

given unless these certain conditions are complied with, and rigorously carried out during the years of study. This is a *sine qua non*. No man can swim unless he enters deep water. No bird can fly unless its wings are grown, and it has space before it and courage to trust itself to the air. A man who will wield a two-edged sword, must be a thorough master of the blunt weapon, if he would not injure himself — or what is worse — others, at the first attempt.

To give an approximate idea of the conditions under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety, that is, without danger that Divine will give place to Black Magic, a page is given from the “private rules,” with which every instructor in the East is furnished. The few passages which follow are chosen from a great number and explained in brackets.

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1. The place selected for receiving instruction must be a spot calculated not to distract the mind, and filled with “influence-evolving” (magnetic) objects. The five sacred colors gathered in a circle must be there among other things. The place must be free from any malignant influences hanging about in the air.

[The place must be set apart, and used for no other purpose. The five “sacred colors” are the prismatic hues arranged in a certain way, as these colors are very magnetic. By “malignant influences” are meant any disturbances through strifes, quarrels, bad feelings, etc., as these are said to impress themselves immediately on the astral light, *i.e.*, in the atmosphere of the place, and to hang “about in the air.”

This first condition seems easy enough to accomplish, yet — on further consideration, it is one of the most difficult ones to obtain.]

2. Before the disciple shall be permitted to study “face to face,” he has to acquire preliminary understanding in a select company of other lay *upasakas* (disciples), the number of whom must be odd.

[“Face to face,” means in this instance a study independent or apart from others, when the disciple gets his instruction *face to face* either with himself (his higher, Divine Self) or — his guru. It is then only that each receives *his due* of information, according to the use he has made of his knowledge. This can happen only toward the end of the cycle of instruction.]