heading of this short epistle was a quote from the editorial of *The Equinox* I:5. This was not lightly done: What I have seen since we have begun to take on several new members contacted online is the very problem that they have taken on *too many* instructors, be they people, blogs, websites, or the like. By taking in so many varying points the student does not have a chance to build his or her own foundation from which he or she can *then* alter things to their satisfaction: As the old saying goes, one has to know the rules to break them! Study the curriculum given; that is enough for any assiduous student, and doing otherwise demonstrates that the Probationer is not putting enough time into the material originally assigned! There is far more in ‘Liber E’ and ‘Liber O’ than many suspect, and I agree with Israel Regardie that the perceptive student *could* spend years on each paper!

The other issue is people: Many, if not most, of us, are members of some other magical society or group. This is to be expected, and one cannot reasonably leave these for a year or more during one's period as a Probationer of A.:A.:. If you are a Freemason or Martinist, go to your lodge, etc. Such things are not a problem and no one could reasonably ask you to stop doing so. What is problematic is engaging another in one's *personal* Work during your tenure as a Probationer. This kind of problem is, I believe, one of the primary reasons that that pronouncement was made in the first place back in 1911 e.v.

This is not an issue of control; far from it. The purpose of working alone is so that the Instructor can learn about *you*, and you alone. Once someone else becomes involved, the Instructor must wonder: “Is this the student's insight, or was it given to him/her by another?”; “Did the student accomplish this, or was it due to the presence of the other?” These kinds of questions, as you can see, make it extremely difficult to assess the Probationer for advancement! And even if said Probationer *was* advanced in

² Crowley used the term ‘Superior’ in his time to refer to that relationship in the Order. We have followed the practice of Frater Adjuvo 2°=9° (Marcelo Motta) in using ‘Instructor’; for how can a “King” have a “Superior”?

the outer sense, the “bar to advancement” clause is *still* valid, as he or she would have been advanced to a grade for which they were not spiritually prepared. In a nutshell, as Scientific Illuminists, the experiment would be tainted.

Wishing all Fratres and Sorores the very best in the Great Work!

Frater **בְּבִלְיָה**

Præmonstrator

☉ in 19° ♁ 54'

☾ in 11° ♀ 55'

AL IV₁₉

February 8, 2014 e.v., 16:19

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Frater B.

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