

The
Technique
of
the
Disciple



by Raymund Andrea, F.R.C.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE DISCIPLE



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Dedicated with Gratitude to
Harvey Spencer Lewis
Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order
for North and South
America



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INTRODUCTION

IN MY BOOK *The Technique of the Master* I outlined certain basic principles of thought and action, and methods of esoteric discipline, which appear to characterize the Master during the training of a disciple. These principles and this discipline constitute the necessary foundation upon which a disciple has to build through graduated development a comprehensive structure of technical equipment in order to attain to high initiation. I tried to sketch the subject from the Master's point of view. I took it for granted that readers accepted the fact of the existence of the Masters as living personalities, actually operative on this material plane as well as on the cosmic plane, having full knowledge of the activities of the Order to which we as members are attached, and inspiring certain advanced initiates in carrying on those activities.

Obviously, for those who do not accept this fact of the existence of such Masters, the technique of the Master and of his disciple can have little significance. Rosicrucianism, in its esoteric aspect, is grounded upon the fact of Cosmic Attunement, a personal alignment with cosmic forces, by means of which its disciple enters the state of superconsciousness. The technique of the Rosicrucians has its origin in the superconscious realm. Therefore its laws and principles must emanate from perfected technicians who are conversant with that realm. We say there exists a Rosicrucian Hierarchy, a section of the Great White Lodge, consisting of Masters specially deputed to promulgate a technique in which these laws and principles in here. In its outer aspect, the Rosicrucian Order is an organization disseminating a systematic teaching, thoroughly practical and of approved utility in the world; and, in its inner aspect, of a deeply mystical and esoteric character. It is in this latter aspect that the operative force resides and indeed gives direction and stability to the manifold applications and

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uses in the everyday world. It is herein also that the technique silently acts and reacts through its chosen channels and is brought to bear with knowledge and understanding upon the lives of those who enter and work in the Order. Without this technique, working silently and understandingly from the inner fraternity of the Order in and through the outer organization, the latter would cease to be; and the technique, wanting this field for its action and use would remain an isolated and unapplied possession of its proficients.

In this work I have endeavored to treat the subject from the point of view of the neophyte as he seeks to qualify from the outset of his studies, knowing little of the path before him, or how his new departure in life will react upon himself and his environment. It is not an easy task to embark upon; but I propose to write from my own experience of the path and take the young aspirant step by step along with me, until light and knowledge dispel doubt and hesitancy and he finds the technique unfolding in his mind and soul and expressing skillfully in his hands in the one great service to which we have dedicated ourselves, the service of the Master.



Chapter 1

THE NEOPHYTE ENTERING ON THE PATH

A MASTER SAID to his pupil: "But you have to remember that you are at a hard school and dealing now with a world entirely distinct from your own." No better admonition could be given to the neophyte entering upon his studies. It is an admonition of warning and encouragement. He is invited to remember that he is entering upon a condition of pupillage in which thought and action are to receive a new direction and intention; that he is taking a path totally different from the worldly path he has trodden hitherto and must be prepared to conform to new principles none too easy to accept perhaps at the threshold, because some of them will oppose firmly rooted personal beliefs and opinions. But there is great encouragement in the fact that he is placing himself under the tuition of teachers who know the path experimentally which he proposes to take. They know the difficult stages of it. Just where he will falter they have perfect confidence and can lift him up.

The admonition reminds one of the impressions experienced in school days when we were warned of the difficulties awaiting us on passing from the junior to the senior classrooms, and we were encouraged to persevere in them. It was truly the entering into an entirely different world, and the first steps in it were difficult. Promotion to it came in the natural course of events; it was inevitable if we were to attain to intellectual manhood. But in the case of the neophyte, entering upon the path is a matter of personal choice. He elects to advance from intellectual to psychic and spiritual manhood. He may

do this as unconcernedly as he changed classrooms, in which case the admonition will have far more warning in it, but no less encouragement than in the case of the man who passes on with the strong resolution to make the most of a great opportunity to equip himself with a fine and useful culture. Whatever happens to the former type of neophyte, the latter will find in himself the patience and perseverance which the higher school of life will demand of him.

Entering upon the path means a new departure in life; in a sense, a parting of the ways. If it is regarded by the neophyte as just another interest, desirable because others have taken the step, that attitude of mind may soon fail him. It cannot be taken as a pastime with others and with indifferent purpose. He can only make headway on his own native strength. Exceptional strength is not required in the beginning, but there must be courage and initiative to use that which he has. His studies will soon demonstrate to him what measure of strength is his. And if he wills to advance, he will apply it confidently to the new task of soul culture and find it developing and preparing him for the higher grades.

The first thing the neophyte has to realize is that his studies will initiate him into a different world from the one he knows. The failure to recognize this fact has caused many a neophyte to cast aside impatiently the very knowledge and discipline he most needed. If the studies offered him had in view only the extended information of a senior classroom, they would obviously be a superfluous institution. But this is not so. They comprise well-tried systems of scientific teaching and technical instruction designed to turn the neophyte's attention inward upon himself, his complex constitution and innate possibilities as a spiritual and psychic being, and they necessarily explore avenues of mental procedure excelling in promise anything he knows and accepts in everyday life. Observe then, that the more firmly adjusted, the more confirmed he is in his adherence to the worldly standard of knowledge and achievement, the greater may be the initial difficulty he will experience on his first encounter with the new scale of values the studies will disclose to him.

Let the neophyte assure himself of this fact that the studies he enters upon hold the key to a new world of progress. No matter what his sympathies may be with accepted standards of thought and action, or what his achievements in any field are, he is circumscribed within the relatively limited frontiers of those sympathies, nor can he extend his achievements beyond those frontiers until he consciously concerns himself with the soul factors that remain latent but unrecognized in the background of his activities. There awaits him a new world of thought, emotion, and action which can only be possessed by giving his well-known factors of expression a subordinate position and looking to the soul for the unfoldment of those super-faculties which in time will enlarge the whole mental horizon for him.

The neophyte may be a student of literature, art, or science. All the accepted canons of his branch of study may be familiar and comprise the main portion of his mental content and be applicable by him in commendable demonstration, of the highest pleasure to himself and of much utility to others. Nevertheless, through his training on the path he will find it possible to raise all these activities into a new dimension of added power and influence. Art may become more expressive, enshrining itself in more beautiful and diviner types; literature may become a sublime pageant of the biography of the soul, invested with secret meanings hitherto undreamed of; and science, instead of being the dull record of irreconcilable facts, may disclose an illumined avenue of approach to contact with invisible and magical forces.

This is a wonderful truth for the neophyte to ponder at the threshold. The adumbrations of a unique career on the path may fall silently upon the mind like a celestial vision. Let him hold it fast and resolve to demonstrate the possibilities of it. Whatever he has and prizes dearly can be re-created, clarified, and oriented in spiritual vision, and become a thing of sheer beauty in the light of the soul. Nothing of value which he brings with him on to the path will be taken away. No ideal he has striven for, no work he has fostered through the years, need be renounced. These mental possessions are his present strength, and on that he will make his way. Now, for the first time, all his acquirements of mind and soul are to be rightly understood and

assessed and their range of service and use in all probability increased through an understanding of the laws of transmutation.

It will be interesting to ask, what is it that causes the neophyte to gravitate towards and take up the studies of the path? The answer of many will be that it is entirely for the purpose of spiritual evolution. In a large percentage of cases this is not so. There is undoubtedly no small percentage who have no such object in view. A careful observation of the lives of various neophytes and their subsequent work and progress proves this conclusively. If every neophyte taking the path were bent solely upon spiritual evolution, the world would probably lose in no long time some of its most promising and able workers and pioneers in the realms of practical activities. At first sight this may appear an unwarranted statement. But experience is stronger than prejudice.

Many a neophyte - and observe, the neophyte is not necessarily a young person, but may be and often is of mature age - enters upon occult and mystical studies for the sole purpose that his chosen profession or life activity may be further advanced by relating it more intimately and forcefully with the secret source of power and revelation which those studies unfold. The purpose is a wise one and fully justified; and if there were more in the occult ranks with the same purpose in view, the world would be richer for their presence.

The purpose is justified for this reason: such a neophyte will find that the creations of art and the discoveries of science originate in the minds of exceptional men and are the offspring of high inspiration. It is the super element in them which attracts the neophyte and makes him a lifelong devotee of these master minds. And if he ever hopes to emulate them, or indeed to understand their work rightly, he must approach them from a higher level than that of the everyday world.

These creators work from the world of mystical and occult forces, whether they know and acknowledge it or not, and to that world the neophyte must look for a full understanding and appreciation of them. The finest things in life are wrought out in a hard school whose laws are entirely distinct from those operative in the school of the world. These laws await the neophyte's discovery and application in the studies of

the path; and he is as fully justified in seeking their assistance to make him a greater artist or scientist, or professional man, at the point of evolution where he stands, as for the purpose of the highest mystical and spiritual research and demonstration.

I have known clever students in many lines of activity whose complete outlook and grasp of the truth and principles relating to their profession have been widened and reorganized through a period of mystical training. The discipline was strange to them and appeared to promise little at the outset; but their keenness and conscientiousness, and the desire to be of practical use in the world, enabled them quickly to surmount the initial difficulties. The soul began to awaken to its possibilities, and an influx of strength from a larger consciousness soon extended over the whole life.

There is nothing mysterious about the process of such an unfoldment. It is as natural as the opening of a flower. The neophyte enters upon the work with a feeling of curiosity as to where it will lead him, and in a little while it often happens that he finds himself upon strangely familiar ground. The seed has been sown in a former life, and in contacting others seriously bent upon the studies, the strong vibration of their concerted efforts, working silently upon his life and thought, does as much as the work itself in his hands in quickening latent growth and bringing him to a feeling of security as a unit in the group to which he belongs.

That is a factor he must keep firmly in mind. Although the early stages of his study may present him with principles foreign to his habit of thought, the neophyte does not progress on his own unaided strength. Directly he links himself with others on the path, he comes more and more to feel the reactive influence of these students upon himself. The law of mental attraction at once comes to his assistance, and a process of attunement with many working to the same end augments his forces and proves to him the great value of cooperative evolution as a guarantee of future advancement. In this way he finds his place on the path, and those who supervise his training will see that he receives encouragement and assistance commensurate with his need.

Chapter 2

THE INITIAL TEST

WHATEVER THE PARTICULAR reason may be that attracts the neophyte to the discipline of the path, the real objective should be that of service. His aim may be new creative ability and increased influence in his profession or other activities, or it may be, as said, entirely for mystical and occult purposes. In any case his power for service will undoubtedly be extended and, when all is said and done, world service of some kind should come to influence his researches on the path. Some, we know, enter upon occultism out of mere curiosity, and they usually quickly fall away. My concern is not with them. I have in mind primarily the neophyte who behaves in the existence of undiscovered powers and abilities in himself and is resolved to awaken the sleeping self within and follow in the footsteps of the great teachers who stand in the forefront of evolution. Nothing less than that will satisfy the aspiring soul who is aware of the perplexing conditions of modern life, the peremptory challenges and unique opportunities which evolution is forcing upon us, and the great need for able men to meet and use them.

The neophyte who recognizes this need will regard himself as a volunteer to a life of discipline, the object of which is to give him skill in service. As a preliminary in this discipline he is to cultivate a responsiveness of the personal self to the soul which is to ultimately dominate all his activities. He will seek to transfer the emphasis he has placed so completely upon the objective self, to that informing entity within which will gradually assert its control and initiate him into new areas of consciousness through a growing responsiveness to subtle vibrational measures hitherto unrecognized. That is really the whole

problem: the centering of attention upon the indwelling self and the expression of its powers in service, as distinct from the emphasis, relatively selfish, hitherto placed upon the objective personal self.

Terms should not confuse the neophyte here. Whether through previous study he has come to think of himself as soul and body, ego and personality, or the master within and his vehicles of expression, the problem is the same. The divine fire is within, and it acts and vibrates throughout its own subtle apparatus; and the mortal self seeks through all experience and self-imposed discipline to unveil the hidden glory that it may shine forth and illumine the temple. The conscious ascension from the objective plane to that of the divine self is the path of discipline which the volunteer elects to tread in order to qualify for service which is the first step in the evolution of the superman. This should be the objective of the neophyte.

But even if all neophytes recognize it, there is, as in other spheres, a diversity of types; and while a few of them will settle down quickly and knowingly, with a clear conception of the work to be done and make that kind of progress which compels recognition, the other types, worthy of all acceptance, will have to ponder every step and proceed with anxious questionings and partial assurance. The few take the path boldly, with a feeling of intimacy, and with the objective clearly outlined in mind. The others take it hesitantly, because they are on unfamiliar ground.

This marked difference between the types of neophytes is a fact of much importance for those who supervise their work and progress. There is nothing in this discrimination to deter or discourage those who are new to the path. It should rather inspire them to the necessary effort to grasp a great opportunity. But the swift advance of the few over the preliminary stages of discipline is a happy indication that they are rapidly unfolding latent occult capacity. Among these we expect to find those to whom the Master referred when he said: "We will always find volunteers to replace the tired sentries."

That is why a powerful occult organization is the most wonderful institution and the most promising in the world today, far exceeding in reality and technical equipment the universities of miscellaneous

knowledge and influence. To such we have to look for the flower of our present humanity. Souls who have passed through the fires of crucial experience, who know the strong vibration of life and now stand at a remove from it, not because they have renounced it but because they understand and can impose their will upon it, who find peace and inspiration in the silent high places of the soul within and draw secret strength thence, as a charge and responsibility not as a mere personal satisfaction, and give them back in manifold forms of service - these souls stand and serve in solid and mindful cooperation, and from them the neophyte is sure of a ready response. To feel themselves destined at no distant time, but possibly within their present incarnation, to take their place among these teachers, with the ability to exercise an evolved technique in the lives of incoming neophytes, should be sufficient to inspire the promising few, if not the others, with strong purpose and levelheadedness to pursue their studies with unusual seriousness and a sense of increasing responsibility both to themselves and to their fellow students.

At this point of a preliminary recognition of his value as an awakening soul, with an expansive vista of attainment ahead, it is as necessary for the neophyte to exercise a reasonable restraint so as to foster the eager aspiration for advancement. In one form or another fanaticism usually besets this type. On coming into his own on the path everything in the economy of life calls for a new valuation. He is thrown a little out of focus with things as they are. He has to adjust himself to many subtle changes transpiring within.

Life expression in the personality does not like to be diverted from its wonted course. Psychology furnishes a reason for this. The mentation and action of years have fashioned the mind and molded the texture of brain and body to able response and the requirements of environment, and a growing attunement with the soul can have but one result. The old rhythm must give place to the new; and the more rapid the attunement and the released force and knowledge of latent growth into the conscious field, the greater will be the need for alertness and flexibility in adjusting to the personal life.

Many neophytes are acutely tried just here. They ask for advancement and compel it, and straightway the law of attraction brings them

into the midst of the battlefield with a host of opposing influences confronting them. Some immediately recognize the situation and welcome it. Others display weakness and cry for deliverance from that which their own efforts have invoked. But there is the test for the volunteer. The right man will stand his ground however circumstances turn round upon him. He knows that this revolution in the personal life is precisely the point at issue and will risk anything to master it. He knows he cannot pass up to the higher levels of consciousness without meeting the exigencies of the ascent. Even the senior classroom has a new master and a tough curriculum and punishment of a sterner quality. But they mold youth into capable manhood.

It is the same all through life. We cannot gain the greater things on the same terms as the lesser. Yet that is what so many students expect to do. They have to learn that the soft inducements which enabled them to assimilate the alphabet do not accompany the mathematics of life. I confess that sometimes when I have seen a neophyte grappling with the initial difficulties incident to the swift recovery of latent faculty stimulated by the forceful demand for progress, I have momentarily doubted the kindness, but not the wisdom, of pressing him forward. This reflection arises from the indelible memory of one's own experiences and a solicitude as to whether the neophyte will have the strength to meet what awaits him.

Hitherto he understood himself tolerably well: he was at peace with himself. His strength he knew, because no unknown elements had tested it. Confined views directed to personal ends have a gratifying strength of their own, self-sufficient and intolerant of interference; and when the narrow barriers, which alone support him, are suddenly removed through the neophyte's own efforts, the resulting experience is often a humiliating one. He does not altogether welcome the process of disillusionment. Yet this is what his discipline has in view. It teaches a true self-awareness which leads to attunement with higher forces; and from that time onward the personal life must adjust as best it can to the potencies which gradually unfold into consciousness the biography of the spiritual man.

The neophyte can never hope to know himself until his strength

has been sharply tried as to what sort it is. It will be well for him if the days that are gone have held their full portion of aspiration, struggle, and suffering on the plane of purely personal forces. For a weak and timid spirit, nursed in the soft lap of the good things of life, unexercised in the cardinal virtues of patience and compassion, and knowing nothing of the healthy antagonism that measures itself against opposing forces, will have much to overcome and much to build in that personality which has now to exert itself. This is the crisis which quickly segregates the different types.

Once again let it be said, there is no cause for discouragement in awakening to the truth of things. The awakening must come. Why not let it come now and use the opportunity it gives? The neophyte who is ready for it, and can bear the revelation of himself as he is, will not falter when the Karma of the past projects itself into the present in many mysterious shapes and challenges his initiative and courage to deal with it.

A word must be said about the type of neophyte who fails the great opportunity. He certainly does exist and is well known. One sometimes wonders how he came to venture upon a new path in life at all. The fact is, he is bound hand and foot to his past. On no account must a single strand of that sweet bondage to what he knows and can do be snapped in the name of mental freedom and spiritual orientation. No assurance or promise can endow this type with the eagle instinct. I have known him to drop preliminary occult study as if stung by a scorpion. The fundamental cause of this is fear of the future. It strangles the very life out of all advancement and great work and makes a man a slave to the end of his days.

Others stand ready to help him, from their knowledge and experience fully understanding the problem that besets and hinders him, but they can do nothing. They cannot drag a man along the path; neither will they attempt to coerce him. The law works here perhaps more rigorously than anywhere else in life. The neophyte must leave the home of the personality from free choice if he is to traverse the kingdom of the soul. Until he is ready to make the choice, he is safer where he is for this incarnation.

Chapter 3

THE NEOPHYTE AND SERVICE

ONE OF THE reasons why the discipline of the path has been termed a “hard school” is because the ordinary motives for action have to be reversed and given more impersonal direction. The neophyte has to think in terms of others as well as of himself. He finds it difficult to accept the condition wholeheartedly of pledging himself to service as soon as he enters thoroughly upon self-development. This is not the case with the neophyte only; it is often so with those who have sought advancement for many years on the path. When it is suggested that they should throw their influence into other lives, think wisely for them, and extend to them their knowledge, they fail to see any connection between self-development and interest in the development of others.

I believe this arises largely from the fact that, although they know the Masters are spoken of as the servants of men, they imagine the law of service does not apply until they themselves are well advanced on the path. They are scarcely to be blamed for this, because many schools and systems of occult education do not particularly stress the importance of service, but concentrate almost exclusively upon methods of self-development or self-importance, with personal power as the sole objective. Within certain limits this objective is quite possible. It is also legitimate and free from objection if one is thinking only in terms of the material plane. It is possible to make some occult progress without any special consideration of service to others, but only within very narrow limits.

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The time comes in the progress of a man of any commendable quality when this kind of exclusive program proves to be a most unsatisfactory affair. Psychic development is quite compatible with the selfish attitude towards life and in some instances has been carried so far as to enter well within the confines of black magic. The modern press has furnished many instances of this in the publication of authenticated cases - some even extending to the hellish practice of compelling money and property from weak minded persons through hypnotic influence. Soul development is impossible on these terms. Study well the two paths. They run very close to each other up to a critical point, where they separate widely forever. Then it is seen that the true path resolves itself into the narrow and flaming way of service.

Why must the neophyte learn to serve? Because the Master whom he aspires to know is perfected in service, and there can be no intimate association with him in world work until the neophyte has learned through long probation to likewise serve, and serve efficiently. Service is not however necessarily of an occult character. We have a corroborative hint of this from the Master when he says: "Nay, but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty?" That is characteristic of the teaching of the Master. He points the neophyte back to first principles, to the place where he now stands, and bids him be productive in that place. That does not appear very inviting to the neophyte. He looks for something important at the beginning, something different from the occupation of the average man, if only to have himself remarked as a notable character.

How typical of this age is that attitude of mind in occultism as in other directions! It merits the harsh criticism often dealt out to it. Our noble-minded ancestors, of only a generation ago, were not possessed with this provincial spirit to any the like degree that is common around us today. And to go further back, the Masters who figure in my mind as belonging to an old and classic humanity, to whom the masks and mummeries and triumphs of our day pass for nothing, stand as an inspiring example of reality and durability and self-effacement which makes our little ambitions and desire for effect unworthy of serious notice.

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Small wonder is it that the Master has to wait, even through incarnations, for us to awaken from this sleep of the senses. Small wonder that the neophyte is compelled to open his own eyes just where he is and shake off the hypnotic sleep of unreality and false values that hang heavy about him. I believe one's affection for the Master grows most as he realizes more and more the infinite patience exercised with the children of the path during this awakening process. It can only be a patience grounded upon supernal wisdom and perfect compassion. Nothing less could exercise it.

Neophytes are sometimes of that turn of mind that they lust for power over their fellow men. Their objective in this study is to win the reputation of being notable characters. This attitude slays the soul for real achievement. It is forbidden ground, and the man who treads it is soon lost in the swamp of illusion. He has a long way to go before he can hope to lord it over the souls of men. But when he can really do that on the path, the sense of lordship loses its worldly attributes. He then has a new definition for it - ascendancy over others through having given himself in service for their sakes. He will then be as careful in imposing that supremacy abroad as in surrendering his own personality to foreign influence.

The neophyte can lord it over others to his heart's content on the physical and mental planes if he has cultivated force to that end, but not on the spiritual plane. He requires a greater and purified force there, and this he will gain only when the objectionable voice of personal superiority has been made dumb through probation. So long as this speaks he is on the mental plane, and his service will be vitiated because of its initiation from that plane. It will be service actuated largely by self-interest and will pass with others for what it is worth.

Service on the path means service because one wants to and must serve. If that ideal carries with it too strong a note of self-effacement, it is not the ideal that is wrong, but the conception of the neophyte of the work before him. There is one aspect of life on the path which is exactly similar to what obtains in the world: there is a price for everything worth having. Strangely enough, many believe this law has no place in occultism. But the law is more exacting there than anywhere

else. The occult path is an individual one, and every step thereon has to be cut by the neophyte's own hands and trodden by his own feet.

This is not an arbitrary law made by his teachers. It is an unalterable condition in the sphere of the Masters that to receive he must give. It is a severe and mortifying condition for the personality that loves to grasp and live for itself; but because there is no other way for one to gain even a preliminary measure of true self-knowledge, to advance himself only to the minor initiations of the path, service must be recognized by the neophyte as synonymous with development. From the Master's point of view development is service, and service means swift advancement in understanding of the technique of the path.

The neophyte's service is not necessarily occult in character. One might say it is not necessarily occult in character in the case of the advanced man. Pause for a moment on that statement. St. Paul's comment upon the diversities of gifts applies here. The recognition in their fullness of his innate gifts will determine the neophyte's mission in life. Years may pass in different spheres before those gifts are recognized. And one of the most striking results of service is the peculiar power of its discipline in initiating him into the sphere of the soul and unfolding faculties hitherto unperceived, or but dimly recognized and partially expressed.

The process is in nature occult: the awakening of the soul resulting from it may lead him to minister to the sick, inspire him to some mechanical invention of practical utility to the people, or take him into church or city to assist youth or foster schemes of child culture. This idea is strongly marked when the neophyte is bidden to remember that the disciples of the Masters are just as likely to be found engaged in political, social, and economic fields, as in spiritual and religious.

There are perhaps no examples so powerfully indicative of this as are to be found in the history of the Rosicrucian fraternity. Their influence can be traced throughout the civilized world in literature, art, and science; in church and state; in mystical illumination and occult achievements. That being so, the neophyte should enter upon his training with an open mind in the matter of what line of service his studies will eventually disclose as fittest for him. As the training

goes forward, one thing is certain, - that which he can best do will be brought into prominence and matured, and it will not be long before he finds ways and means of applying his abilities along lines satisfactory to himself and of value to the world.

I fully sympathize with the neophyte who may pause here as a shadow of disappointment settles upon him on meeting with so emphatic an insistence upon service as the key to high development. I know well that he enters upon his studies with hopeful ambition for personal conquest; and the idea of service savors too much of the religious observance inculcated in youthful days. But he has to remember that he is passing now within the domain of an exact science, the technique of which consists of inexorable laws of thought and principles of action which cannot be abrogated with impunity.

The act of service on the path releases the power of the soul. Unfoldment is not contingent only upon the absorption of material gained from the studies. The athlete is not made by the most comprehensive study of anatomy and reflection upon works of physical culture. He has to translate these into the terms of muscular training and scientific body building, combined with manifold mental adjustments relative to the feats he desires to accomplish. So with the neophyte. The forces he seeks to know and manipulate are resident within and existing around him. What he needs is the key to enable him to tap these infinite sources that await the call of the will to bring them into active combination and use.

Faith plays a far more active part in the neophyte's unfoldment and use of power than he is inclined to believe. He may obtain many hints of this in times of emergency and stress if he is observant of his deeper nature. The steady and continuous effort to use himself in service, in any way that circumstances suggest or afford the least opportunity, will teach the neophyte far more than extended reading in occultism. He has no idea of what he is capable until he rises confidently in the face of human need and compels the response of the soul's innate power in meeting it. If he can force the issue with himself and act with this confidence, the soul aspect will be brought powerfully into prominence without loss of time. Everything will depend upon the type of mind

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the neophyte brings to the task; but if he can summon that force of will and clear the ground early in his novitiate for strong and decisive effort, and make the necessary adjustments in his life, perhaps at some personal cost to himself, the future years will applaud his courage and resolution and justify the past.

There is no room for the lukewarm neophyte on the path, nor have the exigencies of life any room for him. On the path men of action are needed. There are enough cults, societies, and circles in existence which will afford the lackadaisical ample hospitality to dream life away. But the man we have in mind must leave these things to those who need them, or use them himself as a diversion or relaxation from hard personal effort to make himself a first-class technician. Then he will be of some use in the world and others will emulate his example.



Chapter 4

THE NEOPHYTE AND INITIATIVE

THERE IS ONE quality imperatively demanded in the neophyte who essays to make good his position on the path. That quality is initiative. It is that quality in the character which, in itself, is almost a guarantee of success in whatever direction it is judiciously exercised. There is one neophyte who has it - it is a part of his natural equipment, and he will show it in everything he handles. There is another who has it not - it is not a part of his natural equipment, and he will have to labor assiduously for it. The first will quickly make the studies his own and apply them in a personal and ingenious way. The other will find even the rudiments of the science strange and revolutionary, and every line and precept will have to be hammered into the mind and ruminated upon again and again before there is full acceptance and understanding. But it should mean much to him that he is on the path and started upon the conquest of difficulties which cannot be encountered elsewhere and which will ultimately have such momentous consequences for him. But I pass on to consider the neophyte with initiative.

A peculiar interest attaches to the neophyte who displays marked initiative in his occult work. He is not new to the path and is therefore a potential character which cannot be fully anticipated and must be allowed a certain margin of freedom. This does not mean that he is at liberty to override his teachers or ignore the rules of discipline. Nor do we expect this attitude in him, but the reverse. Nevertheless, the failing often observable in this type of aspirant is an impatience for advanced

work and a shortcut to it. A little more advancement in self-knowledge will rectify this. It is as necessary for him to be scrupulously exact in making sound the foundation for future work as for the veriest tyro, although he may dispute this point. But those who offer him their assistance know, and ripe experience is not to be discounted.

In the schools of painting an implicit obedience to the rules of the art is enjoined upon the young student. Possessed, as he usually is, with a vivid imagination and fired by the contemplation of the works of the great masters, his mind runs far ahead of his hand. The fluent execution of the perfect model inclines him to overlook the painstaking novitiate during which the master in the making compelled untutored nature to follow with slavish exactness the ancient rules which his matured work reveals to the seeing eye in every line. Here is a hint for the neophyte. No matter what his power of instant appreciation may be of the work and service of the finished occultist, he must apply himself humbly and with deep sincerity to the rudiments of the science. No matter what his inborn initiative may be, it is not for him to criticize, but to obey. A margin of freedom is permissible to him, but not before a reasonable period of personality culture, in the occult sense, and of strict obedience to the rules of discipline has been passed.

This first cycle of basic preparation is of importance, if only to teach him patience and humility. His first contemplation of the Masters, and their easy ascendancy and manipulation of force, is something of a revelation and not a little staggering to the ambitious mind. Consequently there is a tendency to lose a sense of perspective and a resolution to reach this level at a bound. There is also sometimes a tendency to indulge a natural slothfulness and neglect some of the stages of early discipline. The labor required to attain exactness is unacceptable, and the neophyte is opposed to conquest by slow approaches to the goal. The vivid imagination, so valuable in its place, is responsible for this mistaken attitude. It is imposed upon by the vision of perfection and forgets the tedious process of becoming that precedes it.

Those who lead have most faithfully followed. Nothing is lost by bending the will to take the preliminary stages of discipline with

crucial attention. This may appear to leave little scope for initiative, but even initiative is subject to the law of growth. The failure to realize this is the reason that students of occultism, with multifarious reading to their credit, are unproductive in the way of service. One can only teach and assist others by knowing theoretically and practically every step of the way in his own living experience.

I have known many instances of both types of students. The one has been encyclopedic in occult knowledge, yet pessimistic and doubtful, with a pathetic helplessness in the direction of throwing his influence into other lives for unfoldment. The other has demonstrated his painfully assimilated lesser knowledge step by step and compelled recognition by a well-directed application of it. That is the beginning of real initiative, and the more advanced stages will be taken by that student with a facility and power in demonstration which the other never knew.

Through obedience the neophyte develops and accumulates force for original work. From a solicitousness that he shall not fail in applying any detail of discipline, definite qualifications are gained. Perhaps the most important is that he learns to *trust himself*. Above all things the Master requires that quality in a technician. The Master will never trust the man who has no confidence in himself. That self-trust fully established, the work before him assumes a different aspect to the neophyte. He is no longer only a copyist; he begins to initiate. With a sure eye for progress, cultured by a diligent survey of the studies at his disposal, he will now have a well-filled background of the worthy examples of his teachers upon which to reflect. He will appreciate more truly the value of these examples through an understanding of the discipline which raised them to eminence.

It is but a step further when, through a critical examination of the master minds, he will unconsciously express somewhat of their virtue and skill in action in his own life. Still heedful, even to a greater degree, of the accredited rules of discipline which have brought him so far, he will come to exercise a kind of authority over the rules themselves. He will use them with a freedom and extended application suitable to his own individual need. Obeying the rules now unconsciously, he

will lose the sense of restraint imposed by them and feel free to press on upon his own initiative. He is a faithful neophyte still, but also an aspirant who has passed successfully through the preliminary cycle of development, aware of his weaknesses, yet feeling his strength and able to serve.

It must not be thought that this transition from a careful and conscientious dependence upon the rules of discipline to a conscious elevation above and partial independence of them is to be easily and swiftly made. The stage of progress I have concisely depicted admits of amplification. A familiarity with the rules of occult procedure is the first period, and it necessarily comprises a thorough understanding of the occult doctrine which it is the object of the rules to demonstrate. It is to be remarked that a deep and discursive reading in occultism is not absolutely necessary for the neophyte. This, I do not hesitate to say, may exercise a peculiarly hindering influence upon some types of students.

There is, for instance, the very practical type who quickly tires of doctrine, but has a marked facility for putting every theory to the test. It is not that he is ignorant of the value of and the necessity for understanding thoroughly the theoretical groundwork which must precede experimentation and application, but it is naturally difficult for him to divorce action from study and find satisfaction and repose in omniscient tirades on the possibilities of man. He believes in the demonstration of possibilities, instead of endless and stupefying visualization of them. The principles and practice of the technique grow apace in the mind and soul of that kind of neophyte. Initiative with him is a daily development. He is one who approves himself in the eyes of his teachers, because he has that in him which is much sought for by them: the ability and eagerness to work himself into life and circumstances at every step of the way. A hint will prove more prolific in him of results than a library to the type lacking initiative.

Another type, no less commendable than the above, will have a fine aptitude for combining extensive study with a versatile use of it. Discursive reading is a necessity to him. He feels the need of ranging widely over a number of presentations of doctrine. He has a definite

line of application in view which the basic rules reveal, and he brings all his varied knowledge to bear positively to that end. But this is contingent upon the possession of a well-balanced mind, a power of keen discrimination, and an ability to grasp intellectually many varieties of occult doctrine without being perplexed by the different angles of vision of their authors, or weakening in the main line of advance in a practical objective. In this matter the neophyte will therefore wisely consult his peculiar mental disposition and the guidance of his intuition. Whichever line he adopts, let him hold fast to the central aim of applying the rules of discipline and experimentation continuously and exactly to the unfoldment of his personal powers and the alert and energetic projection of these into some field of labor to justify his presence on the path.

Under this procedure he will enter upon the second cycle of the novitiate. Through the strenuous application of his present knowledge and personal influence in his vocation and in service, his interest in the science will bring within his purview the work and achievements of many Masters of varying degrees of technique who have trodden the path. His aim will be to gain a right perspective of himself in relation to these Masters. Their superiority and excellence will fire his imagination to greater effort as the ideal man comes more and more to possess it. Those perfections which he observes in each will gradually take shape in one dominating idea of the Master life, and narrow and one-sided conceptions will be displaced by a full and rounded impression of the character he emulates.

The master minds of occultism have their individual peculiarities and mental predilections and, as we have seen, in their statements of doctrine and personal methods of demonstration there is a great deal of apparent contrariety which has led to much useless controversy among those of narrow outlook and limited sympathies. The path is one; the master minds who have taken it are many. Truth is one; but can we conceive the truth of the great cosmos being capable of expression through one illumined soul? That is a thought for the neophyte to ponder and allow to influence his entire attitude of research. His objective is to become a representative of the Brotherhood of Masters. He will find that the members of it are exponents of a technique which

is as diverse in its tenor and application as the individual minds and personalities of the Masters themselves.

As I am writing primarily for the Rosicrucian neophyte, we are thinking specifically of the Rosicrucian technique; but let him not, for that reason, shut out the allied rays of the technique that shine down beneficently upon his path from the one great center of illumination. The path is one; truth is one; the Masters are one in the Cosmic in perception and illumination, yet each with a perfected technique peculiarly adapted to the mental, psychic, and spiritual constitutions of the several authentic schools of discipline and initiates who seek their aid for the purpose of accomplishing their work. That is what I mean by the elimination of a narrow, one-sided conception of the truth of divine science and the comprehensive technique expressing through its perfected Masters, and the substitution of an expansive and growing mind that aspires to take all knowledge for its province and use it to the end of a full and balanced development for the salvage of human lives.

The third cycle of the novitiate is a culminating one and should find the neophyte well along the path with well defined mental qualities indicating that the groundwork of the technique has been laid and is operative in his life. I say nothing specifically here of his particular studies; those are of his own choice and persuasion. I am concerned with the technique of the path and have indicated that phase of it which I consider of vital importance in the accomplishment of practical works in the world and which is preeminently needed today.

During the third cycle the neophyte has presumably prosecuted a discriminating study of many exponents of the technique. He will have observed their individual peculiarities and their diverse applications of the technique in original departmental work; and from these examples he will have gathered to himself and combined into one composite conception a compelling individual technique which allows his constitution full expression in personal initiative. He will put himself to the trial by a powerful endeavor to act from the altitude of vision and achievement of those master minds who have for so long been the object of his study and emulation until through a sympathetic attunement their dignity and strength become his by participation and

enable him to command increasing recognition from cosmic sources through fulfilling the law which is pledged to gratify the deepest aspirations of the dedicated soul.

Some of my readers may think that I am demanding a measure of efficiency not to be expected during the comparatively brief term of the novitiate. I can only say that I am constrained to this view of the task because I have worked it out steadfastly and unfailingly in my own case, and I impart my experience for their encouragement. Moreover, I have always regarded the task with the utmost seriousness and spared no pains to fulfill in the spirit and the letter the austere demands which confront every aspirant who essays the great adventure. Therefore I am assuming in the neophyte all those basic qualities of character which, when once he is launched upon the path, will urge him to bring his whole life into line with cosmic purposes, undeterred by any personal weaknesses or temporary failures, holding ever steadily in mind that conception of masterhood which he has built up in the interludes of study and contemplation, and compelling every power and faculty to respond obediently to that grand conception.



Chapter 5

THE WILL OF THE NEOPHYTE

IF THE NEOPHYTE complies with the rules of discipline over the required period he will come to recognize in himself the development of distinct qualities in the personality. He has brought an inventive mind to his work and sought new ways in which to apply it. He has initiative; and at the back of initiative is always found the developing will. The central power to be and do drives him on to exploit himself; then we have the neophyte alive to his task and already working on the side of evolution. His service has grown purposeful and effective, and the reactions upon himself from near and far are carrying his unfoldment steadily forward.

The responsible factor in this cycle of advancement has been the awakening will. This is the key to all his future progress. Every faculty is related to it; self-expression upon every plane revolves around it. Observe how pregnantly the will is referred to in the writings of the Masters. From one aspect the life of the Master may be regarded as organized will. From whatever aspect of his work we regard the Master, we cannot ignore this finely tempered cosmic attribute expressing with mathematical precision the resourceful technique to which we aspire. Wisdom, compassion, knowledge, they would lose their name without that irresistible, directive force which gives them form and potency. The neophyte may be assured that, in the last analysis, it is according to his will that he is known and valued. His development is a spiral ascension in will consciousness.

In early years I was much impressed by the peculiar phenomenon of genius. I quickly set apart the favored few who possessed it from the brilliant and clever who did not. I paid deep homage to these characters, although I did not understand the source and meaning of the precious gifts they displayed. I believed simply in inspiration and knew they were the recipients of it. Now I regard genius as a phase of discipleship, in most cases, of unconscious discipleship, and rooted in the occult world of force. And I suggest that if the neophyte wishes for some idea of the technician's will in action, he should study the world's great characters, in whatever sphere they have moved.

I am not concerned with their virtues, or vices, or eccentricities. Let him study the awakened man in action and driving his influence across the world; because when he becomes a disciple, he will have to demonstrate just that quality of the concentrated will, forced into avenues of unique activity, which compels recognition by virtue of its inspirational content and value in evolution. Thus, in an indirect way and through examples of imperfect because unconscious discipleship, he will realize vividly what he may expect to find coming to fruition in the technician on the path. Through the contemplation of these characters he will gradually acquire the flavor and ultimately touch the essence of that divine inspiration which is the secret of their ascendancy. His contemplation will be of the vital, energizing force in genius which has that appealing quality in it of a new creation, untiring, initiating, and inspiring others to reach up to it and surpass themselves in the effort.

True, there are diversities of genius, and not all manifest the energizing and masterful quality of action. But genius is always new, always original, and touches with apparent ease some level of achievement and expresses almost unconsciously that kind of faculty which is the despair of the merely clever and assiduous. How often it baffles and depresses the ambitious! That is an incident of its nature, not its aim. Its mission is to carry the world on and lead humanity up from the sordid and commonplace to the beautiful and noble in nature and man. It leaves in the hearts of men a disquieting dissatisfaction and pathetic longing for that which in their best moments they claim as their own but cannot reach.

Observing the effect of the magnetism of the will of genius impressing itself irresistibly and indifferently upon the learned and illiterate alike, it is not difficult to understand and give complete assent to those forceful words of the Master: "He who gets knowledge by certain intuition lays hands upon its various forms with supreme rapidity, by fierce effort of will." Let us revolve that statement a little in its application to the genius, apart from any particular occult significance, since it is so truly representative of him; for in considering this worldly phenomenon of the will in commanding and original action, the impression I seek to convey to the neophyte will be enhanced.

The genius by certain intuition seizes upon the hidden secrets of mind and nature, and by fierce effort of will drags them forth to the light of day, giving them uncommon application and enriching some department of life in his singular handling of them. There is a divine extravagance in the way he does this, an autocratic procedure which fools criticize and wise men rejoice at. For the thing is good and ravishes the appreciative eye and heart. Indeed, there is nothing that so truly apprises us of the presence of divinity in human life. We may recall what was said by a scholar of his reading of Homer: his whole form appeared to himself to be enlarged and all nature which surrounded him diminished to atoms. Such is the effect upon men of a divine faculty informing a perfected and responsive personality resigning itself with perfect abandon to the overshadowing afflatus.

So is it with the disciple who stands near to the Master. He may not possess the fiery quality of notable achievement. He may walk in humble paths and remain unknown. His will may not have that direction which attracts public attention; but awakened it must be and demonstrated actively in its sphere. To call a man of weak will a disciple is a misnomer. If this is questioned, why do the Masters lay such emphasis upon the highest development of the will? It is the indispensable pivot of the structure of technical training they inculcate. And remembering how important is the will in the achievement of anything of value in the world, the necessity is at once seen for its superior education when a man begins to work upon himself in an interior way. The will must be brought to that tension and glow at the heart of life which nothing on any plane can damp or hinder.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE DISCIPLE

I said that compliance with the prescribed rules of discipline will bring to the neophyte a sense of awareness of a forward tendency throughout the personal economy. He has acquired the habit of self-direction, of imposing the will upon the activities of his vehicles. He will not make the mistake of thinking he thus creates will, but that through strong intention in study and meditation he gradually organizes his faculties, coordinates his activities, and so affords the omnipresent cosmic force resident in the soul an opportunity of expression.

It is the organization of the outer personification which affords an avenue of release of the divinity within, the energizing, creative force underlying all manifestation and which, the more powerfully and purely we see it informing a personality, the more we feel that here is great will in calm possession and ensuring unobstructed expression. And looking beyond genius to the perfect example of the Master using his many-sided technique with freedom and exactitude, the effect upon the neophyte will be one of profound veneration and the desire to take with all possible and legitimate speed the stages of discipleship.

He will not overlook the need of perspective in this self dedication and resolve. The genius, we know, disdains to look abroad for help from others. He is powerfully developed, usually overdeveloped, from the occult point of view, in one specific area of consciousness and its use. Supremacy in his chosen field is sufficient compensation for him for ignorance, eccentricity, or want of balance in other departments of his constitution. The world thinks so, too.

But the neophyte cannot afford to think so. He will quickly realize this if he studies both intellectually and intuitionally the fine and gentle poise, the illumined and gracious speech, and the exquisite application of spiritual technique of the Master in human evolution. As with the reader of Homer, he will find his entire nature enlarged by the contemplation, but nature around him will not be diminished to atoms. It will acquire a new significance in his eyes of beauty, rhythm, and law; and he will strive unceasingly to express these attributes in his own personal life.

Is it necessary to add that this fine discrimination and balanced conception of the neophyte is contingent upon his having made the third period of the novitiate a full and productive one? This period of study and of coordinating his knowledge must be characterized by all the ardor and enthusiasm of the true artist. A strong incentive of the will does not emerge from a mere desire for it. Genius is indefatigable in ranging over the world of knowledge pertaining to its personal exercise. It has that reach of mind which draws into its sphere everything good and useful accomplished by its predecessors.

From the queerest and most hidden sources it brings to its hands the secret signatures of power and wisdom with which to measure its technique against the greatest achievements of men. It collects material with an avidity known only to those possessed of a boundless passion towards a fixed aim. It is not a copyist; it scorns imitations. It does not collect for the purpose of imitation. It discerns in its material a unique possibility and evolves a combination of sterling value consistent with and only possible to its individual technical foresight. What is it that works this miracle of a new creation that sometimes suddenly surpasses all the plodding labor of generations of men? It is the vision of an aroused soul and the commanding will, polarized steadfastly to its aim, congregating with dynamic intensity all the ingredients necessary to the objectivation of that vision.

Let the neophyte not be deterred by the magnitude of the ideal held before him. I give it this shape with deep intent to bring him to that enlarged and masterful view of his calling, whereby the powers of the soul will be incited to express themselves and ensure the needed cosmic contacts essential in developing his technique. He builds upon the finished works of his predecessors on the path. During the third period of novitiate he makes these works his own through sympathetic understanding, not the sympathy of fact but of spiritual atmosphere. He rises imperceptibly into the thought sphere of these regal minds; if it be so, nature has qualified him for this classic appreciation. His life becomes saturated with the genius of the path, permeating him with will impulses divine and irresistible in character, and tutoring him to that conception of beauty and simplicity which is ever the appanage of genius and super-eminent in the disciple of the Master.

Chapter 6

THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

PART 1

IN BRIEF COMPASS the stages of novitiate have been outlined. In the majority of cases it is a long and exacting period of study and preparation during which the fundamentals of the technique have to be thoroughly understood by the neophyte and find practical expression in his daily life. When this objective has been reached, he will have the assurance within himself, through signs clear and unmistakable in character, that he has entered upon the stage of discipleship. He will have brought himself to that point of development where the Master will be interested in his value as a factor in evolution, and the Master will, unperceived and unknown perhaps to the disciple, afford him means of knowledge and progress, through recognized teachers on the objective plane, whereby he may qualify for accepted pupillage in time under that Master.

Many disciples there are in the various schools of occultism who are engaged in this task of qualification for personal acceptance; but comparatively few have undeniable proof of such acceptance. Why is this - especially in view of the fact that thousands of earnest aspirants of every conceivable type of occult persuasion, some of large and commendable mentality and equipment, are on the path? It is because they lack certain immensely important elements of technical skill in the light of the Master's judgment and need for specialized work. Some who have read *The Technique of the Master* have said that the book at

once inspired and discouraged because, whilst their deepest intuition responded to its teaching which probed to the heart of their individual problems and gave them new strength for advancement, there was a note of austerity in the requirements demanded by the Masters in those who were admitted to their confidence. I do not think this can be denied. But let us look at the matter from the everyday point of view, since if we are to have a sound and sober conception of ourselves as occultists, we must constantly seek for analogies among the forces and circumstances of the outer world to rightly interpret the laws and conditions of the world of the soul.

I consider it desirable that the neophyte should be a man before he is an occultist. I will explain what I mean. The hallmark of men of light and learning, in whatever sphere of achievement, is perfected faculty and faultless execution within the limits of that sphere. I do not speak merely of men of genius whose works always shine with this twofold luster, but of men of lesser magnitude; men of laborious, patient, and scrutinizing ability, self-denying to the last degree in the interest of their chosen aim, severe and implacable critics of themselves and their work, imperturbable in the face of opposition and criticism from circumstances and men. Whatever amiable qualities they manifest to others, whatever their kindness and consideration and adaptability to their fellow men, to themselves they are hard and inflexible taskmasters. I am not thinking of automatons, but of men who give themselves heart and soul to great purpose and conform their lives to serve and follow that purpose.

I do not speak beyond what the facts of such lives daily reveal, if one takes the trouble to read their written and unwritten biographies. The pioneer work of the world rests upon the shoulders of such men. This being so, what are we to expect that the Masters, who are perfected men in the highest and noblest sense, require of their disciples who offer themselves and aspire to share in the most momentous task possible to man: the culture and utilization of occult forces in the evolution of souls? There is not the slightest doubt that the demands of the Masters in the selection and use of a disciple are based upon preparation and personal demonstration in accordance with occult laws, which are entirely outside the categories of culture

and experimentation inculcated and applied in any of the schools of ordinary knowledge. The neophyte may assure himself of this fact from personal observation of exponents of the technique. He will find that these technicians and their methods of execution defy all ordinary classification, simply because the underlying laws and principles have their source in a sphere beyond the circumscribed bounds of ordinary knowledge and usage.

This is why it has been said that the rules of occultism have significance for the disciple only for those who take knowledge in the true and mystical sense - that to none but those who are disciples are they of any use or interest. The pith of that statement is that until the student has thoroughly prepared himself during the period of discipline as a neophyte, the said rules will not convey to him their intended significance. He will read them as a fact of science, instead of luminous aphorisms epitomizing a body of intimate spiritual experience. So many students read in the former sense and ask others to give them what can only be lived.

No one can give them the power to read in the occult sense. Depth and intensity of living alone give it. The neophyte who shrinks from the profoundly meaningful words *depth* and *intensity* had better stand back for a while. The path of discipleship will lead him into deep waters. Fear has held many a man back at the first glimpse of these waters. Perhaps this is well. It is not easy to pass on alone. It is wise to try out one's nerve sufficiently before stepping off the ground he knows well. Once beyond the frontiers there is no going back. In passing he will lose his hold of many things he has grasped firmly through life. The issue for him now is whether he can trust the soul to find a new path that will lead him to something infinitely more enduring to replace what he will lose.

The path of the neophyte merges almost insensibly into that of the disciple. Yet they are sharply distinguished in discipline and purpose. There is gentle and persuasive encouragement for the neophyte. He is led by an easy approach from the way of the world to think in terms of the soul. It is an experiment in higher culture, and he will succeed with it according to capacity and guidance. But the path of the disciple

is marked by a note of severity. He has chosen a vocation for life, and what eminence he will reach in it lies chiefly with himself. Hence the concise declaration of the scripture, that the rules pertaining to this life are of use to none but those who choose this vocation with a clear understanding of the nature of their choice and the demands it will make upon them.

First, a word as to the more stringent conditions which obtain on this path. It is the high school which the man enters with certain definite acquirements of his novitiate. He has a good deal of self-knowledge and knows how to use the mind with concentrated effect in study and meditation. Now he has to compel that mind to initiate experience in a deeper sense and upon an ever-widening scale. There is only one thing which will ensure this: decisive action within the personality and without.

I have known students who, during their novitiate, rejoiced exceedingly because they had found a new peace and tranquility through a preliminary detachment from many worldly interests; and their chief aim as they passed on to higher work was to increase this quiescence of the personality which they felt to be so desirable. They had yet to learn that undisturbed tranquility is not for the disciple. If the disciple wants that above all things, he will do well to stay where he is until he tires of it. He certainly will tire of it. I have also known those who tarried so long in this first heaven of quietude that it became a hell of unrest to them, and they entreated to be in action. Perhaps that is a sure sign that they are ready for discipleship.

Once again, I have known students who no doubt felt much elevation because they had accomplished so arduous a task as a short period of novitiate, and their quiescence and profound calm have been disconcerting. They had attained a condition of peace and repose through mental concentration and there they remained, self-hypnotized, awaiting the contact of a live soul to awaken them. This is not the mark of a disciple. There are countless businessmen in the city who have a repose far deeper than this, and to some purpose. The trouble with these students is that they have read the scripture literally instead of spiritually and have made a heroic attempt to kill

out ambition and cease from sensation before they had measured themselves against the force of the one or sounded the depths of the other. Their quiescence and peace arose from absence of experience instead of from the knowledge and use of it.

The crime of slaying urgent ambition and denying the insistent desire for sensation, the two most natural forces in a powerful organization, means one thing - the impoverishment, not the completion, of personality. It is an attempt, through perfect misunderstanding, to do first that which remains for conquest almost last, or at least a long way ahead on the path of discipleship. I fear no criticism I may incur on this theme. There are too many concrete instances of the truth of it in living, breathing students who are the victims of wrong teaching or narrow self-instruction in the canons of occultism relating to it. If they could realize the kind of force and faculty which dominant ambition and vivid response to sensation throughout the worlds of form would breed and develop in them, they would willingly allow the greater task to await its proper time.

The case is somewhat different with the mature student in whose life ambition has played a great part and response to sensation has been versatile. The distinction is vital and gives point to the above comments, and perhaps alone justifies them. Two instances may be cited in explanation. A young student of many promising talents proceeds to the discipline of the path. It is not long before he encounters teaching enjoining the negative doctrine of killing out; this, with the example of advanced students devoted entirely to the work of the path, inclines him to question the legitimate fostering of the very faculties which alone will make him a full man, capable of understanding and interpreting the experience of others when he reaches more critical stages of the path. These emphatic teachings and personal examples psychologize the young soul, and before the most precious plants in his personal life have begun to live, he embraces the pernicious doctrine that they are but weeds which, if allowed to flourish, will stifle the very soul within him.

Does the aspirant think that those gifts which he has cultivated with such labor in the far past, whose content forms the substratum of his

mental life, the vibration of which pulsates silently in every vehicle, expectant of its appropriate karmic contact - does he think that this lifeblood will willingly renounce its force and passion and be slain at the threshold of occult study and discipline by a mere word? If he adopts a policy of willful repression, let him gauge the psychological effect of this before he goes further, and the penalty that awaits him. If he still doubts, let him stifle that wherein resides the basic strength of his character and makes him a man, and press on to discipleship. Then he may expect one of two results, negative or positive, contingent upon the type of man he is. He will either take his place among those who are nothing more than disciples in name, simply because they are engaged upon the academical instruction of discipleship, but in occult action and service they are but negative in the measurement of their values; or, in marked contrast with this, the hidden fire in him, not dead but sleeping, will in good time assert itself with startling intensity, overturn all the bibles and occult maxims in creation, and carry him back to primal sources and the voice of God and nature within him, much to the consternation of himself and his fellows. That is the positive type.

I write in the name of the natural man; for it is infinitely preferable to be a natural man swayed by high ambition and responding to the sensation of the whole living creation, than a puny, make-believe occultist, the soul in bondage to occult creed and dogma, lacking virility and inspiration, and of less value to his fellow man than an average human being. The neophyte might reflect that the time will come when he will have to encounter strong individuals of force and character, known of men and valued by them for the extensive experience they have acquired through great ambition and emotional response, and for whom the hour has arrived for them to take knowledge of the path. How will he meet these men, having nothing of their power and passion in him? How can he hope to influence or lead them? They will have far more to teach him than he can hope to teach them. Deep calls to deep all through life. The disciple must have depth. He must be able to pass to any depth in others, without being submerged there. He must prepare himself for that by hard and prolonged struggle on the mental and emotional planes and a record in his soul of the most searching probation through contact and response in the utilization of self.

The second instance applies, in my judgment, almost exclusively to the man who has taken knowledge and is entering upon discipleship in the fullest sense. Here we encounter men who are highly mental and emotional. Their vehicles are full and vibrant. Ambition has done its great work and still has vast strength and direction in them. In them its flame can be sensed as having all the brilliance of genius. And when to this is added the new accession of force resulting from occult discipline, then a condition of tension, through the opposing factors of soul and personality, evolves out of all proportion to the unexercised ambition of the ordinary individual. The soul is recognized; its fire is felt; and the divine call descends upon the mental plane and challenges the fierce fire of supremacy there.

But observe in this case the marked contrast with the former one. Here, ambition and response have carried the man to the heights of mental achievement in the past. He is no weakling endeavoring to kill out, paradoxically, what does not exist, denying response to that which he has never felt. His supreme task is to transmute that which is mature, splendid, and enthralling on the plane of mind, into the greater fire of the soul that can no longer wait for complete union. All here is power, force, ripe faculty, the limits of which have been reached and must now surrender its form to spiritual illumination.

In portraying briefly the two types of aspirants essaying the definite stage of discipleship, I think we arrive at the root of the vexed question of the acceptance by the Master for intimate personal work of the few instead of the many. It explains the rigorousness of the demand of the Masters pertaining to acceptance. If the material offered has not reached maturity and strength, has not versatility and responsiveness and fullness of experience and understanding upon the several planes of life; if the incipient elements of the technique are not present as a result of the systematic cultivation of every aspect of the constitution, through secret vigil and worldly warfare and the ceaseless wrestling of flesh and blood and cosmic emotion in the world of form, of open-eyed encounter with high and low, and the steady ascension of the whole life inwardly to the plane of the soul - that does not signify defeat, is not a cause for discouragement, provides no basis for honest criticism. It means that all these factors must be present in the subtle

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apparatus of the inner man before a Master can avail himself of its use; and the aspirant himself will be the first to realize and acknowledge this when the time comes to accept the responsibility and accomplish the work which falls to the lot of the tried and accepted disciple.



Chapter 7

THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

PART 2

I SAID THAT a man entering upon discipleship has to address his mind, with such force and skill as his novitiate has equipped him, to the deepening and extension of experience, and that this can be done only by decisive action within the personality and without. This will carry him rapidly beyond the surface aspect of life. He will not have to deliberately force this new angle of vision; it will transpire all too effectually if he is intent upon the work of his vocation and with a determination to attain his goal.

There is perhaps one thing more certain than anything else which will initiate this cycle of experience for him, and that is the intensified thought of the life of the Master. Just as soon as his idea of the Master, as the goal of his aspiration and effort, becomes a living, warm reality in consciousness, magnetically drawing him upwards, then will eventuate crises in his personal experience which will either bring him to a firm standing for further advance or throw him back upon the world to gain in common ways of life the necessary strength for it. I mean that the man with an ample and well organized mental background will be the one ready for advance and take it with resolution and courage.

If the neophyte has taken the hint and narrowly observes genius and its action, he should not find it difficult to extend his conception and focus veneration and affection upon the super-genius, the Master.

Imagination and intuition must be the means to this conception, for the obvious reason that he cannot see the Master face to face and witness his action in the world of men. But that is one of the tests for the intuition. He has to walk and live according to the magnitude of the conception he holds of the Master in consciousness, and how long that will have to suffice for him no one knows. But he has the assurance that there will come to exist between the vivid concept he holds and the Master himself a bond of affinity and, in time, of subtle communication, all the more wonderful and potent because physical barriers are done away.

There is therefore a renewed dedication of himself to the Master by the entrant upon discipleship, the result of which is that he passes within a circle which leaves ordinary humanity outside. There is no room for personal inflation in this fact. It does not imply superiority, but redirection of life and purpose. Moreover, it is so fraught with doubts and misgivings that only the strength and ability derived from a serious novitiate will enable him to proceed. The personal history of aspirants places this beyond question. It is not a somber theme, but a serious one; and that which has been written upon it shows conclusively that discipleship means keener living from every point of view, a new assessment of pleasure and pain, losses and gains in friendship, upheavals, silent or otherwise, in environment, - in a word, an entire change of front.

One of the earliest books I remember to have read on occultism put this pointed question: Can you do without human sympathy? For a student on the threshold of life and the path that may sound ominous and forbidding. But the writer of it had trodden the path; the student had not. Not literally has one to do without human sympathy on the path of discipleship, but it is true that many sympathies he values and which have meant much to him will be eliminated as he passes on within the inner circle. The position, from a strictly technical point of view, is this: the simple process of daily concentration for mental control, the more interior process of alignment of personality and soul, gradually and imperceptibly weakens the disciple's interest in many hitherto strongly objective activities which have used or dissipated mental energy, have served their purpose, and must be regarded as

hindrances to progress. He will have to face with open eyes the fact that a changed attitude is creating breaches in his environment.

This is often a great surprise. His progress in the science may be silent and hidden. He may have a fine tact which enables him to withhold views that he knows would jar and create opposition in others associated with him. He may think, wanting experience, that the presence of deeper knowledge within, jealously guarded not selfishly but foreseeing that its utterance would make his path more difficult, that the consciousness of increasing force playing within the personality can proceed unknown and unmolested from without so long as reticence holds the precincts. He may think so, but to little purpose. A disciple cannot hide his light, strive as he may.

Discipleship is a condition which will utter itself though not a word be spoken; and it is that silent and searching vibration which stimulates for good or ill those among whom he moves. Questioning and cross-questioning, unexpected antagonism from those with whom he has long lived in the bonds of affection and friendship, keen criticism aimed with direct intent to unsettle the growing assurance in a larger life and break down the secret strength and serenity which the world cannot understand and consequently hates - what disciple has not faced the insidious attacks of friend and enemy alike when once he has declared with the voice of the soul his eternal allegiance to the Master?

Well might it be asked whether he can do without human sympathy! He will sometimes so crave for the right kind of sympathy that nothing but the consciousness that he is qualifying for a definite mission in life will sustain him. There will be some near to him who would go with him to the bitter end if they could - but they cannot. He, too, would take them with him - but he cannot. He will feel the gulf of separation between, widening as surely as he lives onward, until his voice is no longer heard by those on the other side. It is a painful experience, but of incalculable value. He is to minister to those who stand inert, stricken with the grief of loss in one form or another all along the way. He must understand that loss, not theoretically but actually. He must answer to it with mind and heart and have the power to speak the word and do the thing that shall change the very character of it in the eyes and heart of the afflicted one.

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That is one of the least of things the disciple must be capable of. The force that rises within him as the result of the conscious upward breathing of the soul must flow from him as naturally and fervently as the breath that pulsates to his heart to do it and find avenues of expression created only by his own initiative. That is an inward experience of discipleship and symbolizes a technique of action. Reading may be a preliminary to it, far back in the past; but this I speak of transcends the written word. Nay, the disciple in action is alien to books. The soul in its right mood, aligned with the Master, forgets books and teachers and believes in its own comment and expression. It exults in projecting its fire into a neophyte and raising him in his own strength. He acts unquestioningly under the irresistible emphasis of his whole constitution. It is the genius of the spirit which is perfect vision.

The disciple must have this power in other lives. He must have a congeries of faculties, a peculiar knowledge, or a distinctive force, which lesser men need and will gratefully receive from him. This brings us to the central thought of our theme: that the occultist should stand out from the rank and file of men and be good for something. Academic occultists have been prolific for half a century; whereas the occult practitioner is so comparatively rare that he is regarded by those who have to deal with him as either a fanatic or a phenomenon, and among occultists themselves he often passes as an innovator or a revolutionary. Yet sensationalism is totally foreign to the man. That is the mark of a small mind and never graces a disciple.

There is nothing more beautiful, or so transcendent in nature, than the holy ghost inspiring a man and taking him he knows not whither. That is why he does not wait upon or regard the opinions of men, but speaks with abandon of the Son of Man. If his development proceeds according to tradition, - that is, in accordance with a discipline, searching and arduous, - and is able during some cycle of life to assert himself wholly with understanding and power, influence in other lives will be a concomitant of that. Any willful attempt to force himself to such an issue is useless. It is a divine obsession that transpires unbidden after certain frontiers have been passed; he knows not when or how until he has it. It is organized faculty and force, sure of itself, certain

in its direction, largely unconscious of its own influence, which is only realized in the reactions, often very unexpected, from near and far.

What is the nature of these reactions? Those from the disciple's immediate environment have been hinted at, and I think they are usually more troublesome than assistant, because they arise chiefly from criticism based upon misunderstanding from those who resent anything of the nature of a new departure in life, or anything that augurs special or secret knowledge and influence. That is why experience of a sound and general character is essential, a fine and ready tact, to traverse the steady waters, a profound knowledge of human nature, its depth and possibilities, to swiftly use it against itself, and pass on undaunted though wounded.

The disciple is a battle-scarred warrior. He is perpetually on the offensive, an attitude that commonly makes for trouble anywhere in life; but since he has entered upon an advance into unknown territory and has to hold every vantage point gained in the face of any odds, all the elements of the true fighting spirit of the hard warrior must be strongly in evidence. It may be said that there are many types and not all have this quality of aggressive advancement. I grant it; but I write from my own experience. That alone avails for me, not the experience of others. Let the disciple try out his own measure of force and see what experience will teach him. He may prefer to act on the defensive only and thus save his own face and reputation. If so, I really do not see how he will ever know the force of the Masters on those terms.

He may expect reactions from afar if he is declaring himself in some definite way in service. The work of a disciple, along whatever line he may act, should have that peculiar quality of strength and impressiveness and usefulness which compels recognition. It should have a value which creates a demand for it. The resulting reactions therefore will usually be of a favorable character. They will come from those sources where his work meets with proper appreciation because it is rightly judged and assessed. That is some compensation indeed for the inimical reactions which come upon him near at hand.

I do believe that the disciple who works through to this point will realize within himself, emanating from his own soul or group, a

quickenings of life and consciousness which will gradually give him the ascendancy over all the pain and distress which the swift outworking of his Karma is bound to bring. If I dwell on a note of struggle with forces of the personality hard to be overcome, it is only because it is true in the disciple's experience. Many times I have found that the written word of this experience has answered to the letter the secret experience of the solitary aspirant's soul. Life had either done its best to strip them of everything it gave them, except a living heart, or placed beyond their reach the things they were royally born for. Yet they were disciples, potential masters of the technique of form, noble and patient in defeat and deprivation. It was only their discipleship that held them upright.

Just so; but what is the inestimable result of these rapidly increasing reactions in the personal life? Nothing less than a steady graduation in the technique of the path. There is one truth which, I think, may be taken for granted. The multiform experience accruing to the disciple from these reactions now taking place upon every plane of life will have a special significance for him, since they have been initiated by an intenser living incident to his treading the path. That which befalls him now will be reflectively related to his status of discipleship. No longer is life a meaningless jumble of haphazard events which carry him hither and thither with no determinative signature upon them. It is a ritual of the soul in which the tones of Karma are seeking their appropriate setting, to which the personality must attentively listen and bring its own activities into worshipful response.

Many of these tones will not be understood. Some will bring doubt and hesitation because they are new to the sensitive ear; some will challenge, others will soothe, yet all are to be related to the basic harmony of the individual self, self-revealing and sympathetically revealing the lives of his fellow men. This will be so because all experience is to be viewed now from a higher level of vision and cannot be permitted to pass by with indifference uncoordinated.

Commenting upon the valuation of experience peculiar to discipleship, a critic once wrote: "It is immaterial to our higher selves whether or not one is so many millions of years ahead of another,

or merely thirty years. Nor can one assume to be in advance of the other merely because he has undergone experiences which to him are profound. No minority of individuals can constitute themselves authorities in experience." When an occult student can seriously write that, one can only say that he has a right to his opinion but it is not the opinion of a Rosicrucian. There are obviously degrees of hearing and understanding occult truth. Some of us hear very partially and understand superficially. And the only hope for this critic of the valuation of experience is that he gives a few more years to careful hearing of the truth in order to attain the experience of understanding it.

One only need ask, if there were not a minority of individuals who constitute themselves authorities in occult experience, none other than the venerable Brotherhood of Masters, the inspiration and guide of every true occult student throughout the world and the hope of struggling humanity, why waste our time on a forlorn quest? The veriest tyro must realize that the Masters, whose profound experience in the laws and technique of occultism is the most arresting fact in human existence, constitute precisely such a minority of individuals whose authoritative knowledge and wisdom we can no more reasonably discount than the common experience which enables this critic to earn his daily bread. Moreover, there is a lesser minority of individuals well known throughout the world as disciples of these Masters, who are undoubtedly authorities in the experience of discipleship and who are competent to speak from the knowledge gained from personal discipline under those Masters, whether a student is prepared to accept their word or not.

It is a curious trait in human nature that a student will often accept the truth of experience of one authority and will deny and reject the same experience, presented in a different form, when proceeding from another. This is not true studentship, much less the attitude of a disciple. In fact, it is just this quick recognition of truth under any form that distinguishes the latter. There is only one remedy for this want of perception and personal bias, and that is the civilization of a responsive hearing of occult truth from divers sources, apparently unrelated and contradictory, perhaps revolutionary, and a personal respect for the

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sincere expositions of writers of various occult persuasions, even if one cannot accept them.

This attitude is imperative in a disciple. Let who will belittle the relative value of his growing experience in the laws of life, mind, and soul. If the Master is all things to all men and understands man because he has all knowledge, and if the disciple must be as his Master, and if he cannot hope to be so unless he can show that temper of mind, the fruit of deep study and experience, which ensures pupillage, then the latter can only profit a full man who has reached the limits of the personal self and waits for the Master's guidance because he anticipates it..



Chapter 8

THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

PART 3

THE MAN WHO is technically known as a disciple of the Master is one who has indubitable proof within himself of contact with the cosmic or occult world of force and is applying the inspirational results of this contact in everyday life in effective service. A man who lives in and for himself, whatever his academical occult knowledge may be, is totally foreign to this definition of a disciple. Disciples necessarily differ in caliber and in their range of personal activity, but the status of discipleship implies the skillful use of a scientific technique to specific ends in the service of the Master.

There is no such condition as discipleship exercised either for self-aggrandizement or from motives of personal ambition, wherein such ambition has for its object prestige and advantage in the worldly sense. There are vast fields of demonstration in which every kind of ambition may be legitimately exercised and in which a man may allow himself full and wholesome expression of his faculties. But discipleship has its own rigorous laws which either negate these forms of ambition or convert them into adjuncts of power and efficiency to be used in the interest of the general evolution of consciousness. The long probation and crucial preparation incident to discipleship would be lost labor and lacking in significance were the disciple to become, through his training, just one more servant of ambition engaged in the competitive race of making a name and carving it upon the pillar of fame one

niche higher than his fellows. That, in its place, is laudable and reacts for good, but discipleship has nothing in common with it.

The disciple seeks neither name nor prestige. He is often an unconscious candidate for loss of name and prestige as commonly understood, and finds himself engaged in a single-handed combat with prejudice and adverse influence which threaten the very ground he stands on. Hence discipleship is a consummation in development not devoutly to be wished unless there is an irresistible bias in the nature toward it and the requirements necessary for it are fully calculated and resolved upon.

Discipleship, fundamentally speaking, is the exercise of a structure of mental, psychic, and spiritual technique founded upon organized character and applied to specialized work under a Master. It is the basic character organization which demands so much attention from the aspirant during his novitiate. This foundation for the technique appeals to me as so important that, while I can well conceive a man being used as a disciple in a special sphere of labor for which he has a peculiar aptitude, and therefore the available material cannot be overlooked by those who have decision in these matters, at the same time discipleship in its true form demands, in my estimation, an unusual strength and consistency of character for the execution of its office with complete independence and full responsibility in the work attached thereto.

It may be asked whether I am not taking upon myself too much in demanding, and assuming an authority unwarranted in determining, so much excellence to be indispensably necessary for discipleship. I am not demanding or determining anything absolutely or arbitrarily. I have observed discipleship closely; I have analyzed discipleship in the making in many; and I affirm the results of these observations. There may be exceptions, as above said, to meet special conditions. There have been such exceptions, where the disciple has been doubtful in points of character. There have been marked idiosyncrasies, erratic departures, temperamental disturbances, manifest weaknesses from a normal observer's point of view. Nevertheless, a kind of technique has been in evidence of such value that all deficiencies of a general nature have proved of little hindrance except in the disciple's own

personal adjustment in life, and the Master has used that technique with pronounced effect.

I am not orthodox or rigid in assessing human character; quite the reverse. I am not happy in the presence of immorality, or mental aberration, or temperament defeating itself; but when I see a man achieving a fine work in conjunction with or in spite of either, my attention is fastened upon the work, not primarily on the man. Am I then demanding too much in expecting that an aspirant under training for discipleship, in the course of which he should be molding and disciplining mind and temperament and organizing character, should measure up to a commendable level of mental and temperamental stability and force of character to guarantee his ultimately taking his place among those who have achieved this standard and share in their labor?

There is one thing we have to look to today, when occultism is overstepping its former bounds, so to speak, and compelling us to new applications of its technique, and that is not to place orthodox and exclusive interpretations upon it. Narrow and exclusive interpretation and application of occult truth have given it bad names in the past. If an occultist hopes to be of any use in the present day he will need as much to orient himself as those he aims to teach. It has been intimated that there is a strong forward movement among thinkers in the world. No intelligent student can doubt it. But exclusive interpretation is not their watchword. They are interrogating all and everything, even the occultist.

What I appear to demand and determine regarding the standing and authority of a disciple is by no means in excess of what they will demand of and determine about him. He will have to stand well in advance of those he proposes to assist, or he will be discounted. And rightly so. We should not expect to gain the ear of men of large mental growth by reiterating homely platitudes, even occult ones, of which they have forgotten the phraseology but have acted upon all their lives. If my suggestions about discipleship appear too exacting, it is not that I expect others to accept and conform to them, but because I feel the necessity of sketching in bold outline the conception I entertain of

discipleship. I could sketch a much softer outline, in half lights and uncertain tones, but, like many other things seen in half lights and of doubtful meaning, the outline would for me be a false one. The truth is, I have no soft and soothing outline for my conception of discipleship. On the contrary, I have no outline bold or forceful enough for the perfect depiction of it.

I do not say this to perplex or baffle. Perhaps I am obsessed with the truth of a great idea and write chiefly for those likewise obsessed and who can bear to see its formidable contour overshadowing their whole life, the conception of a technique of a thousand facets embracing the experience of many incarnations. A conception of this kind always compels the soul to declare itself, whatever reception it may receive. Those who have it not are inclined to think there is a straining aftereffect when they see it, a passing beyond one's depth and falling into exaggeration. Discerning only one aspect of truth they interpret a full and balanced conception as an abortion. "The history of Beethoven's life," says one of his biographers, "is a record of struggles, a fraction of which would have exhausted and emptied an ordinary man." If the reader will substitute the word *disciple* for Beethoven, he will approach my conception of the history of discipleship.

The great man himself said: "In my instrumental music, I always have the *whole* in my mind." There you have my conception of the objective for the disciple. The real leaders and teachers of men are all of that quality. Deep down in the soul they have a gigantic grasp of the technique of their art or science. The true disciple should be no exception to this first magnitude of values. In him we look for the paramount soul, perceptive at the center of a radiating and compelling technique, observing with impartiality every avenue of knowledge. We look for an austerity of thought which can withstand the onslaught of ignorance and evil entities, whether embodied or emanating with malicious intent from unseen sources. We look for an emotional responsiveness which can answer to all that man can say and do in the worlds of form, without losing its moral integrity.

This is my interpretation of the canon of occult scripture. The precise terms of it may be objected to, but the fact is embodied in the

text. "To be able to stand is to have confidence." Upon that confidence is based the Rosicrucian technique. It is equally true in the worldly and occult sense, but the occult significance is far removed from the worldly significance. Each has its acknowledged area of experience and force. Standing in confidence, worthy of the name in the worldly sense, always implies character. Occult confidence is built on that, and I maintain that it cannot be built upon anything but that. We cannot impart occult confidence unless we have that. The difference between occultism proper and pseudo-occultism is fundamentally just the difference between character and the absence of it, because true character has insight which will not permit itself to be made a fool of by false values.

The men we are proposing to contact and inspire in these days will be men who have a respect for character, and unless we can impress them first with character in solid form, they will pass by. Evolution during the past twenty five years has compelled men to respect and desire character as never before. The European war helped to do this more effectually than anything else. It brought the true values of life to the fore and gave a death blow to insincerity and make-believe. I remember how moved I once was when a businessman of fine culture, whose wife had been murdered abroad, asked how he could learn to go into the silence. That is a great moment in life and makes all the years of endeavor infinitely worthwhile. That is the kind of man we shall contact today, and only the disciple can deal with him. Character he has and confidence in the worldly sense. The disciple must have confidence in the occult sense, and it must be built upon character that compels the respect of others because he has the highest respect for it himself.

How marked, for instance, is this character in Beethoven. It is an arresting fact that many of his utterances are instinct with spiritual passion and have a most profound occult application. The critic will point to the want of balance and control, the tragic emotional chaos in the man, the uncompromising, headlong driving against personalities and through circumstances, leaving a memory so keen and poignant of pathos and regret behind him. It was so; and in these respects the disciple cannot accept him as an exemplar. But he said this: "The only

good thing is a beautiful, good soul, which is recognized in everything and in the presence of which there need be no concealment. *One must be somebody if one wishes to appear so.* The world is bound to recognize one; it is not always unjust. To me, however, that is a matter of no importance; for I have a higher aim” It may be asked, why I introduce Beethoven here? I do so, not simply because he is one of the most eminent instances of sublime genius in the world of art, and was an unconscious disciple and working under cosmic direction, but because he stands out as a classic example of that greatness of character upon which I am insisting. Nor is this example in any way irrelevant; for the time must come when the disciple will feel a marvelous affinity with such men of character and vision. Indeed, I go so far as to submit that he will never fully understand or master occult technique until he can glance over the field of evolution at once and meet these characters, spirit to spirit, just where they stand and participate in what they did by virtue of a sympathetic alignment with the same rays of cosmic forces which animated them.

Occult exclusiveness is the one barrier to this access to the world soul. The force of this statement will have significance only for the disciple who is taking the higher stages of his vocation. The aspirant may well miss its value and bearing in his life. The disciple must be aware of and interpret understandingly the force of the Cosmic Hierarchy using with tremendous effect characters in the most diverse spheres of world evolution, totally unrelated as they appear objectively to any occult nomenclature. He must pass to and fro at will sympathetically between their world of thought and his own and feel the synchronous vibration that underlies both. He must not stand isolated within his own circle of light and leave outside as foreign and unrelated activities the art, music, and literature which resound throughout the universe. These are the Master’s own measured tones of expression and blend harmonically in the creative Word. They are voices of the Divine to which he must listen and respond to and immensely love, until his life trembles with the fullness of comprehension of the whole inspirational life of man.

The disciple creates his own temple of meditation, the invisible circle within which he retires at will to contact the master in the

soul. But if those precincts become a concrete barrier which induces isolation and unresponsiveness to the myriad expressions of technique manifesting through the souls of the great army of master spirits, past and present, on the broad highway of evolution, who have lighted up the whole path to the present hour with a splendor of character and genius so noble and impressive that we sometimes wonder whether they were indeed men, then not only is the heresy of separateness, that cardinal sin that besets every aspirant, upon us, but we pass on blindly and oblivious of the greatest gift of the Masters to aspiring men. It is this isolation which the aspirant has with pain created and in which he seeks to remain, shielded from the intrusion of all influences likely to disturb its serenity, yet whose mission it is to extend his sympathies and contacts in every possible direction, that becomes the barrier to further progress.

During the early years of novitiate the aspirant is prone to pride himself greatly upon the acquisition of new knowledge, and the temptation to build and hold for himself is strong. I have observed this attitude in many a young Rosicrucian student. But it has been gratifying also to observe that as he passes on to higher grades of instruction, a reaction to this attitude takes place. He finds himself inevitably drawn gradually by the strong vibration active within the sphere of his acquired knowledge to seek for some way in which to project his increasing force and influence for the benefit of others. Not until this change of attitude manifests is it possible for him to think in terms of discipleship.

The entire tendency of the life of discipleship today is toward group cooperation and effort. The Masters are cosmopolitan in thought, work, and influence. There are no barriers to their seership, comprehension, and bountiful compassion. Let the disciple attune his mind to this large and dignified conception. "The divine give; they demand that you also shall give before you can be of their kin."



Chapter 9

THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE OF THE TECHNIQUE

WE HAVE CONSIDERED some of the attitudes and discipline which enable the aspirant in good time to pass successfully the novitiate and take the first steps on the path of discipleship. We have to consider him now in his status of a disciple who, in the words of occult scripture, is able to stand, able to hear, able to see, able to speak. The experience gained during his novitiate enables him to stand firmly and with confidence in his own place, to hear the voice of the soul above the insistent and distracting voices of the personal life and to follow it, to see the meaning and purpose of his life in the light of the technical unfoldment within him, and to speak with authority to those who seek. His mission, as a disciple, is to be an interpreter and exponent of the technique in the vocation of discipleship. He cannot regard that vocation too seriously or be imbued too deeply with the responsibility of it.

The novitiate perfects his manhood; discipleship must unfold and demonstrate his super-manhood. Only upon the rock of mature manhood can the divine superstructure be safely built. Our conception of manhood for the novitiate is that which has reference primarily to the mental life, wherein all the various faculties have been systematically disciplined and coordinated, are under the control of the will, and can be applied ably and effectively to general life activities. There is the sense of organization and basic structure in the mental life

which can assume the responsibilities of larger vision and knowledge, a groundwork of power and ability which is subject to no possibility of losing its integrity or proper management in the face of emergencies, or liable to disruption from the onslaught of inimical influences from circumstances or men. Those who have observed disciples in the making and know them personally can testify to the presence in them of this basic structure of mental power and ability, and those who know what discipleship really means know how indispensably necessary is this structure for the adequate fulfillment of the duties of its vocation.

Upon this foundation evolved during the novitiate the fourfold organism of the technique of the disciple comes into being: ability to stand, to hear, to see, to speak. Wisdom gives the ability to stand, *reverence* is born of hearing, caution comes of inward sight, integrity is necessary for speech. It will be proper to consider this somewhat in detail. It should be unnecessary to affirm that the disciple must have wisdom in order to stand in the occult sense. If there is one thing more than all others that compels the admiration and allegiance of the disciple to the Master, it is the sublime and inclusive knowledge of the latter and the mathematical exactitude with which he can apply any phase of his technique generally to any situation, and particularly in his tuition of a disciple.

We read much of the compassion of the Master, but it is not the sentimental emotion which some are apt to regard it. That compassion derives from his profound and searching knowledge of and insight into the mind and soul of humanity. The personal element is not in evidence in the dealing of the Master with his disciples. The rigorous laws of discipline in his training should teach us that. This is not said from underestimation of the value of the affectional life, but to point the truth that the higher mind and spiritual will are the prime channels of expression and use in the life of the Master and disciple.

Through those channels alone do we approach to the heart of things and gain true knowledge and insight into the sphere of causes. Contact with that subtle atmosphere will almost invariably unfold the flower of compassion in the heart. The disciple need only penetrate

deeply enough into the life of the soul to feel all the compassion he is able to bear. The heart and passionate life are active enough in the majority. The art of devotion is a comparatively easy attainment. It has considerable attention during the novitiate. But devotion alone will never comprehend and exercise the technique of discipleship.

Wisdom therefore must be the disciple's most powerful aid at this point, and by wisdom I mean the essential knowing derived from specialized study of the science of the soul. The disciple must know and be able to apply his knowledge. His mind must be replete with principles of technical adaptation to the infinite problems of development that will confront him and demand his aid during his life of service. He will never trouble to look back and observe how far he has come, or pride himself upon some little advancement beyond a previous condition of relative ignorance, but forever in his mind's eye will stand the image of the master mind with its perfect equipment and amazing resourcefulness, and the compassionate understanding and power of assistance which the Master has already vouchsafed to him. He will seek by every possible avenue to augment the principles of knowledge revealed to him, whereby his technique may be brought nearer to perfection.

During this steady unfoldment of the technique he will gain the ability to hear truth in the occult sense. Impersonality here is of first importance. This subject has been considered in a previous book, and is now approached from a different angle. The diversified knowledge imperative for the disciple must be obtained from authentic sources, from traditional sources of acknowledged value and utility. Not neglecting the discoveries of the moderns but testing their value in his own life, he will ground his knowledge upon the approved theory and practice of the Rosicrucian and other proficients which have stood the test of time and are destined to enlighten all the realms of knowledge of the future.

These expositions of the science will prove the great transforming power in his life. Through constant and inward brooding they will become the very content of his soul and awaken a deep reverence for all teaching that proceeds from reliable seership. I say reverence, because all the possibilities of his advance in the technique arise from

the sincere and selfless assimilations of these transcripts of illumined experience set down by those who have trodden the way and write for his guidance. Reverence for the universal applications of truth from whatsoever sources of acknowledged authority is a very special quality in the disciple, since in his work with others he will certainly meet in time with the most diverse applications of occult wisdom, and he must not be wanting in due reverence for their personal persuasions nor lack a proper responsiveness thereto.

The attitude of the disciple to others must be: What is this soul saying to me and how must I respond for its enlightenment? It is not simply what the disciple thinks of the specific problem from his own point of view; it is what it means to another and from what angle of vision it can wisely be approached and resolved that has to be taken into consideration before advice is offered. The disciple may exercise in caution by applying a too advanced phase of his technique to a problem for its solution, a grade of force quite beyond the possibility of acceptance, as surely as he might speak incautiously through the want of adequate personal detachment and selflessness. The due and attentive exercise of these latter qualities will inevitably sharpen the sense of inward sight into the soul life and lead in time to an instantaneous and intuitive comprehension of the status of another soul and its immediate need. I consider this one of the highest and most inspiring aspects of the technique of the disciple.

The power of right speech demands integrity in the disciple. I define integrity of speech here as an entire correspondence with the concepts of occult truth as intuitionally apprehended. The disciple has the vision of and access to the truth of things, and from thence arises the power of speech for the helping of others. However much he may have dissembled before he entered the path, perhaps in legitimate self-interest and to avoid criticism, the technique of the disciple will compel the truth of life to shine through him. He must declare the truth that is in him, forgetful of or indifferent to the opinions of others. It is the very condition of discipleship that he has attained a new altitude, and what he sees from that altitude must be declared, if only for the few who need and will profit of it. This point scarcely needs to be enlarged upon, for the technique, in its true form, is of that force

and courage that it cannot postpone itself. Rash or untimely speech is foreign to it, but the quest evoked by it vibrates across the space with dynamic purpose. It laughs at enemies and criticism and rejoices in the possibilities of its own glorious service. It is satisfied if it can coin the true word for the Master's thought and hallow the ether with it.

Wisdom to stand in confidence, reverence for the truth of the science, caution in the exposition of it, and integrity in what is uttered: this is the basis of the fourfold organism of the disciple's technique. The experience which will accrue to the disciple who acts conscientiously upon these sound and well-tried principles of his vocation will enable him to exercise that tolerance and gravity which are so becoming and attractive when faced with points of difference in the presentations of truth issuing from many sources of authority. If he takes the Rosicrucian path, I do not think there will be much fear of delinquency in this respect, because, for one thing, he will be conversant with the history of the great characters of the past, philosophers and scientists, school men and reformers, all followers and exponents of the Divine Arcana, but approaching the secret science from the most various standpoints, many of them so markedly original and inspired and professedly Rosicrucian in character and belief, that he will receive the strongest incentive to take a universal and inclusive view of all tendencies in modern thought, scholarship, and technique towards the evolution of consciousness.

This breadth of vision is characteristic of the disciple, and it especially marks him in these days when the clash of sects and philosophies and religions is still holding so many back from a cosmic understanding and enlightenment. Nor is the occult field any exception to intolerance and light-mindedness in this respect. Occult sects fight as bitterly for their little platforms of truth as the orthodox Christian bodies. The disciple must stand above this. He must be able to hear all, understand all, and speak to all. He must learn to be silent in the presence of the thinking mind struggling with the expression of its inspired gift of cosmic truth. He cannot afford to ignore the voices of the messengers as there are none too many of them and they will help him to understand himself. And his aim must be to stand with them upon equal terms of knowledge and power.

The attitude of patient hearing and comprehension of many presentations of master minds firmly established, the disciple will develop in his vocation the ability to approach the problems of the path from a wide and understanding basis of knowledge. He will thus avoid the pathetic and discouraging attitude of those teachers who can only speak to an aspirant from their own restricted platform of particular belief, while he approaches them very often from a far more catholic conception of truth than their own. The disciple will not assume to know what he does not in order to hold a reputation for knowledge beyond his scope; but it is expected that he will, through conscientious and prolonged personal effort, and having taken the full term of the novitiate, not be ignorant of any general problem of development that is likely to be presented to him.

He will find that he will be able to handle far greater work and responsibilities connected with the path than he at first imagined possible. The reason for this arises from a fact of the technique itself. For the technique is not of a fixed and stable measure, so to speak; it has a native resilience and adaptability and discloses reserves of knowledge and force, under pressure of need, of unexpected capacity. In the case of faculties operating entirely upon the mental plane, we know as a rule that present extent and possibility of their use; we know approximately what we can and cannot do with them. This kind of limitation does not apply to the exercise of the technique. And I conceive this is so because it does not originate upon the mental plane, but fundamentally and directly in the world of occult force. It derives from a sphere of unlimited possibilities; and a disciple who has developed and is using the technique understandingly as above outlined is not subjected to more or less arbitrary limits in the exercise of it as in the case of the purely mental faculties within the spheres of science, art, or learning.

Under pressure of need or emergency for service, its vibration may be so extended and augmented, may become so inspired and potent, that he will be truly humbled by the cosmic response that has been accorded to him; and, having once responded to this exceptional measure, beyond anything he hitherto considered possible to him, the incentive will be firm to deliberately work towards making this extension a normal feature of the technique. Nor is there any limit to

such extensions. Indeed, it is such extensions of personal vibrations which impart uniqueness to the disciple's experience and render it so valuable to others. It is not that an extension in energy simply confers ability to meet the emergency. It is a true unfoldment into a higher grade of sensitivity to world vibration on every hand. It is an advancement in individual knowing and insight over a large field in world contact. It is an advance in world telepathy, by which I mean that the disciple ensures for himself a mental radio sensitiveness to the thought and purpose of his compeers throughout the world.

He will become conscious of attunement with other disciples working at his own level as their thought and force will amalgamate with his own. He will become unconsciously at one with deeper strata of intelligence and illumination upon which he will draw in his work. He will find himself assimilating unconsciously the inner values of the technique used by all disciples everywhere. Is there not more than a hint in this conception of the rapidity and facility with which the technique grows spontaneously, augments itself, and becomes so amazingly inclusive of knowledge and projective of influence when once it has reached a certain momentum in the disciple's life? It is a divine and classic adventure, only possible to a great soul able to subjugate all lesser aims and pledged to the Master life.

Within the radius of this attained measure of technical sensitivity and responsiveness, extending, be it noted, from the first step of the novitiate up to the present point of organic and instrumental equipment, lies a vast field of possible service for the disciple in the lives of aspirants attracted to him by karmic affiliation and in whose lives he is destined to play a part. In this work he will have an opportunity to try himself out in the most intricate ways in correct diagnosis of individual need. Occult diagnosis is comparable on the mental and spiritual planes to that of the physician on the physical, and it should be no less exacting. Now, it is a special feature of the technique when well developed that it has an immediate perception of the mood or truth behind the written or spoken word. This insight is so immediate and penetrating that I have known a technician often to respond not so directly to what has been spoken or written, but to the facts unintentionally withheld or with intent concealed, and unfold the

seeker's problem with minuteness and accuracy, much to the surprise of the latter.

Unusual, if not uncanny, as it may appear to the seeker, the technician is to expect this feature of his science to become very pronounced as he carries out his diagnoses patiently and untiringly on a wide scale, and so enters into the very soul sphere of those contacted. The diagnosis characteristic of the technique is not the result of logical procedure; it is not a calculated process of mental ratiocination. Ratiocination upon the subtle elements of human character and conduct, their singularities and combinations, agreements and conflicts, their involutions and evolutions observable in many individual types, may be a thoroughly digested subconscious content in the disciple, resulting from severe mental training in the past. In fact, all this is a part of this preliminary technical equipment, but the diagnostic feature of the technique in its pure form is nothing less than a fine spiritual sagacity which discerns the recurring complications in students' lives and denotes the corresponding solutions to them, based upon successive evidences of them, clear and luminous, in his own soul memory.

The technique of the disciple gives him direct access to this repertoire of experienced knowledge or reminiscence, and upon it he draws at will with confidence and certainty in the work of ministry in his vocation. Being able to do this is compensation for all the pains of discipline and growth that lie behind him. These are now forgotten in the calm consciousness of dispensing knowledge and healing to those still in the throes of the novitiate or lost for a while in the darkness of the obscure night, crying for a word of wise assurance that the quest is not a hopeless one and needing the sure touch of an understanding guidance to pilot them over the threshold into larger life. And this and more is within the scope of the early stages of the technique. Knowledge and influence are within the disciple's grasp, but never to make an exhibition of, or to strike a note of superiority, or to mark the distance between himself and the humblest aspirant, or for the imposition of personal opinion rather than timely and inspiring suggestion. These are perilous negatives absolutely forbidden in discipleship.

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It is not suggested that the disciple's service to others should consist of a tame and bloodless platitudinism. The technique is in the highest sense positive, virile, and masterful. It is the developed diagnostic element in it that tempers and adjusts the whole technical adaptation to the appropriate measure of expression and exercise. It enables him to stand aside, to become selfless in the presence of another's difficulty, that the conditions of it brought to him may appear in their right setting and character, unobstructed by the personal opinion of the disciple about them. It is not what *he* thinks about the matter from his point of evolution, but what it means in the life and circumstances of the one who presents it to him. That is a fine point, and the disciple is on trial as to how he deals with it. He is to lead and suggest, enlighten and inspire, penetrate the hidden associations and ramifications of a difficulty, reveal a way of ascension over it so much so that he himself, or any personal predilection, scarcely appears, but only the revealing of a new way, a larger thought, a subtle flavor of that blessed influence entrusted to him by the Master for self-effacing dispensation.



Chapter 10

THE DISCIPLE IN ACTION

THE ASPIRANT WILL have taken many important steps on the path from his entrance upon the novitiate to the point of conscious discipleship sketched in the preceding chapter. It is a period requiring the hard study and concentrated effort of many years. I may incur the charge of repetition in dwelling again upon this aspect of the theme. It will bear repetition. The hypothetical aspirant I have taken with me through these pages may be on the verge of true discipleship, and this serious communion between us may precipitate and bring into action the mature faculty of past lives hitherto unrealized. Let him focus all his powers of mind and soul upon the task, confronting himself with steady circumspection, and resolved upon a new cycle of unfoldment. It is a task only for those who have counted the cost, are of a settled and determined temperament, fearless in investigation, and of that quality of spirit which can wrestle with difficulty and meet a challenge.

I sound the note of the conquering will in the domain of mind and spirit - not the iron will, but the will of steel, keen and bright in its native luster, driving straight as an arrow to its appointed goal. I must again quote the noble Beethoven, as he is so magnificently impregnated with the supreme spirit of conquest. "Power," he wrote, "is the morality of men who stand out from the rest, and it is also mine." Not the power of a tyrant, but the conscious strength of a soul inspired by the Spirit of God. It is that power which, in the words of the Rosicrucian ritual, is offered to the true initiate: "God alone will be your inspiration; the philosophers will be your equals. The highest intelligence will be ambitious to obey your desires; the demons will not

dare to approach the place where you are; your voice will make them tremble in the depths of the abyss." I commend this ideal religiously to the disciple.

The disciple in his ministry will soon be able to testify to the endless perplexing problems and sufferings in human lives, to which there is neither answer nor hope of healing in the outside world. They repeat themselves daily in almost monotonous succession and will continue to exercise the same cruel tyranny and cast the same cloud of hopelessness upon the soul in travail unless the Karma of knowledge replaces that of ignorance or worldliness. Let no aspirant think that, in qualifying for discipleship and rising to the larger conception and issues of life, these things will no longer trouble him. Not so - discipleship will make him aware in a keener sense than ever before of the cross laid upon humanity.

He, no matter what his growth and knowledge, cannot escape it. He will understand life and know how to adjust to and live it, scientifically and wisely, and he will reap the spiritual joy of his labor. But he can never rest in peace and inaction - for the voices of the world soul will strike upon his sensitive ear with poignancy a hundredfold greater than before his novitiate, and he will be constrained by the compassion active in his soul to throw himself earnestly into the company of those who have answered his petition only that he shall partake of their holy service. For to deliberately work through the novitiate and on to the path of discipleship, with the consequent unfolding of the organism of the technique within the natural man, is nothing less than projecting into the Master's world an ever-sounding, voiceless petition to live after the laws and principles of that world. And having attained to such a commendable exercise of the technique as has been described is the surest proof he can have that his petition has been heard and answered.

"When the disciple is ready to learn, then he is accepted, acknowledged, recognized. It must be so; for he has lit his lamp, and it cannot be hidden." That is precisely where the disciple now stands. His present technical organism is the lamp he has lighted through the bold adventure of his dynamic will. Its radiance shines in the Master's

presence and is reflected back as a beam of knowledge to enlighten the darkness of the world. That is the simple issue to which all the storied past has led him. He has kindled the light of the soul, and his mission is to kindle the light in other souls. His contact with the Master is sure. It exists, unknown to the world, in the deeps of his wholly aspiring and dedicated life. His aura is tense and radiant with the force and luminosity of the fire of this contact. There can be no failure, no diminution of that silent bond of fellowship, only expansion and augmentation of the vital elements in it, so long as the disciple remains true to the sacred ritual inscribed by it in his members. It will grow as the flower grows, but not to fade. Its many-petaled radiance will increase in glory with every access of influence directed upon him from the inner plane of ascension to strengthen his life of service.

One of the many paradoxes in the disciple's life, which experience will have brought home strongly to him, is that although his development must perforce acquaint him in the deepest sense with the fact of loneliness, yet he cannot work in isolation. His unfolding technique takes him further and further from the common worldly interests of men insofar as personal participation in them is concerned, but this inevitable retreat means a corresponding advance towards cooperative interest and action with those of his own plane of knowledge and purpose. The need of this cooperation will be forced upon him by his growing experience, and if he is fully awake to the possibilities of it, he will not hesitate to accept it.

This is mentioned because there are some who have been compelled by the circumstances of their development to work so utterly alone, with no sympathy or understanding from others in their environment, that on reaching at length certain objectives they have felt that the alliance of their forces with others was a matter of more or less indifference. I have the greatest sympathy for one whose circumstances of development have induced that attitude of mind. To him who can say, "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me," my heart speaks in perfect brotherhood. It is a condition of the path, and the solitary trial of the obscure night may just as likely as not cause him to forget that brotherhood exists. But that trial passed, he will discern emerging from the shadows others who

have passed and understand and await his cooperation for momentous work. He must not fail that call, but give his "aid to the few strong hands that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory."

But is there need to sound this word of caution? It seems to me that the kind of aspirant I have been communing with in these pages will not need it. To him, as to me, the path and the responsibilities and duties of it are very life, and only death can put a temporary period to the assumption of those responsibilities and the fulfillment of those duties. He will be surprised when the technique comes to work smoothly within him and brings a deeper insight into souls and enables him to interpret the lives of those fellow disciples who need his cooperation. He will be surprised beyond measure to note how similar to their own has been the long day of his trial and discipline. This is the foundation of the co-nature existing between them. They have all stood alone, aspired alone, fought the secret battle alone, until the light of the soul shone in the Master's presence and, reflected back into the world, attracted the vigilant eyes of those other disciples, working each in his appointed place.

He will realize that, throughout all the searching discipline of discipleship he has really been allied with the brethren of the spirit in the four quarters of the earth; that he has been but one of an invisible fraternity of aspiring souls, selfless as himself, chanting the same litany, intoning the same sacred word, infused with the same vibration of revealing fire, and knowing every soul that passes within the precincts of the temple of their consecrated service. This is not fantasy - it is a fact of the ascent of consciousness. And the successive dawns within him of what is transpiring upon spiral after spiral of the ascent is one of the climaxes of experience. The awareness of this fact of the simultaneous effort of many in comparative individual isolation to a common level of spiritual co-partnership brings to the disciple a new accession of strength, courage, and purpose. No matter in what condition of loneliness he may live and work, the illusion of isolation no longer overshadows him. He will now be in a position to see how many of the things which have held him back and forced him on have been more of the nature of illusion than fact.

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It was said that the laws and principles of the technique which the disciple is learning to comply with and use emanate from perfected technicians who function in the superconscious realm, and that these technicians compose various sections or groups of the Great White Lodge. Now anyone who observes closely the trend of modern evolutionary thought cannot fail to perceive the very conspicuous fact that this advancing thought is expressing itself more and more noticeably and powerfully in cooperative and group form. In every direction is to be seen the amalgamation of individuals, the consolidating of forces, the concentration of knowledge through organized channels for swifter and more potent results, all which has ultimately in view a larger and more expressive life for the individual unit - but not for him alone. I do not refer to the masses of average human beings, who care for nothing beyond the day and seek the greatest pleasure in it. I refer to those in whom the *mind* is awakened, those who feel deeply the problems and responsibilities of existence and are sensing somewhat of the purpose of it. They are to be found within the occult field and outside of it, of all kinds of belief and profession.

It is towards these thinking, progressive men and women that the disciple gravitates in his work. They are really seeking each other. The disciple knows this, while the others do not; and it is only a matter of time when the attractive force of synchronous vibration will unite them in work and service. But this can only transpire, or it will transpire much sooner than otherwise it would, through the synchronous and high-powered vibration of disciples working in cooperation. I write from personal experience of this all-important truth; but confirmation of it may be found in many of the writings of the initiates. "Let us establish," it is written, "our relations towards Rosicrucians, Masons, and other organizations, where the general good is approached. Many Mahatmas have participated in them. And when we remember the altruistic principles of the foundation of these organizations, we must not deny them. When it concerns sincere motives, then all workers for the general good must unite. Especially when the spirit is developed and the consciousness does not sleep."

This is a direct call and petition to the technicians of the schools of occultism for the amalgamation of forces, the sharing of knowledge

and experience, the surmounting of personal inclinations and mental and emotional differences, and the united concentration and projection of esoteric force, and every ability which the unfolding technique has awakened into activity, into appropriate channels of expression that will reach and invite the progressive mind of the age. Recondite and ideal as this may appear at the first glance, there is nothing so eminently practical and sure of response as the united force of discipleship. Subjective as it is in its technique and unusual methods of application, amalgamated and enlightened esoteric force possesses an irresistible potency and is responsible, under the direction of Masters, for the masterly advancement of the thinking mind to the conception of a new life in this exceptional cycle.

That is one aspect of the need of cooperative work by the disciple. It indicates a special duty he has towards the progressive thinkers of the world who are not actually within but are approaching the occult field of thought. But he will observe that if these thinkers are to be inclined to an acceptance of occult thought and experimentation, they must be impressed with the weight of evidence of truth and the unimpeachable technique of those who proclaim this thought and by the appeal of the experimental work done by them. The disciple working alone will not accomplish this. He will undoubtedly be powerful in his own place and within a very limited sphere, but the impression of evidence needed of the truth declared and demonstration achieved must emanate from the strong and irresistible cooperative forces of discipleship.

The progressive mind of today has a range of knowledge and a personal prestige, and in many directions is of that self-centered opinionativeness and self-sufficiency along its own lines that it is not very susceptible of change or open to the appeal of isolated evidence. It has that settled personal persuasion which can only be influenced through the amalgamated knowledge and forces emanating from the sphere of cooperative discipleship. If we look back to the early cycles of the Rosicrucian activities, we find this cooperative idea strongly in evidence. The initiates of the various periods worked in the closest secret contact in all parts of the world. And whatever the particular work each did for humanity, it bore the mark, the strength and character, the immortal seal, of the united influence of the fraternity to which he

belonged. Some of them labored under the most difficult conditions and in circumstances of imminent peril. They were in danger of being apprehended by the authorities of church and state as charlatans and a menace to society.

Today remnants of this peril survive, not indeed from church or state, but from some sections of society which appear to be veritable reincarnations of the spirit which actuated those authorities in the past times. And then, as now, to these evil tendencies, ever vigilant to thwart the progress of man towards spiritual freedom, the initiates would have succumbed had they not been closely knit with their compeers in many places. Supported and inspired by psychic contact and conversation in the spiritual domain, they lived and worked, as it were, invisibly and passed their noble treasures of thought into the stream of general learning, to be seized upon and honorably used by the few progressive thinkers of the time. But in the main they remained hidden, even in the open light of day, for those who should come after them. History repeats itself here, as elsewhere; but in each succeeding period a new spiral is achieved, and these forces of evil, so far as physical plane encroachments are concerned, are sensibly diminished.

The group activities to cultural ends of all kinds prevalent around him should be a powerful, visible inducement to the disciple in this cycle to heed the call to cooperative effort. But a greater inducement and of paramount importance to him is the fact of the corporate character of all sections of the Brotherhood of Masters to which he has given his allegiance. There is no ancient tradition so jealously guarded as that which comprises the laws and principles, the rules and procedures, of the one Great Lodge. The disciple should honor that tradition. It has an imposing gravity and wisdom, because it derives from those elders of the ages who sustain in collective understanding and with unsearchable responsibility the all-knowledge of human evolution. As above, so below.

The Masters will have the corporate idea become a working factor in the disciple's life if he would know that tradition as a living organism of light, inspiration, and power. The Masters are not interested primarily in his personal development for himself alone, but in centers of esoteric

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force consisting of efficient units working in harmonious combination and alignment. Such centers of skilled occult technicians have been the secret of accomplishment in all the fraternities of occultism of the past. This law of corporate demonstration holds good on the high plane of hierarchical activity, on the interplanes of Masters and initiates, and among disciples engaged in physical plane action. It is through this close interrelationship and amalgamation of centers of esoteric force that the Brotherhood of Masters wields its great influence and affords the disciple who is ready a unique opportunity of qualifying for higher service.



Chapter 11

THE INQUISTION OF FIRE

THE STAGES OF the path and the requirements for discipleship have been set out again and again in the textbooks. There is a good deal of similarity between them - so much so that they appear to be mainly paraphrases one of another. The requirements usually resolve themselves into the well-known cardinal qualifications of a mental and moral character, and while these qualifications are undoubtedly necessary and must be regarded as foundational principles in discipleship, they nevertheless impress one as a formal structure which lacks the living content of individual experience.

Why is this? Not, presumably, because the compilers of textbooks on discipleship are without experience of it, unless they choose to adopt the role of copyists. If they write from knowledge, they must have experience of the technical training involved in discipleship. Perhaps some of them felt that this experience was not suitable for publication. This is understandable, because the actual experience precipitated while under training is of so searching and intimate a character that there may be a disinclination to impart it or no feeling of necessity to do so. Or, indeed, the very nature of the experience, subtle in texture and more like fleeting reminiscence than the luminous conceptions of objective consciousness, may elude the conscious grasp of thought and refuse embodiment in formal language.

In my opinion, the embodiment of this peculiarly intimate, individual experience in formal language is of the highest value to the neophyte. It will enable him to interpret the unfolding of his own soul life and realize that the technique is a living and very personal matter. This

particular value I have had in mind from first to last in these books on the technique. I have written without reserve and from deep conviction what this development means to me. I have not sought to depreciate the value of genuine textbooks or the views of others. I have been constrained to unfold my own mental and spiritual conception of the truth of this development as experienced in my own life. And I have found, through its reactions upon others, that this is a true way of service and one which is much needed and appreciated.

No one more values traditional teaching and method than I do. There is nothing we need to be so much reminded of if we are ever in danger of forgetting it in the present day, when innovations of every description crowd upon us, threatening the dignity and stability of life and action, and inviting us to compete in the questionable race for this and that dubious material conquest, which will no more satisfy the soul than the swinish life of the prodigal son. This is not a digression, for the aspirant will need to make discrimination in this respect, or the temptation to divert his energies to a quest unworthy of his original purpose may prove too strong for him and valuable time will be wasted. The important thing is that tradition shall not blind him to the necessities of the hour.

Bacon said: "With regard to authority, it is the greatest weakness to attribute infinite credit to particular authors, and to refuse his own prerogative to time, the author of all authors, and, therefore, of all authority. For truth is rightly esteemed the daughter of time, not of authority. It is not wonderful, therefore, if the bonds of antiquity, authority, and unanimity, have so enchained the power of man, that he is unable, as if bewitched, to become familiar with things themselves?" The day is yet remote when the authoritative word of Bacon will lose its value. True to the Rosicrucian tradition, he has written for all time, and these words of his are apt to my theme. The textbooks on discipleship have given us the skeleton outline of the necessary qualifications for it. The skeleton requires the vital body of living experience of the disciple to render it of utility to the aspirant.

"The real order of experience," says Bacon, "begins by setting up a light, and then shows the road by it, commencing with a regulated

and digested, not a misplaced and vague course of experiment, and thence deducing axioms, and from those axioms new experiments.” “For as in ordinary life every person’s disposition, and the concealed feelings of the mind and passions are most drawn out when they are disturbed - so the secrets of nature betray themselves more readily when tormented by art than when left to their own course.” These acute aphorisms afford a basis for my concluding remarks on the disciple and his technique.

We respect traditional occult teaching and method because they have stood the test of time. There is not a working disciple who is not indebted to them. He can no more deny their influence in his development and work than the author can repudiate the influence of literary tradition upon the language in which he creates. Tradition has this of good in it, that it comes to the student’s hand with the impress of countless master minds upon it since the time of its original and spontaneous birth. These minds have assimilated it, retaining yet adapting it, to the various cycles in which they lived and taught. It has never been lost sight of, no matter what the particular adaptation of it in any cycle has been, but has continued to be a basis of intellectual security, a corrector of personal aberration, a guide for honest endeavor, and the very hope and guarantee of future discovery.

It has taught us the amenities of intellectual conduct and opened the book of universal knowledge for all succeeding generations. It is the initial means by which the student gathers to himself a body of attested truth about his science. Were the tradition an isolated and solitary one, it would not have this unassailable authority and importance, or merit the reverence of generations of thinkers. But in occultism there is a multiplication of traditions converging in one body of accepted doctrine, and the reason why the disciple must respect it is because the imprimatur of the Great Brotherhood is upon it.

But the cycles of the present differ from those of the past in this respect: the unparalleled progress of the thinking mind compels the vision of new processes and unexpected adaptations of the knowledge transmitted to us. We stand today before the advent of a new instauration of far greater importance to us than that majestic

instauration magisterially proclaimed by Bacon. The broad bases of knowledge and method laid down by him remain a luminous guide in the present cycle in the unveiling of the heart of things. If ever man had a perfected form of technique, Bacon had it: "The real order of experience begins by setting up a light." Note the application of this axiom. The disciple must kindle his own light and unfold by means of it his own order of experience, which alone is a real guide for him; and that light will show him the way, commencing with a regulated and digested groundwork of laws and principles of occult tradition, thence to a deduction of axioms of personal development, thence to an application of experiments for the demonstration thereof.

Bacon, writing from profound knowledge of the human constitution and its behavior, says that a person's disposition and the concealed feelings and passions of the mind are truly revealed under the pressure of unusual conditions. Now the technique constitutes a recurring initiation into unusual conditions of mind. The training of the disciple sets up a powerful interaction between the personality and the soul, and when alignment is established, the mind and brain are recipient of an increasing influx of the force of the soul. The mind receives new accessions of knowledge from the soul, the brain areas are stimulated by the heightening vibration to respond thereto, and the field of cognition is sensibly enlarged.

This process creates that disturbance referred to by Bacon. The emotional life is accentuated, the mental life is awakened to unexpected strength and venture, and both in conjunction militate at times against the soul which has brought them to trial. And it is no inconsiderable part of the technical training of the disciple to make this alignment a stable and wholly praiseworthy one in the conduct of life, and to subdue and overcome those unavoidable tendencies incident to the process which constitute a veritable inner battle between the hitherto dominant personal self and the spiritual man who is rising in the ascendant.

This unveiling of the real nature of the disciple is of surpassing importance and comprises a major portion of his training. The purpose of it is summed up in the words of the Master: "It is not enough to

know thoroughly what a pupil is capable of doing or not doing at the time and under the circumstances during the period of probation. We have to know of *what he may* become capable under different and every kind of opportunities.” How is this to be discerned? By the way in which a disciple conducts himself in relationship with other disciples to whom he is karmically attached in group work; by his motive, speech, and action in relationship with those who pass within his sphere of occult service; and by the selfish or impersonal use he makes of the knowledge and force automatically passing within his control as a consequence of his fully conscious dedication of himself to the Masters.

It will be obvious that a disciple working in comparative isolation cannot be put fully upon trial in this way. He can only be brought to know himself through a most searching inquisition of his emotional and mental life; and this can only take place within a sphere of active occult service in which his life is urged to expression in ordinary and exceptional circumstances of relationship with and adjustment to others. The Master’s word is very plain on this point: “of *what he may* become capable under different and every kind of opportunities.” The aspirant may think he knows full well what he is or will be capable of when opportunities present themselves, but no trust is so perilous as new force in new hands. When once the door to the Master’s world is opened, to but a slight degree, influx of force to the personality is the consequence; and this force can destroy as easily as it can build up. It can demoralize the disciple as easily as it can add to his human nature another Christlike quality. It is impersonal in action and descends upon him from within, in response to his reiterated petition, to search and test the strength and weakness of his constitution, indifferent whether he stand or fall.

The issue rests absolutely with the disciple. If he has chastened himself aforesaid in mind and heart, cultured his emotions, developed his analytical faculties, sharpened his intuition to a point of instant seizure of implicated motive and suggestion, the tension of a fiery force released in his economy, accentuating these developments, will cause no unpropitious reactions, because the opportunities which it opens

to the disciple in his relationships will have been largely anticipated during the period of technical discipline. He will stand firm as a rock in his own place, discerning the possibility of ignominious failure veiled within the fair form of insidious temptation which suddenly rises before him as a ministering angel, inviting him, in the name of friendship and sympathy, to abate for a season the stern aspect of moral rectitude and unwelcome impersonality, even to a forgetting of his common manhood.

The fire will descend and stimulate latent ambition to an astonishing degree. The single path to the Master will become twain, leading as surely back to worldly prestige and exploitations, as onward to otherworldliness; and if the disciple has not already definitely made his choice, there will be cause for long delay, until the call of the soul emerges clear and dominant over the alluring voices of personal desire. Yet again, the descending fire, wonderful and clarifying in its motion, will invest the personality with something of its own arresting magnetism and show the disciple ways and means, unlooked for and intriguing, to exploit the little ones who are weak and helpless before its masterful influence. Never let it be that the disciple will so use it. He will find no greater hell and no swifter fall into it.

The history of discipleship is not without its records of failures. Power has sometimes been sought in the name of the Master and for his service, but the inquisition of it has proved too strong for a faulty mechanism, and the disciple has fallen in his own weakness before the portal of initiation. The tempter may be vanity; it may be sexual gratification; it may be intellectual pride; it may be other manifest weaknesses, only brought out and emphasized under the inquisition of fire, and which the Master in his compassion cannot condone. Prevalent as these failings are in the world of men, even adding influence to some in the common way of life, in the disciple they appear as sorrowful aberrations which disfigure and thwart the whole purpose of his ministry.

He may think otherwise because of the veil of illusion which the form of the temptation casts upon him. The circumstances surrounding it may appear to have so lawfully and unavoidably led to

it, the setting in which it appears may so effectually metamorphose the deleterious aspects of it, that the issues are confused in the disciple's heart and the personal dictate triumphs. Nevertheless, there is the test, and the novitiate proposes the exact training whereby the heart shall know itself by the patient scrutiny of motives and the mind become apprehensive of the causes and effects of these through the multiform intricacies of the technique unfolded by discriminating experience in human contacts.

In my previous book on the technique I said that I did not believe in the killing of ambition as generally understood by aspirants; that the idea of slaying that which is the finished product of past fervent ambition did not appeal to me. In its connection with the theme then under consideration I adhere to that statement. But in the present view of the technique there is another aspect of the matter to be mentioned. When the disciple has worked his way to the point of recognition and acceptance and enters upon what I have called the cooperative group work of discipleship, he will have to make a decisive choice between living over again for his own personal satisfaction the ripe product of past ambition which is now so powerfully influential in his consciousness, and renouncing this for the higher and impersonal work to which his group affiliations invite him.

I have spoken of this as one of the most poignant stages encountered during graduation in the technique. And so I consider it. No sooner is the alignment of the soul and personality established than the hidden culture and ability of the past begins to enter vigorously into the mind consciousness and emphatically demands recognition. There is ample data available among disciples to testify to the truth of this fact. The two paths open to the vision: the one, brilliant and inviting, from the past to the present, revealing what has been heroically sought and hardly won in the realm of mental achievement; the other, dimly sensed ahead, the only guide thereon the disciple's own light set up, leading to a surrender or conversion of all to the service of the Master. The swift play of the two-edged sword of the inquisition of the descending fire divides the storied and speaking past from the untrodden and virgin future that promises technical comprehension and use of super-experience.

The disciple stands alone at this midway point. Both paths are seen: the one offering personal power and enviable reputation in the eyes of men; the other, a passing selflessly into the hiddenness of subjective activity and a surrendering of all powers and faculties to the silent leading of the divine voice that breathes forth from the deep recesses of the flame. Once again, the aspirant may think, in the access of his enkindled enthusiasm, that a right choice would present no difficulty to him. But the fire of the soul will test him to a degree unknown to the unperturbed and reasoning mind. It is a far different matter to remain in calm possession of power and ability, to be exercised and enjoyed freely to our own personal advantage in any way we elect without question or hindrance, and, on the other hand, to have that possession, not questioned or condemned, but the exercise and enjoyment of it diverted almost exclusively to the service of others in world work. The fire, working energetically in a powerful organization, will make the choice not an easy one.

I do not say that a true disciple will fail to make a right choice and without loss of time. The choice, I believe, will be made immediately it is presented. But while the soul unhesitatingly takes the onward path, the mind will dispute the justice of the renunciation it is compelled to make. It will demand to add further laurels to its past achievements, because they are seen to be so easily within reach. It will protest that its personal satisfaction for greater expression is surely allowable in conjunction with its speculation into the unknown. And the fuller the man, the more comprehensive the experience that has been accumulated and is now being released into consciousness through the process of alignment, the more insistent will be this demand and the protest almost pitiful in its intensity.

I am not dealing here with theories, with intellectual abstractions, but with the actual operation of the technique within the mind and heart of the disciple. He is brought to trial before the bar of the soul. The life of discipleship is at stake. There are no advocates on either side. The disciple stands alone before an invisible tribunal. It is the inquisition of fire. If he can bear it and pass on, it will be only upon the accumulated knowledge and strength he has brought with him. The portals of the temple remain hidden behind the flame. He may

even doubt their existence and demand proof of them. There is no response, only silence, from which his own voice must arise. "We have to know of *what he may* be capable", - whether he will hold fast to the coveted flower of the mind and add to its beauty and luxuriance with intellectual pride and self-gratulation, or pass on within the temple with ambition stilled by the peace of devotion and with empty hands, that the Master may place in them such instruments as he sees fittest for the greater work before him.

Whatever the disciple thinks about having to make this choice, however, he may question with himself the justice of it, a little reflection will reveal the perfect wisdom of it. The mind will continue to be the greatest instrument in any work to be done, but in dealing with phases of the technique in others the ordinary faculties of the mind will prove totally inadequate. It is only by making a right choice to follow the call of the soul that extensions of these faculties can be entrusted to the disciple. These extensions open out new ranges of cognition and enable him to sense vibrations and register rhythms entirely outside the ordinary mental level. He can never perfect the technique on that level, nor attain to Masterhood upon it.

The technique is of the soul and spirit. The Master's inspiration derives from the superphysical. Why then should the disciple hesitate to pass on from that with which he is familiar and a complete master of, yet so relative in character, to that divine tuition to which his whole training has prompted him and which only the Master can impart? Blessed indeed is the disciple to whom the inquisition comes in all its intensity and subtle challenges in response to his consistent and sustained petition. It is the Master's solemn offer of acceptance.

The choice is made. The disciple has proved his impersonality and power of self-effacement. The inquisition of fire has not slain ambition: it has revealed a more excellent way to apply the fruits of it. The fire of the mind no longer agitates and craves for further conquests to hold as an isolated possession for self-aggrandizement and worldly reputation. The fire of the spirit permeates the whole economy of the mortal man, bathing, tranquilizing, and healing the grieving nerves; stilling the discordant voices of desire; and transmuting every adjunct of culture

into a spiritual force for its service. This is a major conquest of the technique and surpasses anything hitherto achieved, for it places the disciple in a dominant position on the spiritual plane.

He has yet to prove his strength in maintaining that position. The forms of temptation he has stripped of their illusion and mastered on the objective plane have been the means by which he has attained this ascendancy. They reappear now to test him in a far more subtle form. As a dominant and self-constituted spiritual force working for evolution, he is a menace to those psychic entities who are so interested in his advance as to desire his defeat and spare no means to secure it. He will be subjected again and again to psychic impulsion from the dark side of unseen forces. They will endeavor to turn the disciple aside from his chosen path by most ingenious devices of glamour and illusion. So insidious are these attempts at any cost to thwart the disciple's progress through personalities and circumstances that he will need all the circumspection and wisdom inculcated by his training in order to discriminate between deception and reality.

This point need not be elaborated here. It is true in the experience of discipleship and merits special investigation. One-pointed devotion and the power of fearless challenge against all odds give the magical key to the situation. The disciple will remember the promise of the ritual: "The demons will not dare to approach the place where you are; your voice will make them tremble in the depths of the abyss." It is for the disciple to now demonstrate all the fine technical qualities which, by the grace of the Master, have been conferred upon him and, through steadfast and patient onward living, evoke the whole force of the soul to transcend every hindrance and counteract every opposing influence and initiate him into the presence of the Master.



THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

Purpose and Work of the Order

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

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