

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 as well as 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 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 Master's 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 their 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 Rosicrucian's has its origin in the superconscious realm. Its laws and principles, therefore, 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 adhere. In its outer aspect, the Rosicrucian Order is an organization disseminating a systematic teaching, thoroughly practical and of approved utility in the world. In its inner aspect, it is 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

uses in the everyday world. It is also herein 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 proficient.

In this work I have endeavored to treat the subject from the point of view of the neophyte as they seek to qualify from the outset of their studies, knowing little of the path before them or how their new departure in life will react upon themselves and their 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 they find the technique unfolding in their mind and soul and expressing skillfully in their 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. They are invited to remember that they are entering upon a condition of pupillage in which thought and action are to receive a new direction and intention, and that they are taking a path totally different from the worldly path they have trodden hitherto. They must be prepared to conform to new principles, none too easy to accept at the threshold perhaps, because some of them will oppose firmly rooted personal beliefs and opinions. There is great encouragement, however, in the fact that they are placing themselves under the tuition of teachers who experimentally know the path which they propose to take. They know the difficult stages of it, so that where they falter they have perfect confidence and can lift them 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 how we were encouraged to persevere in them. It was truly entering into an entirely different world, and the first steps in it were difficult. Promotion to it came in the natural course of events, as it was inevitable if we were to attain intellectual personhood. In the case of the neophyte, entering upon the path is a matter of personal choice. They elect to advance

from intellectual to psychic and spiritual personhood. They may do this as unconcernedly as they changed classrooms, in which case the admonition will have far more warning in it, but no less encouragement than in the case of the person 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 themselves the patience and perseverance which the higher school of life will demand of them.

Entering upon the path means a new departure in life. In a sense, it means 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 them. It cannot be taken as a pastime with others and with indifferent purpose. They can only make headway on their own native strength. Exceptional strength is not required in the beginning, but there must be courage and initiative to use what they have. Their studies will soon demonstrate to them what measure of strength is theirs. If they want to advance, they will confidently apply it to the new task of soul culture and find it developing as it prepares them for the higher grades.

The first thing the neophyte has to realize is that their studies will initiate them into a different world from the one they know. The failure to recognize this fact has caused many a neophyte to impatiently cast aside the very knowledge and discipline they need most. If the studies offered to them 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-trying systems of scientific teaching and technical instruction designed to turn the neophyte's attention inward upon themselves, their complex constitution and innate possibilities as a spiritual and psychic being, and they necessarily explore avenues of mental procedure excelling in promise anything they know and accept in everyday life. The more firmly adjusted, the more confirmed they are in their adherence to the worldly standard of knowledge and achievement. The greater may be the initial difficulty they will experience on their first encounter with the new scale of values the studies will disclose to them.

Let the neophyte assure himself of this fact that the studies they

enter upon hold the key to a new world of progress. No matter what their sympathies may be with accepted standards of thought and action, or what their achievements in any field are, they are circumscribed within the relatively limited frontiers of those sympathies, and thus nor can they extend their achievements beyond those frontiers until they consciously concern themselves with the soul factors that remain latent but unrecognized in the background of their activities. There waits for them a new world of thought, emotion, and action which can only be possessed by giving their 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 them.

The neophyte may be a student of literature, art, or science. All the accepted canons of their branch of study may be familiar and comprise the main portion of their mental content and be applicable by them in commendable demonstration, of the highest pleasure to themselves and of much utility to others. Nevertheless, through their training on the path they 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 them hold it fast and resolve to demonstrate the possibilities of it. Whatever they have and prize 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 they bring with them on to the path will be taken away. No ideal they have striven for, no work they have fostered through the years, need be renounced. These mental possessions are their present strength and on that they will make their way. Now, for the first time, all of their 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 some of its most promising and able workers and pioneers in the realms of practical activities in no time. At first sight this may appear an unwarranted statement, but experience is stronger than prejudice.

Many a neophyte (observe that 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 their 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 people and are the offspring of high inspiration. It is the super element in them which attracts the neophyte and makes them a lifelong devotee of these master minds. If they ever hope to emulate them, or indeed to understand their work rightly, they 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. They are as fully justified in seeking their assistance to make

them a greater artist or scientist, or professional person, at the point of evolution where they stand 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 to quickly 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 them, and in a little while it often happens that they find themselves 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 their life and thought, does as much as the work itself in their hands in quickening latent growth and bringing them to a feeling of security as a unit in the group to which they belong.

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

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. Their aim may be new creative ability and increased influence in their profession or other activities, or it may be entirely for mystical and occult purposes. In any case, their power for service will undoubtedly be extended and when all is said and done, world service of some kind should come to influence their research on the path. We know that some people enter upon occultism out of mere curiosity, and they usually quickly fall away. My concern is not with them. I primarily have in mind the neophyte who behaves in the existence of undiscovered powers and abilities in themselves 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 people 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 them skills in service. As a preliminary of this discipline, they are to cultivate a responsiveness of the personal self to the soul which is to ultimately dominate all of their activities. They will seek to transfer the emphasis they have placed so completely upon the objective self, to that informing entity within which will gradually assert its control and initiate them 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 relatively selfish emphasis hitherto placed upon the objective personal self.

Terms should not confuse the neophyte here. Whether through previous study they have come to think of themselves as soul and body, ego and personality, or the master within and their vehicles of expression, the problem is the same. The Divine fire is within and it acts and vibrates throughout its own subtle apparatus. 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 super person. This should be the objective of the neophyte.

Even if all neophytes recognize it, there is, as in other spheres, a diversity of types. 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 make the necessary effort to grasp a great opportunity. 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. As such we have to look for the flower of our present humanity. There are souls who have passed through the fires of crucial experience, who know the strong vibration of life and now stand removed 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, and 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 their 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 their own on the path everything in the economy of life calls for a new valuation. They are thrown a little out of focus with things as they are. They have to adjust themselves 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. 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 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. There is, however, the test for the volunteer. The right person will stand their ground no matter the circumstances that turn round upon them. They know that this revolution in the personal life is precisely the point at issue and will risk anything to master it. They know that they 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 personhood.

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 them 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 them.

Hitherto they understood themselves tolerably well, and they were at peace with themselves. They knew their strength, 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. When the narrow barriers, which alone support them, are suddenly removed through the neophyte's own efforts, the resulting experience is often a humiliating one. They do not altogether welcome the process of disillusionment. Yet this is what their 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 person.

The neophyte can never hope to know themselves until their strength has been sharply tried as to what sort it is. It will be well for them 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 now has to exert itself. This is the crisis which quickly segregates the different types.

Once again, let it be said that 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 themselves as they are will not falter when the karma of the past projects itself into the present in many mysterious shapes and challenges their initiative and courage to deal with it.

A word must be said about the type of neophyte who fails the great opportunity. They certainly exist and are well known. One sometimes wonders how they came to venture upon a new path in life at all. The fact is, they are bound hand and foot to their past. On no account must a single strand of that sweet bondage to what they know 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 them 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 person a slave to the end of their days.

Others stand ready to help them, fully understanding the problem that besets and hinders them from their knowledge and experience, but they can do nothing. They cannot drag a person along the path, neither will they attempt to coerce them. 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 they are to traverse the kingdom of the soul. Until they are ready to make the choice, they are safer where they are 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 themselves. They find it difficult to accept the condition wholeheartedly of pledging themselves to service as soon as they thoroughly enter upon self-development. This is not only the case with the neophyte; 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 people, they imagine that 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.

The time comes in the progress of a person 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 they aspire to know is perfected in service, and there can be no intimate association with them 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 who 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 the first principles, to the place where he now stands, and bids him to be productive in that place. That does not appear very inviting to the neophyte. They look 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 like the degree that is common around us today. To go further back, the Masters who figure in my mind as belonging to an old and classic humanity, to whom the masks, mummeries, and triumphs of our day pass for nothing, stand as an inspiring example of reality, durability, and self-effacement which

makes our little ambitions and desire for effect unworthy of serious notice.

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 their own eyes just where they are and shake off the hypnotic sleep of unreality and false values that hang heavy about them. I believe one's affection for the Master grows most as they realize more and more the infinite patience exercised with the children of the path during this awakening process. It can only be a kind of patience that is 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 people. 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. They have a long way to go before they can hope to lord it over the souls of others. When they can really do that on the path, the sense of lordship loses its worldly attributes. They then have a new definition for it: ascendancy over others through having given themselves in service for their sakes. They will then be as careful in imposing that supremacy abroad as in surrendering their own personality to foreign influence.

The neophyte can lord it over others to their heart's content on the physical and mental planes if they have cultivated force to that end, but not on the spiritual plane. They require a greater and purified force there, and they will gain this only when the objectionable voice of personal superiority has been made dumb through probation. So long as this speaks they are on the mental plane, and their 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 them. There is one aspect of life on the path which

is exactly similar to that of 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 their own feet.

This is not an arbitrary law made by their teachers. It is an unalterable condition in the sphere of the Masters that in order to receive, they 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 themselves 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 this is so in the case of the advanced person. Pause for a moment on that statement. Paul's comment upon the diversities of gifts applies here. The recognition in their fullness of their innate gifts will determine the neophyte's mission in life. Years may pass in different spheres before those gifts are recognized. One of the most striking results of service is the peculiar power of its discipline in initiating them into the sphere of the soul and unfolding faculties hitherto unperceived or otherwise dimly recognized and partially expressed.

The process is occult in nature: the awakening of the soul resulting from it may lead them to minister to the sick, inspire them to some mechanical invention of practical utility to the people, or take them 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 fields.

There are perhaps no examples so powerfully indicative of this as those 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, and in mystical illumination

and occult achievements. That being so, the neophyte should enter upon their training with an open mind in the matter of what line of service their studies will eventually disclose as fittest for them. As the training goes forward, one thing is certain, that which they can do best will be brought into prominence and matured, and it will not be long before they find ways and means of applying their abilities along lines satisfactory to themselves and of value to the world.

I fully sympathize with the neophyte who may pause here as a shadow of disappointment settles upon them on meeting with so emphatic an insistence upon service as the key to high development. I know well that they enter upon their studies with hopeful ambition for personal conquest, and the idea of service savors too much of the religious observance inculcated in youthful days. They must remember, however, that they are now passing 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 only made by the most comprehensive study of anatomy and reflection upon works of physical culture. They have to translate these into the terms of muscular training and scientific body building combined with manifold mental adjustments relative to the feats they desire to accomplish. With the neophyte, the forces they seek to know and manipulate are resident within and existing around them. What they need is the key to enable them to tap into 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 they are inclined to believe. They may obtain many hints of this in times of emergency and stress if they are observant of their deeper nature. The steady and continuous effort to use themselves in service, in any way that circumstances suggest or afford the least opportunity, will teach the neophyte far more than extended reading in occultism. They have no idea of what they are capable of until they rise confidently in the face of human need and compel the response of the soul's innate power in meeting it. If they can force the issue

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

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



Chapter 4

THE NEOPHYTE AND INITIATIVE

THERE IS ONE quality that is imperatively demanded in the neophyte who essays to make good their 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 their natural equipment and they will show it in everything they handle. There is another who does not have it. It is not a part of their natural equipment, and they will have to labor assiduously for it. The first will quickly make the studies their 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. It should mean much to them that they are on the path and that they have started upon the conquest of difficulties which cannot be encountered elsewhere and which will ultimately have such momentous consequences for them. I will, however, pass on to consider the neophyte with initiative.

A peculiar interest attaches to the neophyte who displays marked initiative in their occult work. They are 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 they are at liberty to override their teachers or ignore the rules of discipline. Nor do we expect this attitude in them, 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 them to be scrupulously exact in making sound the foundation for future work as for the veriest tyro, although they may dispute this point, but those who offer them their assistance know that ripe experience is not to be discounted.

In the schools of painting, an implicit obedience to the rules of art is enjoined upon the young student. Possessed, as they usually are, with a vivid imagination and fired by the contemplation of the works of the great Masters, their mind runs far ahead of their hand. The fluent execution of the perfect model inclines them to overlook the painstaking novitiate during which the Master in the making compelled untutored nature to follow with slavish exactness the ancient rules which their matured work reveals to the seeing eye in every line. Here is a hint for the neophyte. No matter what their power of instant appreciation may be of the work and service of the finished occultist, they must apply themselves humbly and with deep sincerity to the rudiments of the science. No matter what their inborn initiative may be, it is not for them to criticize, but to obey. A margin of freedom is permissible to them, 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 them patience and humility. Their 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 to 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 theoretically and practically knowing every step of the way in their 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 their influence into other lives for unfoldment. The other has demonstrated their 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 they shall not fail in applying any detail of discipline, definite qualifications are gained. Perhaps the most important is that they learn to trust themselves. Above all things, the Master requires that quality in a technician. The Master will never trust the person who has no confidence in themselves. With that self-trust fully established, the work before them assumes a different aspect to the neophyte. They are no longer only a copyist; they begin to initiate. With a sure eye for progress, cultured by a diligent survey of the studies at their disposal, they will now have a well-filled background of the worthy examples of their teachers upon which to reflect. They will more truly appreciate 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, they will unconsciously express somewhat of their virtue and skill in action in their own life. Still heedful, even to a greater degree, of the accredited rules of discipline which have brought them so far, they will come to exercise a kind of authority over the rules themselves.

They will use them with a freedom and extended application suitable to their own individual needs. Obeying the rules now unconsciously, they will lose the sense of restraint imposed by them and feel free to press on upon their own initiative. They are still a faithful neophyte, but they are also an aspirant who has passed successfully through the preliminary cycle of development, both aware of their weaknesses and yet feeling their strength and ability 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 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 they are ignorant of the value of and the necessity for thoroughly understanding the theoretical groundwork which must precede experimentation and application, but it is naturally difficult for them to divorce action from study and find satisfaction and repose in omniscient tirades on the possibilities of people. They believe 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. With them, initiative is a daily development. They are who approves themselves in the eyes of their teachers because they have that in them which is much sought for by them. This is the ability and eagerness to work themselves into life and circumstances at every step of the way. A hint will prove more prolific in them 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 for them. They feel the need of ranging widely over a number of presentations of doctrine. They have a definite line of application in view which the basic rules reveal, and they bring all his varied knowledge to positively bear to that end. This is contingent, however, upon the possession of a well-balanced mind, a power of keen discrimination, and an ability to intellectually grasp 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 their peculiar mental disposition and the guidance of their intuition. Whichever line they adopt, let them hold fast to the central aim of applying the rules of discipline and experimentation continuously and exactly to the unfoldment of their personal powers and the alert and energetic projection of these into some field of labor to justify their presence on the path.

Under this procedure they will enter upon the second cycle of the novitiate. Through the strenuous application of their present knowledge and personal influence in their vocation and in service, their interest in the science will bring within their purview the work and achievements of many Masters of varying degrees of technique who have trodden the path. Their aim will be to gain a right perspective of themselves in relation to these Masters. Their superiority and excellence will fire their imagination to greater effort as the ideal person comes more and more to possess it. Those perfections which they observe 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 they emulate.

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 their entire attitude of research. Their

objective is to become a representative of the Brotherhood of Masters. They 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 for that reason, let them not shut out the allied rays of the technique that shine down beneficently upon their path from the one great center of illumination. The path is one, truth is one, and 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 their life. I say nothing specifically here about their particular studies, those are of their 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. They will have observed their individual peculiarities and their diverse applications of the technique in original departmental work. From these examples they will have gathered to themselves and combined into one composite conception a compelling individual technique which allows their constitution full expression in personal initiative. They will put themselves 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 their study and emulation, until through

a sympathetic attunement their dignity and strength become theirs by participation and enable them 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, once they are launched upon the path, will urge them to bring their whole life into line with cosmic purposes, undeterred by any personal weaknesses or temporary failures, and holding ever steadily in mind that conception of masterhood which they have built up in the interludes of study and contemplation, 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, they will come to recognize the development of distinct qualities in their personality. They have brought an inventive mind to their work and have sought new ways in which to apply it. They have initiative, and at the back of initiative is always found the developing will. The central power to be and do drives them on to exploit themselves; then we have the neophyte alive to their task and are already working on the side of evolution. Their service has grown purposeful and effective, and the reactions upon themselves from near and far are carrying their unfoldment steadily forward.

The responsible factor in this cycle of advancement has been the awakening will. This is the key to all of their future progress. Every faculty is related to it; self-expression upon every plane revolves around it. Observe how often 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 their 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, and knowledge, would all lose their name without that irresistible and directive force which gives them form and potency. The neophyte may be assured that, in the last analysis, it is according to their will that they are known and valued. Their development is a spiral ascension in will consciousness.

In my 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 simply believed in inspiration and knew that they were the recipients of it. Now I regard genius as a phase of discipleship, and in most cases, of unconscious discipleship, which is rooted in the occult world of force. I suggest that if the neophyte wishes for some idea of the technician's will in action, they should study the world's great characters in whatever sphere they have moved.

I am not concerned with their virtues, vices, or eccentricities. Let them study the awakened man in action and drive their influence across the world, because when they become a disciple, they will have to demonstrate 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, unconscious discipleship, they will vividly realize what they may expect to find coming to fruition in the technician on the path. Through the contemplation of these characters, they will gradually acquire the flavor and ultimately touch the essence of divine inspiration which is the secret of their ascendancy. Their 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.

It is true that 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 person. It leaves in the hearts of people 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: "One 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 them. 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 their singular handling of them. There is a divine extravagance in the way they do this, an autocratic procedure which fools criticize and sages 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 their reading of Homer: their whole form appeared to themselves to be enlarged and all nature which surrounded them diminished to atoms. Such is the effect upon those 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. They may not possess the fiery quality of notable achievement. They may walk on humble paths and remain unknown. Their will may not have that direction which attracts public attention, but it must be awakened and demonstrated actively in its sphere. To call a person 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. Remembering how important the will is in the achievement of anything of value in the world, the necessity is at once seen for its superior education when a person begins to work upon themselves 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.

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. They have acquired the habit of self-direction and of imposing the will upon the activities of their vehicles. They will not make the mistake of thinking they create will, but that through strong intention in study and meditation they gradually organize their faculties, coordinate their activities, and so afford 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. Looking beyond genius to the perfect example of the Master using their 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.

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

The neophyte cannot afford to think so. They will quickly realize this if they study 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, they will find their entire nature enlarged by the contemplation, but nature around them will not be diminished to atoms. It will acquire a new significance in their eyes of beauty, rhythm, and law, and they will unceasingly strive to express these attributes in their own personal life.

Is it necessary to add that this fine discrimination and balanced conception of the neophyte is contingent upon their having made the third period of the novitiate a full and productive one? This period of study and of coordinating their 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 people. 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 people? It is the vision of an aroused soul and the commanding will, polarized steadfastly to its aim and congregating with dynamic intensity all of the ingredients necessary to the objectivation of that vision.

Let the neophyte not be deterred by the magnitude of the ideal held before them. I give it this shape with deep intent to bring them to that enlarged and masterful view of their calling, whereby the powers of the soul will be incited to express themselves and ensure the needed cosmic contacts essential in developing their technique. They build upon the finished works of their predecessors on the path. During the third period of novitiate, they make these works their own through sympathetic understanding. Not the sympathy of fact, but of spiritual atmosphere. They imperceptibly rise into the thought sphere of these regal minds. If it be so, nature has qualified them for this classic appreciation. Their life becomes saturated with the genius of the path, permeating them with will impulses divine and irresistible in character, and tutoring them 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 they must find practical expression in their daily life. When this objective has been reached, they will have the assurance within themselves through clear and unmistakable signs in character that they have entered upon the stage of discipleship. They will have brought themselves to that point of development where the Master will be interested in their value as a factor in evolution. The Master will, perhaps unperceived and unknown to the disciple, afford them means of knowledge and progress through recognized teachers on the objective plane whereby they may qualify for accepted pupillage in time under that Master.

There are many disciples 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 person before they are an occultist. I will explain what I mean. The hallmark of people 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 people of genius whose works always shine with this twofold luster, but of people of lesser magnitude. Namely, people 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, and imperturbable in the face of opposition and criticism from circumstances and people. Whatever amiable qualities they manifest to others, whatever their kindness and consideration and adaptability to their fellow peers, to themselves they are hard and inflexible taskmasters. I am not thinking of automatons, but of people 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 people. This being so, what are we to expect that the Masters, who are perfected people in the highest and noblest sense, require of their disciples who offer themselves and aspire to share in the most momentous task possible to people: 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 themselves of this fact from personal observation of exponents of the technique. They 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 only for the disciple who takes knowledge in the true and mystical sense. The pith of that statement is that until the student has thoroughly prepared themselves during the period of discipline as a neophyte, the said rules will not convey to them their intended significance. They 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 them into deep waters. Fear has held many a person 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 they know well. Once beyond the frontiers there is no going back. In passing, they will lose their hold on many things they have firmly grasped through life. The issue for them now is whether they can trust the soul to find a new path that will lead them to something infinitely more enduring to replace what they 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. They are 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 they will succeed with it according to capacity and guidance. The path of the disciple, however, is marked by a note of severity. They have chosen a vocation for life, and what eminence they will reach in it lies chiefly with themselves. 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 person enters with certain definite acquirements of their novitiate. They have a good deal of self-knowledge and they know how to use the mind with concentrated effect in study and meditation. Now they have 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 and that is 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, they will do well to stay where they are until they tire of it. They 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 businesspeople 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 they encounter teaching enjoining the negative doctrine of killing out. This, with the example of advanced students devoted entirely to the work of the path, inclines them to question the legitimate fostering of the very faculties which alone will make them a full person, capable of understanding and interpreting the experience of others when they reach more critical stages of the path. These emphatic teachings and personal examples psychologize the young soul, and before the most precious plants in their personal life have begun to live, they embrace 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 they have cultivated with such labor in the far past, whose content forms the substratum of their mental life, the vibration of which pulsates silently in every vehicle, expectant of its appropriate karmic contact, do they 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 they adopt a policy of willful repression, let them gauge the psychological effect of this before they go further and meet the penalty that awaits them. If they still doubt, let them stifle that wherein resides the basic strength of their character and makes them a man and press on to discipleship. Then they may expect one of two results, negative or positive, contingent upon the type of man they are. They will either take their 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 them, not dead but sleeping, will in good time assert itself with startling intensity, overturn all the bibles and occult maxims in creation and carry them back to primal sources and the voice of the Divine and nature within them, much to the consternation of themselves and their fellows. That is the positive type.

I write in the name of the natural person, for it is infinitely preferable to be a natural person swayed by high ambition and responding to the sensation of the whole, living creation, then by a puny, make-believe occultist, the soul in bondage to occult creed and dogma, lacking virility and inspiration, and of less value to their fellow person than an average human being. The neophyte might reflect that the time will come when they will have to encounter strong individuals of force and character, known of people 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 they meet these people, having nothing of their power and passion in them? How can they hope to influence or lead

them? They will have far more to teach them than they can hope to teach them. Deep calls to deep all through life. The disciple must have depth. They must be able to pass to any depth in others without being submerged there. They must prepare themselves for that 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.

In my judgment, the second instance applies almost exclusively to the person who has taken knowledge and is entering upon discipleship in the fullest sense. Here we encounter people 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. Its flame in them can be sensed as having all the brilliance of genius. When this is added to 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.

In this case, observe the marked contrast with the former one. Here, ambition and response have carried the person to the heights of mental achievement in the past. They are no weakling endeavoring to kill out, paradoxically, what does not exist, denying response to that which they have never felt. Their 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. Here is power, force, and ripe faculty, the limits of which have been reached and must now surrender its form to spiritual illumination.

In briefly portraying 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, does not have versatility, responsiveness, and

fullness of experience and understanding upon the several planes of life, and 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 as well as the ceaseless wrestling of flesh, blood, and cosmic emotion in the world of form, open-eyed encounters with highs and lows, and the steady ascension of the whole life inwardly to the plane of the soul, that does not signify defeat. It is not a cause for discouragement, and it provides no basis for honest criticism. It means that all of these factors must be present in the subtle apparatus of the inner person before a Master can avail themselves of its use. The aspirant themselves 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 person entering upon discipleship has to address their mind with such force and skill as their novitiate has equipped them, to the deepening and extension of experience, and that this can be done only by decisive action within the personality and without. This will rapidly carry them beyond the surface aspect of life. They will not have to deliberately force this new angle of vision. It will transpire all too effectually if they are intent upon the work of their vocation and if they are determined to attain their goals.

There is perhaps one thing more certain than anything else which will initiate this cycle of experience for them, and that is the intensified thought of the life of the Master. Just as soon as their idea of the Master, as the goal of their aspiration and effort, becomes a living, warm reality in consciousness, magnetically drawing them upwards, then will eventuate crises in their personal experience which will either bring them to a firm standing for further advance or throw them back upon the world to gain the necessary strength for it in the common ways of life. I mean that the person 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, they should not find it difficult to extend their 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 they cannot see the Master face-to-face and witness their action in the world of people, but that is one of the tests for the intuition. They have to walk and live according to the magnitude of the conception they hold of the Master in consciousness, and how long that will have to suffice for them, no one knows. They have the assurance, however, that there will come to exist a bond of affinity between the vivid concept they hold and the Master himself. In time, with subtle communication, this bond will become all the more wonderful and potent because physical barriers are done away with.

There is, therefore, a renewed dedication of themselves to the Master by the entrant upon discipleship, the result of which is that they pass 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 them to proceed. The personal history of aspirants places this beyond question. It is not a somber theme, but a serious one. 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 and in a word, an entire change of front.

One of the earliest books I remember to have read on occultism asked 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. The author of that quote had trodden the path, but the student had not. One does not literally have to do without human sympathy on the path of discipleship, but it is true that many sympathies they value and which have meant much to them will be eliminated as they pass on within the inner circle. From a strictly technical point of view, the position is this: the simple process of daily concentration for mental control and the more interior process of alignment of personality and soul, gradually and imperceptibly weaken

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. They will have to face, with open eyes, the fact that a changed attitude is creating breaches in their environment.

This is often a great surprise. Their progress in the science may be silent and hidden. They may have a fine tact which enables them to withhold views that they know would jar and create opposition in others associated with them. They may think, wanting experience, that the presence of jealously guarded (not selfishly) deeper knowledge within, but foreseeing that its utterance would make their 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. They may think so, but to little purpose. A disciple cannot hide their light, strive as they 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 they move. What disciple has not faced the insidious attacks of friend and enemy alike once they have declared with the voice of the soul their eternal allegiance to the Master? These attacks include questioning and cross-questioning, unexpected antagonism from those with whom they have 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.

It might be asked whether they can do without human sympathy! They will sometimes crave for the right kind of sympathy that nothing but the consciousness that they are qualifying for a definite mission in life will sustain them. There will be some near to them who would go with them to the bitter end if they could, but they cannot. They, too, would take them with them, but they cannot. They will feel the gulf of separation between, widening as surely as they live onward, until their voice is no longer heard by those on the other side. It is a painful experience, but it is of incalculable value. They are to minister to those who stand inert, stricken with the grief of loss in one form or another

all along the way. They must understand that loss not theoretically, but actually. They 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.

That is one of the things that the disciple must be capable of. The force that rises within them as the result of the conscious upward breathing of the soul must flow from them as naturally and fervently as the breath that pulsates to their heart to do it and to find avenues of expression created only by their own initiative. That is an inward experience of discipleship and it 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 them in their own strength. They act unquestioningly under the irresistible emphasis of their whole constitution. It is the genius of the spirit which is perfect vision.

The disciple must have this power in other lives. They must have a congeries of faculties, a peculiar knowledge, or a distinctive force which lesser people need and will gratefully receive from them. This brings us to the central thought of our theme: that the occultist should stand out from the rank and file of people and be good for something. Academic occultists have been prolific for half a century, whereas the occult practitioner is so comparatively rare that they are regarded by those who have to deal with them as either a fanatic or a phenomenon, and among occultists themselves they often pass as an innovator or a revolutionary. Yet, sensationalism is totally foreign to the person. 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 person and taking them he knows not whither. That is why they do not wait upon or regard the opinions of people, but why they speak with abandon of the Son of Man. If their development proceeds according to tradition, that is, in accordance with a discipline, searching and arduous, and during some cycle of life is able to assert themselves wholly with understanding and power,

influence in other lives will be a concomitant of that. Any willful attempt to force themselves to such an issue is useless. It is a divine obsession that transpires unbidden after certain frontiers have been passed. They know not when or how until they have it. It is organized faculty and force, sure of itself, certain in its direction, and 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 chiefly arise 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 as well as a fine and ready tact to traverse the steady waters, and a profound knowledge of human nature, including its depth and possibilities, to swiftly use it against itself and pass on undaunted though wounded.

The disciple is a battle-scarred warrior. They are perpetually on the offensive which is an attitude that commonly makes for trouble anywhere in life. Since they have entered upon an advance into unknown territory, however, and have to hold every vantage point gained in the face of any odds, all of 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 their own measure of force and see what experience will teach them. They may prefer to act only on the defensive and thus save their own face and reputation. If so, I really do not see how they will ever know the force of the Masters on those terms.

They may expect reactions from afar if they are declaring themselves in some definite way in service. The work of a disciple, along whatever line they 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 their work meets with proper appreciation because it is rightly judged and assessed. That is some compensation indeed for the inimical reactions which come upon them near at hand.

I do believe that the disciple who works through to this point will realize within themselves, emanating from their own soul or group, a quickening of life and consciousness which will gradually give them the ascendancy over all of the pain and distress which the swift outworking of their karma is bound to bring. If I dwell on a note of struggle with forces of the personality hard to 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 that 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.

What is the inestimable result of these rapidly increasing reactions in personal life? It is nothing less than a steady graduation in the technique of the path. I think there is one truth which 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 them, since they have been initiated by a more intense living incident to their treading the path. That which befalls them will now be reflectively related to their status of discipleship. No longer is life a meaningless jumble of haphazard events which carry them 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 and 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 their fellow peers. 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 uncoordinated indifference.

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 they have a right to their 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. The only hope for this critic of the valuation of experience is that they give 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 their 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 diverse sources, apparently unrelated and contradictory and perhaps revolutionary, and a personal respect for the 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 their growing experience in the laws of life, mind, and soul. If the Master is all things to all people and understands people because they have all knowledge, and if the disciple must be as their Master, and if they cannot hope to be so unless they can show that temper of mind, the fruit of deep study and experience which ensures pupillage, then the latter can only profit a full person who has reached the limits of the personal self and who waits for the Master's guidance because they anticipate it.



Chapter 8

THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

PART 3

THE PERSON WHO is technically known as a disciple of the Master is one who has indubitable proof within themselves 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 person who lives in and for themselves, whatever their 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 person may allow themselves full and wholesome expression of their faculties. Discipleship, however, 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 their

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 their 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. They are often an unconscious candidate for loss of name and prestige as commonly understood, and they find themselves engaged in a single-handed combat with prejudice and adverse influence which threaten the very ground they stand 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 their novitiate. This foundation for the technique appeals to me as so important that, while I can well conceive a person being used as a disciple in a special sphere of labor for which they have a peculiar aptitude, and therefore the available material cannot be overlooked by those who have decision in these matters, at the same time, in my estimation, discipleship in its true form demands 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 said above, 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, and 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, in fact, I am quite the reverse. I am not happy in the presence of immorality or mental aberration, or temperament defeating itself, but when I see a person achieving a fine work in conjunction with or in spite of either, my attention is fastened upon the work, not primarily on the person. Am I then demanding too much in expecting that an aspirant under training for discipleship, in the course of which they should be molding and disciplining their mind, temperament, and organizing character, should measure up to a commendable level of mental and temperamental stability and force of character to guarantee ultimately taking their 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, they will need to orient themselves as much as they aim to teach. It has been intimated that there is a strong forward movement among thinkers in the world. No intelligent student can doubt this. 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 them. They will have to stand well in advance of those they propose to assist, or they will be discounted, and rightly so. We should not expect to gain the ear of people 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 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 are not inclined to think that 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 substitutes the word disciple for Beethoven, they will approach my conception of the history of discipleship.

Beethoven 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 people are all of that quality. Deep down in their 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 them 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 people 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 and 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 the difference between character and the absence of it, because true character has insight which will not permit itself to be made a fool by false values.

The people we are proposing to contact and inspire in these days will be people who have a respect for character. Unless we can first impress them with character in solid form, they will pass by. Evolution during the past twenty-five years has compelled people 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 of the years of endeavor infinitely worthwhile. That is the kind of person we shall contact today and only the disciple can deal with them and the character and confidence they have 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 they have the highest respect for it themselves.

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. 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 do 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. The time must come when the disciple will feel a marvelous affinity with people of such character and vision. Indeed, I go so far as to submit that they will never fully understand or master occult technique until they can glance over the field of evolution and meet these characters spirit to spirit 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 their vocation. The aspirant may well miss its value and bearing in their life. The disciple must be aware of and interpret understandingly the force of the Cosmic Hierarchy, using characters in the most diverse spheres of world evolution with tremendous effect, totally unrelated as they appear objectively to any occult nomenclature. They must pass to and fro at will, sympathetically between their world of thought and their own, feeling the synchronous vibration that underlies both. They must not stand isolated within their 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 they blend harmonically in the creative Word. They are voices of the Divine to which they must listen and respond to and immensely love until their life trembles with the fullness of comprehension the whole inspirational life of people.

The disciple creates their own temple of meditation, the invisible circle within which they retire at will to contact the Master in the soul. If those precincts become a concrete barrier which induce 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 people, then not only is the heresy of separateness, that cardinal sin that besets every aspirant upon us, but we also pass on blindly and oblivious to the greatest gift of the Masters for aspiring people. 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 themselves greatly upon the acquisition of new knowledge and the temptation to build and hold for themselves is strong. I have observed this attitude in many a young Rosicrucian student. It has also been gratifying to observe that as they pass on to higher grades of instruction, a reaction to this attitude takes place. They inevitably find themselves gradually drawn by the strong vibration active within the sphere of their acquired knowledge to seek for some way in which to project their increasing force and influence for the benefit of others. Not until this change of attitude manifests is it possible for them 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 their 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 successfully pass the novitiate and take the first steps on the path of discipleship. We now have to consider them in their status of a disciple who, in the words of occult scripture is able to stand, able to hear, able to see, and able to speak. The experience gained during their novitiate enables them to stand firmly and with confidence in their 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 their life in the light of the technical unfoldment within them, and to speak with authority to those who seek. Their mission, as a disciple, is to be an interpreter and exponent of the technique in the vocation of discipleship. They cannot regard that vocation too seriously or be too deeply imbued with the responsibility of it.

The novitiate perfects their personhood and discipleship must unfold and demonstrate their super-personhood. Only upon the rock of mature personhood can the Divine superstructure be safely built. Our conception of personhood 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 effectively applied 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 people. 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 this structure is for the adequate fulfillment of the duties of its vocation.

Upon this foundation the novitiate evolved during the fourfold organism of the technique of the disciple which comes into being, the ability to stand, to hear, to see, and to speak. Wisdom gives the ability to stand, reverence is born of hearing, caution comes of inward sight, and 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 they can apply any phase of their technique to any situation generally and particularly in their 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. That compassion derives from their profound and searching knowledge of insight into the mind and soul of humanity. The personal element is not in evidence in the dealing of the Master with their disciples. The rigorous laws of discipline in their 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 we approach 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 of the compassion they are

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 the specialized study of the science of the soul. The disciple must know and be able to apply their knowledge. Their mind must be replete with principles of technical adaptation to the infinite problems of development that will confront them and demand their aid during their life of service. They will never trouble to look back and observe how far they have come or pride themselves upon some little advancement beyond a previous condition of relative ignorance, but forever in their 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 them. By every possible avenue they will seek to augment the principles of knowledge revealed to them whereby their technique may be brought nearer to perfection.

During this steady unfoldment of the technique, they will gain the ability to hear truth in the occult sense. Impersonality is of first importance. This subject was 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 and from traditional sources of acknowledged value and utility. Not neglecting the discoveries of the moderns but testing their value in their own life, they will ground their 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 their life. Through constant and inward brooding, they will become the very content of their soul and awaken a deep reverence for all teaching that proceeds from reliable seership. I say reverence because all of the possibilities of their 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 wrote for their guidance. Reverence for the universal applications of truth from whatsoever sources of acknowledged authority is a very special quality in the disciple, since in their work with others they will certainly meet in time with the most diverse applications of occult wisdom, and they must not be wanting in due reverence for their personal persuasions nor lack of a proper responsiveness thereto.

The attitude of the disciple to others must be asking questions such as 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 their own point of view, but 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 their technique to a problem for its solution, a grade of force quite beyond the possibility of acceptance, as surely as they 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 in time lead 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 they may have dissembled before they 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 them. They must declare the truth that is in them, forgetful of or indifferent to the opinions of others. It is the very condition of discipleship that they have attained a new altitude, and what they see 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.

The basis of the fourfold organism of the disciple's technique is wisdom to stand in confidence, reverence for the truth of the science, caution in the exposition of it, and integrity in what is uttered. The experience which will accrue to the disciple who acts conscientiously upon these sound and well-tried principles of their vocation will enable them 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 they take the Rosicrucian path, I do not think there will be much fear of delinquency in this respect because they will be conversant with the history of the great characters of the past. This includes philosophers and scientists, academics and reformers, and all followers and exponents of the Divine Arcana. Approaching the secret science from the most various standpoints, many of them so markedly original and inspired and professedly Rosicrucian in character and belief, they 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 them in these days when the clash of sects, 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. They must be able to hear all, understand all, and speak to all. They must learn to be silent in the presence of the thinking mind struggling with the expression of its inspired gift of cosmic truth. They cannot afford to ignore the voices of the messengers as there are none too many of them and they will help them to understand themselves. Their 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, in their vocation the disciple will develop the ability to approach the problems of the path from a wide and understanding basis of knowledge. They 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 they approach them very often from a far more catholic conception of truth than their own. The disciple will not assume to know what they do not in order to hold a reputation for knowledge beyond their scope, but it is expected that they 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 them.

They will find that they will be able to handle far greater work and responsibilities connected with the path than what they first imagined to be possible. The reason for this arises from the fact of the technique itself. 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 the possibility of their use and what we can and cannot do with them. This kind of limitation does not apply to the exercise of the technique. 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. A disciple who has developed and is using the technique understandingly as outlined above 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, and it may become so inspired and potent, that they will be truly humbled by the cosmic response that has been accorded to them. Having once responded to this exceptional measure, beyond anything they hitherto considered possible to them, 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 the 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 themselves a mental radio sensitiveness to the thought and purpose of their compeers throughout the world.

They will become conscious of attunement with other disciples working at their own level as their thought and force will amalgamate with their own. They will become unconsciously at one with deeper strata of intelligence and illumination upon which they will draw in their work. They will find themselves unconsciously assimilating 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 pledges to the Master life.

Within the radius of this attained measure of technical sensitivity and responsiveness, extending 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 them by karmic affiliation and in whose lives they are destined to play a part. In this work they will have an opportunity to try themselves 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 to often 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 their science to become very pronounced as they carry out their diagnoses patiently and untiringly on a wide scale and thus 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, and 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 of 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 their own soul memory.

The technique of the disciple gives them direct access to this repertoire of experienced knowledge or reminiscence, and upon it they draw at will and with confidence and certainty in the work of ministry in their vocation. Being able to do this is compensation for all of the pains of discipline and growth that lie behind them. 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. This and more is within the scope of the early stages of the technique. Knowledge and influence are within the disciple's grasp, but they are never to strike a note of superiority or make an exhibition themselves 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.

It is not suggested that the disciple's service to others should consist of a tame and bloodless platitudinous behavior. 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 them to stand aside and to become selfless in the presence of another's difficulty. The conditions of it brought to them may appear in their right setting and character, unobstructed by the personal opinion of the disciple about them. It is not what they think about the matter from their point of evolution, but what it means in the life and circumstances of the one who presents it to them. That is a fine point, and the disciple is on trial as to how they deal with it. They are to lead and suggest, enlighten and inspire, penetrate the hidden associations and ramifications of difficulty, and reveal a way of ascension over it so much so that they themselves, or any personal predilection, scarcely appears. They must only reveal a new way, a larger thought, and a subtle flavor of that blessed influence entrusted to them 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 their 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 them focus all of their powers of mind and soul upon the task, confronting themselves 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 people who stand out from the rest, and it is also mine." This is not referring to the power of a tyrant, but the conscious strength of a soul inspired by the Spirit of the Divine. It is that power which, in the words of the Rosicrucian ritual, is offered to the true initiate: "The Divine alone will be your inspiration; the philosophers will be your

equals. The highest intelligence will be eager 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.

In their ministry, the disciple 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 them. Discipleship will make them aware in a keener sense than ever before of the cross laid upon humanity.

No matter their growth and knowledge, they cannot escape it. They will understand life and know how to adjust to and live it, scientifically and wisely, and they will reap the spiritual joy of their labor. They can never rest in peace and inaction, for the voices of the world soul will strike upon their sensitive ear with poignancy a hundredfold greater than before their novitiate, and they will be constrained by the compassion active in their soul to throw themselves earnestly into the company of those who have answered their petition only that they shall partake of their holy service. To deliberately work through the novitiate and on the path of discipleship, with the consequent unfolding of the organism of the technique within the natural person, 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. Having attained to such a commendable exercise of the technique as has been described is the surest proof they can have that their petition has been heard and answered.

"When the disciple is ready to learn, then they are accepted, acknowledged, recognized. It must be so; for they have lit their lamp, and it cannot be hidden." That is precisely where the disciple now stands. Their present technical organism is the lamp they have lighted through the bold adventure of their 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 them. They have kindled the light of the soul, and their mission is to kindle the light in other souls. Their contact with the Master is sure. It exists, unknown to the world, in the deeps of their wholly aspiring and dedicated life. Their aura is tense and radiant with the force and luminosity of the fire of this contact. There can be no failure and no diminution of that silent bond of fellowship. There can only be an expansion and augmentation of the vital elements in it so long as the disciple remains true to the sacred ritual inscribed by it in their members. It will grow as the flower grows, but not fade. Its many-petaled radiance will increase in glory with every access of influence directed upon them from the inner plane of ascension to strengthen their life of service.

One of the many paradoxes in the disciple's life, which experience will have brought home strongly to them, is that although their development must perforce acquaint them in the deepest sense with the fact of loneliness, they cannot work in isolation. Their unfolding technique takes them further and further from the common worldly interests of people insofar as personal participation in them is concerned, but this inevitable retreat means a corresponding advance towards cooperative interest and action with those of their own plane of knowledge and purpose. The need for this cooperation will be forced upon them by their growing experience, and if they are fully awake to the possibilities of it, they 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. On reaching 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 them who can say, "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me," my heart speaks in perfect personhood. It is a condition of the path, and the solitary trial of the obscure night may just as likely as not cause them to forget that personhood exists. They will discern, emerging

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

Is it necessary 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 them, as to me, the path and the responsibilities and duties of it are life, and only death can put a temporary period to the assumption of those responsibilities and the fulfillment of those duties. They will be surprised when the technique comes to work smoothly within them and brings a deeper insight into souls to enable them to interpret the lives of those fellow disciples who need their cooperation. They will be surprised beyond measure to note how similar the long day of their trial and discipline has been to their own. This is the foundation of the co-nature existing between them. They have all stood alone, aspired alone, and 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, each working in their appointed place.

They will realize that throughout all of the searching discipline of discipleship they have really been allied with the brethren of the spirit in the four quarters of the earth. They themselves have been but one of an invisible fraternity of aspiring souls, selfless as themselves, chanting the same litany, intoning the same sacred word, and infused with the same vibration of revealing fire, 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. The successive dawns within them 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 what condition of loneliness they may live and work, the illusion of isolation no longer overshadows them. They will now be in a position to see how many of the things which have held them back and forced them on have been more of the nature of illusion than fact.

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. Anyone who closely observes 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. The amalgamation of individuals and the consolidating of forces is to be seen in every direction. The concentration of knowledge through organized channels for swifter and more potent results, ultimately have in view a larger and more expressive life for the individual unit, but not for them 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, and those who deeply feel the problems and responsibilities of existence and are sensing the purpose of it. They are to be found within the occult field and outside of it, in all kinds of beliefs and professions.

It is towards these thinking and progressive people that the disciple gravitates in their 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. This can only transpire, or it will transpire much sooner than it would otherwise, 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 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 they have towards the progressive thinkers of the world who are not actually within but are approaching the occult field of thought. They will observe, however, 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. Working alone, the disciple will not accomplish this. They will undoubtedly be powerful in their 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 self-centered opinions and self-sufficiency along their own lines are not very susceptible to change or open to the appeal of isolated evidence. Settled personal persuasion 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 strong evidence of this cooperative idea. The initiates of the various periods worked in the closest secret contact in all parts of the world. Whatever the particular work each did for humanity, it bore the immortal seal, the mark, the strength, and character of the united influence of the fraternity to which they

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. Then, as now, these evil tendencies, ever vigilant to thwart the progress of people 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 invisibly, as it were, 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. Primarily, 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 them should be a powerful, visible inducement to the disciple in this cycle to heed the call to cooperative effort. A greater inducement and of paramount importance to them is the fact of the corporate character of all sections of the Fraternity of Masters to which they have given their allegiance. There is no ancient tradition so jealously guarded as that which comprises the laws and principles and 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.

The Masters will have the corporate idea become a working factor in the disciple's life if they would know that tradition as a living organism of light, inspiration, and power. The Masters are not primarily interested in their personal development for themselves alone, but in centers of esoteric 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 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 INQUISITION 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 them to interpret the unfolding of their own

soul life and realize that the technique is a living and very personal matter.

I have had in mind this particular value from first to last in these books on the technique. I have written without reserve and from deep conviction on 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. 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 values traditional teaching and methods more than I do. There is nothing we need to be reminded of more 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 their energies to a quest unworthy of their original purpose may prove too strong for them and valuable time will be wasted. The important thing is that tradition shall not blind them to the necessities of the hour.

Bacon said that "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. Is it not wonderful, therefore, if the bonds of antiquity, authority, and unanimity, have so enchained the power of humankind, that it 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 their technique.

We respect traditional occult teaching and methods because they have stood the test of time. There is not a working disciple who is not indebted to them. They can no more deny their influence in their development and work than the author can repudiate the influence of literary tradition upon the language in which they create. Tradition has this 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 themselves a body of attested truth about their 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. 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.

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 basis 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 people ever 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 their own light and unfold their own order of experience, which alone is a real guide for them and that light will show them 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 and 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 at times, both in conjunction militate against the soul which has brought them to trial. 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 person 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 their 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 they may become capable under different and every kind of opportunities.” How is this to be discerned? By the way in which a disciple conducts themselves in relationships with other disciples to whom they are karmically attached in group work by their motive, speech, and action in relationships with those who pass within their sphere of occult service and by the selfish or impersonal use they make of the knowledge and force automatically passing within their control as a consequence of their fully conscious dedication of themselves to the Masters.

It will be obvious that a disciple working in comparative isolation cannot be fully put on trial in this way. They can only be brought to know themselves through a most searching inquisition of their emotional and mental life, and this can only take place within a sphere of active occult service in which their life is urged to expression in ordinary and exceptional circumstances of relationships with and adjustment to others. The Master’s word is very plain on this point: “of what they may become capable under different and every kind of opportunities.” The aspirant may think they know full well what they are or will be capable of when opportunities present themselves, but no trust is so perilous as new force in new hands. When 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 them from within, in response to their reiterated petition, to search and test the strength and weakness of their constitution, indifferent to whether they stand or fall.

The issue absolutely rests with the disciple. If they have chastened themselves aforesaid in mind and heart, cultured their emotions, developed their analytical faculties, and sharpened their intuition to a point of instant seizure of implicated motive and suggestion, the tension of a fiery force released in their economy and accentuating these developments will cause no unpropitious reactions, because the opportunities which it opens to the disciple in their relationships will have been largely anticipated during the period of technical discipline. They will stand firm as a rock in their own place, discerning

the possibility of ignominious failure veiled within the fair form of insidious temptation which suddenly rise before them as a ministering angel, inviting them 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 their common personhood.

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. If the disciple has not already definitely made their 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 use it so. They 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 their service, but the inquisition of it has proved too strong for a faulty mechanism, and the disciple has fallen in their own weakness before the portal of initiation. The tempter may be vanity, sexual gratification, intellectual pride, or it may be other manifest weaknesses, only brought out and emphasized under the inquisition of fire and which the Master, in their compassion, cannot condone. Prevalent as these failings are in the world of people, 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 their ministry.

They may think otherwise because of the veil of illusion which the form of the temptation casts upon them. 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 becomes

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, and 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 their way to the point of recognition and acceptance and enters upon what I have called the cooperative group work of discipleship, they will have to make a decisive choice between living over again for their own personal satisfaction the ripe product of past ambition which is now so powerfully influential in their consciousness and renouncing this for the higher and impersonal work to which their group affiliations invite them.

I have spoken of this as one of the most poignant stages encountered during graduation in the technique. No sooner is the alignment of the soul and personality established than the hidden culture and ability of the past begins to vigorously enter into the conscious mind and emphatically demand 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, and the other, a selfless passing 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 their enkindled enthusiasm, that a right choice would present no difficulty to them, but the fire of the soul will test them to an unknown degree 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 not make the choice an easy one.

I do not say that a true disciple will fail to make the right choice and without loss of time. The choice, I believe, will be made immediately as it is presented. 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. The fuller the person, the more comprehensive the experience that has been accumulated and is now being released into consciousness through the process of alignment, the more insistent this demand will be and the protest will be almost pitiful in its intensity.

I am not dealing with theories or with intellectual abstractions, but with the actual operation of the technique within the mind and heart of the disciple. They are 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 they can bear it and pass it on, it will be only upon the accumulated knowledge and strength that they have brought with them. The portals of the temple remain hidden behind the flame. They may even doubt their existence and demand proof of them. There is no response, only silence, from which their own voice must arise. "We have to know of what they may be capable." Whether they 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, the Master may place in them such instruments as they see fittest for the greater work before them.

Whatever the disciple thinks about having to make this choice, however, they may question with themselves the justice of it, and 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 the 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 them to sense vibrations and register rhythms entirely outside of the ordinary mental level. They 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 they are familiar and a complete master of, yet so relative in character to that divine tuition to which their whole training has prompted them and to 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 their consistent and sustained petition. It is the Master's solemn offer of acceptance.

The choice is made. The disciple has proved their impersonality and power of self-effacement. The inquisition of fire has not slain ambition, but 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 person, 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.

They have yet to prove their strength in maintaining that position. The forms of temptation they have stripped of their illusion and mastered on the objective plane have been the means by which they

have attained this ascendancy. They reappear now to test them in a far more subtle form. As a dominant and self-constituted spiritual force working for evolution, they are a menace to those psychic entities who are so interested in their advance as to desire their defeat and spare no means to secure it. They 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 their chosen path by the 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 they will need all of the circumspection and wisdom inculcated by their 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 of the fine technical qualities which, by the grace of the Master, have been conferred upon them and, through steadfast and patient onward living, evoke the whole force of the soul to transcend every hindrance and counteract every opposing influence to initiate them into the presence of the Master.



THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

Purpose and Work of the Order

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The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

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