

CHARACTER-BUILDING

Introduction

In our study of the rules of white magic, their application to the magical work is less important. The aspirant's training and the development of his character are more important. The magical work presupposes that he built up a fine character, that he has educated himself for service, that his aspiration is true and steady, that he is living purely and unselfishly, and that he has mastered meditation somewhat in its true meaning.^{1.1.10, 9.5.10}

How the knowledge is to be applied to the manifestation of forces in the world has to be a later issue. Now the objective is something different: to make aspirants, being first selves, take an interest in the second self, and to strengthen that interest so that it generates a force in them that is sufficient to impel them to go forward.^{1.1.10}

The Necessity of Character Building

Aspirants would be amazed if they could see their motives as the members of the planetary hierarchy see them. Mixed motive is universal. Unmixed, single motive is rare and where it exists there is always success so that the goal is reached. Such single motive can be entirely selfish and personal, belong exclusively to the first self; or unselfish and spiritual, belong exclusively to the second self; and in between. Where aspirants are concerned the motive is mixed in varying degree. According to the singleness of intent and to the awareness of purpose, so will be the potency.^{9.6.16}

All true aspirants know, however, that impediments are without number, are met with everywhere. Aspirants may achieve singleness of purpose occasionally, in high moments, but such moments do not last. There are the hindrances of physical nature, of heredity and environment, of character, of time and conditions, of collective as well as individual reaping. What shall aspirants do then? There is only one answer to that question: persist! Failure never prevents success. Difficulties develop the strength of the soul. The secret of success is always to stand steady and to be impersonal.^{9.6.19}

All who are working in world should recognize the need for non-identification and silence. The work before every aspirant who reads these instructions must consist in cultivating an attitude of non-identification. It is a mental non-identification which enables the thinker to dwell always in the higher mental and the causal (47:2-4) and from that centre of peace calmly and powerfully to carry out the work he has set before himself. He works in the world of men. He loves and comforts and serves. He pays no attention to his personality likes and dislikes, or to his prejudices and attachments. He stands as a rock of strength and as a strong hand in the dark to all whom he contacts. The cultivation of an attitude of non-identification with the first self and of identification with the second self, and 45:4 in particular, will cut at the very roots of a man's life; but it will render back a thousandfold for all that it cuts away.

Much has been written about non-identification and the need to develop non-identification. In the urgency of the present situation all aspirants are urged to leave off just reading and thinking about non-identification and to begin to practise it and to demonstrate it.

Why is non-criticism regarded as so essential a requirement? Because criticism (analysis and, consequently, separativeness) is the outstanding characteristic of mental types and also of all integrated first selves. Because criticism is a potent factor in activating mental and emotional matter and so making strong impression upon the brain cells and working out into words. Because in a sudden burst of critical thought, the entire personality can be activated into a potent coordination, but of a wrong kind and with disastrous results. Because criticism being a faculty of the lower mentality can hurt and wound and no man can proceed upon the

way as long as he inflicts wounds and pain knowingly.^{9.6.20-22}

The hierarchy's call to service usually meets with a response, but that response is coloured by the first self of the aspirant with its pride and ambition. He truly realizes the need. His desire to meet the need is genuine and sincere; his longing to serve and lift is real. The aspirant takes steps which he intends to enable him to fit in with the plan. Though there is no question as to the willingness and desire of aspirants to serve, their characters and temperaments are such that they present well nigh insuperable difficulties to the hierarchy, for it is through these aspirants that the hierarchy has to work.

These undesirable characteristics are often latent and do not appear until after the aspirant has undertaken service. That they are there, the watching guides may suspect, but even they have not the right to withhold opportunity to serve. When there is this delayed appearance, the tragedy is that many others suffer besides the aspirant concerned, people who have been attracted to the server by the idealism that he demonstrates simultaneously. The method of the great ones – to seek out those who have trained themselves somewhat in sensitive response and to work through them – carries with it certain dangers. The ordinary well-meaning aspirant is not in such danger as the more advanced and active disciple. The latter is in danger in three directions and can be swept off his feet in three ways:

1. His whole first self is under undue stimulation on account of his contacting both higher kinds of first-self consciousness (47:4) and also kinds of second-self consciousness (47:2,3 and 46:6,7) as well as the energies pertaining to these. This carries with it real danger, for he hardly knows as yet how to handle himself, and is scarcely aware of the risk entailed.

2. The people with whom he is working, in their turn, make his problem. Their greed, their adulation and praise, and their criticism tend to becloud his way. Because he is not sufficiently (detached =) free from identifications and spiritually advanced, he walks bemused in a cloud of thought-forms, and does not know it. Thus he loses his way and wanders from his original intent, and again he does not know it.

3. His latent weaknesses must emerge under the pressure of the work, and inevitably he will show signs of cracking at times. The first-self faults become strengthened as he seeks to carry his particular form of service to the world. That service is meant here which is he has sought and formulated himself on a background of personal ambition and love of power, even if he only partially recognizes them or does not recognize them at all. He is under strain naturally, and – like a man carrying a heavy load up a steep hill – he discovers points of strain, and evinces a tendency to break down physically, or to lower his ideal so as to adapt them to weaknesses.

To all this must be added the strain of the period itself, and the general condition of unhappy humanity. This subconsciously has its effect on all disciples, and on all who are now working in the world. Some are showing signs of pressure on their organisms, though their emotional and mental life remains poised and normal, sane and rightly oriented. Others are breaking up emotionally, and this produces two effects according to the point of development of the aspirant to service. He is either, through the strain, learning non-identification, and this is what might be called the “defense mechanism” of the soul in this present period of world unfoldment, or he is becoming increasingly nervous and is on the way to become a neurotic. Others, again, are feeling the pressure in the mental envelope. They become bewildered in some cases and no clear truth appears to them. They then work on without inspiration, and because they know it to be right and they also have the rhythm of work. Others are grasping opportunity as they see it and, to do so, fall back on innate self-assertion (which is the outstanding fault of the mental types) and build up a structure around their service, and construct a form which in reality embodies what they desire, what they think to be right, but which is separative and the product of their mentality and not the product of causal conscious-

ness. Some, in their turn, more potent and more coordinated, feel the pressure of the entire first self. Their emotionality and their mentality as well responds both to need and to the theory of the plan. They realize their truly valuable assets and know they have somewhat to contribute. They are still, however, so full of their first self that their service is gradually and steadily stepped down to the level of that first self, and is consequently coloured by their first-self reactions, their likes and dislikes, and their individual life tendencies and habits. These eventually assert themselves and there is then a worker, doing good work but spoiling it all by his unrealized separateness and individual methods. This means that such a worker gathers to himself only those whom he can subordinate and govern. His group is not coloured by the ideas of the new age, but by the separative instincts of the worker at the centre. The danger here is so subtle that much care must be taken by a disciple in self-analysis. It is so easy to be glamourised by the beauty of one's own ideals and vision, and by the supposed rectitude of one's own position, and yet all the time be influenced subjectively by love of personal power, individual ambition, jealousy of other workers, and the many traps which catch the feet of the unwary disciple.

But if aspirants cultivate true impersonality, if they develop the power to stand steady, if they handle every situation in a spirit of love and if they refuse to take hasty action and to permit separation to creep in, then a group of true servers will grow, the gathering out of those who can realize the plan and help bring to birth the new age and its attendant advances.

²¹To do this, they must possess courage of the rarest kind. Fear holds the world in thrall, and no one is exempt from its influence. For the aspirant and for the disciple there are two kinds of fear which require to be especially considered. The fears that we dealt with in the earlier part of the treatise, and the fears that are inherent in existence itself are familiar to all of us. They have their root in the instinctual nature (economic fears, fears arising out of the sex life, physical fear and terror, fear of the unknown, with that dominating fear of death which colours so many people's lives) and have been the subject of much psychological investigation. Those fears will not be dealt with here. They are to be overcome by causal consciousness as it permeates and transforms the daily life and by the refusal of the aspirant to accord them any recognition. The first method builds towards future strength of character, and prevents the coming in of any new fears. They cannot exist when causal consciousness is controlling life and its situations. The second method counteracts the old thought-forms and brings about eventually their destruction through lack of nourishment. Two processes are therefore carried forward: the one producing a genuine manifestation of the qualities of the second self and the other a growing freedom from the thralldom of age-old fears. The aspirant finds himself becoming steadily (detached =) liberated from identification with the prime governing instincts which have hitherto served to retain him in the elementary collective life of the planet. It might be valuable here to point out that all the major instincts have their roots in that peculiar quality of the planetary life, that is to say, fear reactions, leading to activity of some kind.^{11.4.14-21}

But what of the two fears with which the aspirant has peculiar concern? What of the fear of public opinion and the fear of failure? These are two potent factors in the life of service, and hinder many.

Those who are beginning to work in cooperation with the plan and are learning the significance of service are prone to fear that what they do will be criticized and misjudged, will not be sufficiently liked, appreciated and understood. They demand liking and praise. They gauge success by numbers of adherents and by response. They dislike to have their motives impugned and misjudged, and rush violently into explanation. They are unhappy if their methods, the personnel of their group, and the way in which they render service come under criticism. The false objectives of numbers, of power, or of a formulated doctrine control

them. Unless what they do measures up to the standards or conforms to the technique of the group of intellects which surrounds them or appeals the most to them, they are unhappy and consequently frequently change their plans, alter their viewpoint, and lower their standard until it conforms to their immediate mass psychology, or their chosen counselors.

The true disciple sees the vision. He then seeks to keep so closely in touch with his Augoeides that he can stand with steadiness while he endeavours to make that vision a reality. He aims to achieve what, from the standpoint of the world, seems to be impossible, knowing that the vision is not realized through expediency and undue adaptation of the suggested ideas of worldly or intellectual counselors. He considers public opinion and the advice of those who are Piscean in their tendencies and not Aquarian carefully but not unduly so. When he finds the advice to be separative and tend to eliminate harmony, and produce a lack of brotherly love and understanding, he discards it at once. When a critical attitude towards other workers in the field of world service is constantly shown and where there is a capacity to see only selfishness and fault and to impute wrong motives and to believe evil, then the true disciple refuses to be swayed and goes serenely on his way.

It should be emphatically said that in the coming cycle the true work will be carried forward (the work of spiritually welding the world into a synthesis and the production of a recognized brotherhood of souls) only by those who refuse to be separative and whose words are watched so that no evil is spoken. These are the workers who see the divine in all and refuse to think evil and impute evil. They work with sealed lips. They deal not with their brother's affairs, nor reveal that which concerns them. Their lives are coloured by understanding and by love. Their mentality are characterized by a trained (spiritual perception =) perception of that which is of the second self, a faculty which employs a keen intellect as the corollary of a loving spirit.

These men and women whose mission it is to inaugurate the new age have learned the secret of silence. They are animated ceaselessly by a spirit of inclusive love. They do not allow themselves to be led astray into the field of ordinary criticism, and they permit no condemnation of others. They are animated by the spirit of protection. To them will be committed the work of fostering the life of the new age.

To those who have not yet reached this point in evolution and whose vision is not so clear, nor their natures so self-disciplined, there remains the important work, on a lower level, of working with their kind. Their abilities and qualities bring to them those who resemble them. They do not work in such loneliness and their work is more outwardly successful, though not always so.

It must be remembered that all work, in the sight of the great ones, is of equal importance. Do not forget this and seek to see life truly and not with its distinctions – men-made and dangerous. A disciple who has not yet the fuller vision of a more trained worker and who is only just learning the ABC of public work may, with all his failures and dense stupidities, be doing as well as an older disciple with his wider knowledge and experience.^{11.4.37-43}

All those who read these instructions are urged to forget their likes and their dislikes and to overlook the personality hindrances which inevitably exist in themselves and in all who work in the physical world, handicapped by the first self. All workers are urged to remember that the day of opportunity is with us and that it will not last forever. The pettiness of the human frictions, the failures to understand each other, the little faults which have their roots in the first self and which are, after all, ephemeral, the ambitions and illusions – all of this must go. If the workers would practise non-identification, knowing that the Law works and that the purposes of the planetary government must finally be realized and if they would learn never to criticize in thought or word, the salvaging of the world would proceed apace and the new age of love and illumination would be ushered in.^{9.6.23}

Warnings and a Summarization of Much Earlier Said

First, do not hold on to the form no matter what it be. All forms are but experiments, and with time reach the point where they are in balance to be then either discarded or vitalized.

Secondly, remember that all first selves have their periods of ebb and flow, under the law of periodicity. The periods of ebb in the case of those holding prominent position cause at times consternation to all those who follow their personalities, and not their own potential divinity.

Thirdly, bear in mind that just as in the individual life there come the periods of decline and darkness, wherein the vision is obscured, so in groups will the same be seen. But bear equally in mind that after obscurity succeeds the vision, and after night comes the day. The corresponding occurs in the the greater cycles affecting great collectives, such as root-races and subraces, just as in the case of the great planetary and solar systemic groups.

Fourthly, do not permit yourselves to be discouraged. Discouragement is due to three causes. Paramountly it is due to the lowering of the vitality of the organism. When such is the case, the emotional envelope makes too strong a demand on the organism. In the endeavour to make the organism obey the demands of emotionality and in the realization of incapacity to do so adequately lies one cause of discouragement. This often attacks those of you who are finely organized in the physical envelopes. The cure for this kind of discouragement is rest and relaxation, which give time for nature to correct the imbalance. The sun too revitalizes with prana and this should be considered. Common sense is the special requirement, and also the realization that one's work should be adjusted to one's capacity, and not to the overwhelming need.

Another basis for discouragement is the over-development of mentality, which in its turn makes too great a demand on the emotional nature, and consequently again on the physical. Too great a capacity to see all around a subject, too disproportionate a comprehension of the world's need, and too quick an apprehension of the many issues involved in connection with some particular matter produce a violent reaction in an uncontrolled emotional envelope. It is here that one must cultivate a sense of proportion, the faculty of wise balancing, of achieving and keeping the mental equilibrium. The cure lies in the realization that the goal will finally be reached with time and in the course of evolution, and that everything does not depend on one's individual effort.

A third ground lies in what is more definitely esoteric, that is to say, in the balancing between the opposites. When the pendulum swings towards the dark, evil, and undesirable, it produces in all those who are oriented towards the light a tension which results in discomfort in all the envelopes of incarnation, and is sensed as depression especially by the etheric envelope. The more sensitive this envelope, the stronger the reaction to this kind of temptation. It is one of the things which hinder the aspirants in particular. It renders them negative and receptive to the the energies of the lowest three worlds (47:4–49:7), and reduces their vibration rate. It hampers their efficiency, and their service to the world suffers in consequence. The cure for discouragement does not lie in cultivating a violent counter-vibration. It lies in the wise use of the mental envelope, in a capacity to reason logically, and to see that the cause of the conditions lies either in one's own first self or in one's environment. It lies also in the stilling of mental consciousness and a subsequent seeking of contact with Augoeides and, via him, with one's own causal group and consequently with one's teacher. It must never be forgotten that contact with the teacher is made in this order, and that he who comes more and more under the guidance of Augoeides is he who more and more enters into the consciousness of his teacher. Augoeides is always the first teacher.

Then having with unselfish intent linked up with the teacher, there comes next the deliberate and concentrated effort to work with pure dispassion, and with no desire to see the

fruit of action. This process, long continued and pursued with patience, will result eventually in the attaining of an equilibrium which nothing can disturb.

There are five virtues, which those who have chosen the path of esoterics need to cultivate, and which the group should specially seek to acquire. They are as follows: 1) the purity of motive, 2) utter fearlessness, 3) imagination balanced wisely by the reasoning faculty, 4) discrimination that accepts only that which is compatible with one's own highest reason, 5) willingness to experiment.

These five virtues, coupled with purity of life and control of thought, will lead to achievement. Remember too that it is not purposed that you should find out all the knowable, but only just as much of it as you may employ wisely for the illumination of the race and of those whom you can each, in your own place, influence.^{6.5.1-9}

9 Cyclic Ebb and Flow

In the understanding of the law of cycles, we may understand the underlying laws of evolution and come to realize that creation works rhythmically. Incidentally also we gain poise as we study our own life impulses, for they also have their ebb and flow, and alternate between periods of light and periods of darkness.

Change between light and darkness, emergence and submergence, activity and passivity characterizes the growth and development of all forms, of individuals, as well as of nations and races. Not understanding this may become a problem for the aspirant who has built for himself a picture of walking constantly in the light.^{4.9.2,3}

The most obvious cycle for every monad is that of incarnation–discarnation. In one respect, monads can be divided into two groups: those who seek experience and self-expression in the physical world and those who seek understanding and are attracted away from the physical world to the causal world. Psychologists speak of extravert and introvert human types. These two groups or types correspond to the two opposite movements of incarnation and discarnation.

There are periods of activity and passivity also in the experience of the monad in a certain world, and each such period covers many cycles of incarnation–discarnation. Incarnating monads seek physical, emotional, and mental experience, and work this up in the emotional and mental worlds at the end of their incarnations. Within the aspirant there arises an understanding of what is going on and there awakens a will to control intentionally the two movements of the cycle: to turn the outgoing energy in any direction he chooses, and to withdraw it to his centre at will. He seeks to arrest the process of being swept out into incarnation without having any conscious purpose, and likewise to be withdrawn from the physical life without his conscious will. Hence he becomes an aspirant to discipleship.^{4.9.6,7}

Aspirantship begins by the aspirant repeating earlier cycles. He is assailed by a sudden stimulation physical urges and emotional desires. This may be succeeded by a cycle wherein the physical body (the organism and the etheric envelope) is deprived of vital energy and is devitalized, because not the object of attention. This accounts for much of the sickness and lack of vitality of many aspirants and disciples. The corresponding process can affect the emotional envelope, so that periods of exaltation and of highest aspiration alternate with periods of the deepest depression and lack of interest. In the mental envelope the flow may produce a cycle of intense mental activity with constant study and much reflection, whereas in the succeeding ebb all study is distasteful, and the very intellect seems dry and inert.

All true seekers after truth are conscious of this instability and frequently regard it as a fault to be strenuously fought.^{4.9.5-9}

That states of feeling are quite immaterial and are no indication of the state of the causal being. The aspirant must try to centre himself in the causal consciousness, refuse to be

influenced by the alternating conditions to which he seems subjected, and simply “stand in spiritual being” and then “having done all, stand”.

The aspirant can achieve equilibrium only where alternation has been the rule. The cycles of ebb and flow will continue just as long as the monad’s attention fluctuates between one or other envelope of incarnation and the causal envelope.

The ideal is to achieve such a condition of conscious control that at will a man may be focused in his causal consciousness or in the consciousness of some one of the envelopes of incarnation, each such act of focused attention being brought about through the realization that he is working to achieve a specific objective, necessitating such a focussing.

The act of service to be rendered will determine the point where the self is centred, but it will be the same self, whether freed temporarily from the consciousness of the envelopes of incarnation (47:4–49:7) or centred in this in order to function better in the pertaining worlds. The man conscious in the second triad seeks to further the plan and to identify himself with the consciousness aspect. He endeavours to focus himself in the centre of the causal envelope and then, having done so, he focuses himself in his mental envelope. He subjects himself to this limitation in order to learn how to serve in the best way. He seeks to reach the consciousness aspect of men and to inspire them. Correspondingly he focuses his consciousness in his emotional envelope to express feelings of unity to all forms of life in the physical world, or in the etheric envelope to transmit healing and constructive energies in the physical world.^{4.9.11-14}

The true mystic, who has contacted world 46, has his consciousness centred in the crown centre and almost entirely in the etheric envelope. The advanced worldly man is centred in the pituitary region, which is connected with the eyebrow centre. When, through esoteric training and knowledge, the relation between the first self and the causal envelope is established, there is a midway spot in the centre of the head, and it is here that the aspirant takes his stand. This is the spot of vital import. It is etheric for the etheric envelope has now become the instrument of conscious service, of directed control, and of force utilization towards specific ends.

Here the magician takes his stand and through his etheric envelope performs the magical creative work.^{4.9.18,19}

From the embryonic 46-envelope and from the focus of consciousness point within it, the monad projects its consciousness into the midway spot in the middle of the brain, where the magical work must, in relation to the physical world, be carried out. This ability to project the consciousness from the 46-envelope into the etheric envelope is gradually acquired by the disciple as he in his meditation work develops the ability to focus his attention in one or other of the centres of the etheric envelope. He gradually gains that control of consciousness which will enable him, the monad, the self, to direct consciousness and play on the centres, as a musician utilizes the seven notes of music. When he has achieved this he can begin to train himself in more extended focussings and must learn to withdraw his self-conscious attention to the 46-envelope and from there redirect his energies.

The fundamental secret of the cycles lies in this withdrawal and the subsequent refocusing of attention. It must be remembered in this connection that the basic law underlying all magical work is that “energy follows thought”. If aspirants remembered this they would live through their periods of aridity with greater ease and would be conscious of the underlying purpose.

The dangers of the midway spot are too violent fluctuations between “land and water”, between life in the physical world and the emotional response to that life. Some aspirants are too emotional in their reactions; others too physical. The effect of this is felt in the midway spot and produces a violent instability. This instability has a direct effect on the solar plexus centre, which was the midway spot to the early Atlanteans, and is still the midway point in the transmutation processes of the aspiring first self. It transmutes and transmits the energies of

the sacral and basal centres, and is the clearing house for all energies focused in the centres below the diaphragm.

There are dangers incident to a premature and uncontrolled pouring in of second triad energy (causal, 47:1, and essential, 46:1) into the first self. Such energy enters through the crown centre and reaches the other head centres. From them it will follow the line of least resistance, which is determined by the trend of the aspirant's everyday life.

Another and rather potent danger is the result of bringing together the physical and the emotional. It demonstrates in objective perception of the emotional world penetrating into the brain consciousness. One of the first tendencies an aspirant becomes aware of is a tendency to psychic perception of a lower kind such as clairvoyance and mediumism. It is a faculty of the solar plexus centre, and this midway point can be utilized as a door into the world of emotional phenomena. Then it may happen that the aspirant "dies by drowning", that is to say, he becomes so engrossed by his interest in this lower psychism that his higher consciousness development ceases. It is here that many worthy aspirants go astray, and even if temporarily, they lose time in futile experimentation and detours, as they later have to begin all over again on a lower level.

It is from the solar plexus centre that the first self usually lets itself be directed at mankind's present general stage of development.^{4.9.21-26}

Harmlessness

The causes of evil in the world around us, including the three subhuman kingdoms, are in man's misuse of force, not only the force of his physical actions, but also his misuse of emotional and mental force, which cause harmful magnetic conditions. How can we, as individuals, change this? By developing harmlessness in ourselves. Therefore, study yourself from this angle. Study your daily conduct – doings, words, and thoughts – so as to make them unable to do harm. Intentionally think such thoughts about yourself and others as are constructive and positive, and hence harmless in their effects. Observe your emotional effect on others so that no negative emotional reaction can you harm a fellowman. Remember in this connection that violent spiritual aspiration and enthusiasm, misplaced or misdirected, may quite easily harm a fellowman, so look not only at your wrong tendencies but also at the use of your virtues.

If harmlessness is the keynote of your life, you will do more to produce right harmonious conditions in your personality than any amount of discipline along other lines. The drastic purgation brought about by the attempt to be harmless will go far to eliminate wrong states of function.^{2.2.24,25}

Therefore, practise harmlessness with zest and understanding, for if truly carried out it is the destroyer of all limitation. Its opposite, desire to harm, is based on selfishness and on an egocentric attitude. It is the demonstration of forces concentrated for self-assertion, self-aggrandizement, and self-justification. Harmlessness is the expression of the life of the man who realizes himself to be everywhere, who lives consciously in the second triad, whose nature is unity, whose method is inclusiveness, and to whom all forms are alike in that they veil and hide the light, and are but externalizations of the one infinite Being. This realization will demonstrate in a true understanding of a brother's need, an understanding divorced from sentiment and personal gain. It will lead to that silence which grows out of non-reference to the separate self. It will produce that instantaneous response to true need which characterizes the Great Ones who, passing beneath the outer appearance, see the inner cause of the conditions that people notice in the outer life, and so, from that wisdom, can give true help and guidance. Harmlessness brings about in the life caution in judgment, reticence in speech, ability to refrain from impulsive action, and the demonstration of a non-critical attitude. So,

free passage can be given to the forces of unity, those energies from the second self which seem to vitalize the first self, leading consequently to right action.

An evening review should be carried forward entirely along this line. The review should have reference to: 1) Harmlessness in thought resulting in the control of speech. 2) Harmlessness in emotional reaction resulting in the individual's being a channel for the unity aspect of the second self. 3) Harmlessness in physical action resulting in skill in action and the release of the creative will. What the individual should particularly observe is the effect this has on his "his own self" (his envelopes, his apparent selves), on his own development, and on his fellow human beings.^{2.2.28,29}

Salvation from our Thought-Forms

The following is for aspirants, who, through concentration and meditation, are gaining power in thought; for the thinkers of the world, who, through their one-pointed application and devotion have their mentality (not emotionality) constantly oriented to some kind of activity, which is necessarily a part of the plan of the planetary government for the consciousness development of mankind.

It is right here, in the use of thought, that the difference between black and white magic can be seen. Selfishness, ruthlessness, hatred, and cruelty characterize the worker in mental matter whose motives are, for many incarnations, centred around his own aggrandizement, focused on his personal acquisition of possessions, and directed entirely to the attainment of his own pleasure and satisfaction, no matter what the cost to others. Such men are happily few, but the way to such a point of view is easy to achieve, and many need to guard themselves lest they tread unthinkingly the way towards self-interest.

A gradual and steady growth in group consciousness and group responsibility, a submergence of the wishes of the first self and the manifestation of a loving spirit characterize those who are oriented towards the consciousness aspect of the divine whole. Viewed from this angle human beings may be assigned to three main groups:

1. The vast majority of people, who are neither good nor bad, but simply unthinking, and entirely submerged in the mass consciousness, and do not know that they are here to develop a true self-consciousness and to acquire the equipment they need for that mission.

2. A very small number of people who are definitely and intentionally working on the side of evil. They are powerful in the physical world, but their power is temporal, not eternal. The cosmic law, which is the law of unity, is eternally against them, and evil, being active temporarily, will eventually be transformed into good.

3. A goodly number of people who are the pioneers into the kingdom of the second self, who are the exponents of the new age ideas, and the custodians of that aspect of esoterics which is next to be revealed to mankind. This group is constituted of the unselfish and intelligent men and women in every field of human endeavour, of the aspirants and disciples, of the initiates.

The people of the first group are unthinking; those of two other groups are beginning to think and to employ the laws of thought. What is to be discussed next is how aspirants use their faculty of thought. Much about thought will be found in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, but here will be given some practical ideas and suggestions which will help the average aspirant to work as he should.

Let us remember first of all that no aspirant, no matter how sincere and devoted, is free from faults. Were he free, he would be an adept. All aspirants are still selfish, still prone to temper and to irritability, still subject to depression and even at times to hatred. Often that temper and hatred may be aroused by what we call just causes. Injustice on the part of others, cruelty to human beings and to animals, and the hatreds and viciousness of their fellow men

do arouse in them corresponding reactions, and cause them much suffering and delay. One thing must ever be remembered. If an aspirant evokes hatred in an associate, if he arouses him to temper, and if he meets with dislike and antagonism, it is because he himself is not entirely harmless; there are still in him the seeds of trouble, for it is a law of life that we get what we give, and produce reactions in line with our activity, be it physical, emotional, or mental.

There are certain kinds of men who do not come under this category. When a man has reached a certain higher stage, the case is different. The seed ideas he seeks to convey, the work he is empowered to do, the pioneering enterprise he is endeavouring to carry forward, may – and often do – call forth from those who do not sense the beauty of his cause and the rightness of the truth he enunciates, a hatred and a fury which causes him much trouble and for which he is not personally responsible. This antagonism comes from reactionaries and emotional people and it should be remembered that it is largely impersonal even though focused on him as the representative of an idea. But such highly developed people are not meant here, but students of esoterics who are learning not only that they seldom think, but that when they do they are often thinking wrongly, for they are forced into a thought activity by reactions which have their seat in their lower nature, and are based on selfishness and lack of love. And all reaction is basically and originally physical and emotional, never purely mental.

There are three lessons which every aspirant needs to learn.

First, that every thought-form which he builds is built under the impulse of some desire, some feeling or imagination. In rarer cases it may be built in the light of some causal idea, therefore, some intuition. But with the majority, the motivating impulse which sweeps mental matter into activity is an emotional one, a potent, more or less selfish desire.

Secondly, that the thought-form so constructed will either remain in his own aura, or will find its way to a sensed objective. In the first case, it will form part of a dense wall of such thought-forms which entirely surround him or constitute his mental aura. In so far as he pays attention to it, will grow in strength until it is so large that it will shut out reality from him, or it will be so dynamic and potent that he will become the victim of that which he built. In this case the thought-form will be more powerful than its creator, so that he becomes obsessed by his own ideas, and driven by his own creation. In the second case, his thought-form will find its way into the mental aura of another human being, or into some group. You have here the seeds of evil magical work in which a stronger intellect imposes its will on a weaker one. If it finds its way into some group, analogous emotionally impulsive forms (found within the group aura) will coalesce with it, having the same vibratory rate. Then the same thing will take place in the group aura as has taken place within the individual delimiting sphere: the group will have around it an inhibiting wall of thought-forms, or it will be obsessed by some idea. Here we have the clue to all sectarianism, to all fanaticism, and to some forms of insanity, both group and individual.

Thirdly, that the creator of the thought-form (in this case an aspirant) remains responsible. The form remains linked to him by his living purpose and therefore the result of the form, and the ultimate work of destroying the form which he has built must be his reaping. This is true of every idea that has been clothed in a physical form, the good as well as the bad. The creator of all of them is responsible for the work of his creation. 44-self J., for instance, has still to deal with the thought-forms which we call the Christian Church, and has much to do. Both Christos–Maitreya and Gautama Buddha have still some consummating work to carry through, though not so much with the forms which embody their enunciated principles, as with the individuals who have evolved through the application of those principles.

With the aspirant, however, who is still learning to think, the problem is different. He is still prone to use mental matter to embody his mistaken apprehension of the reality ideas; he is still apt to express his likes and dislikes through the power of thought; he is still inclined to

use mental matter to make possible the desires of his first self. To this every sincere aspirant will bear witness.

Many aspirants are very concerned as to the guarding of thoughts and the protection of formulated ideas. Some thoughts are ideas, clothed in mental matter and remain in the mental world. Such are the abstract conceptions and the scarcely sensed facts of the esoteric life that pass through the intellect of the thinker. They are not so difficult to guard, for their vibrations are so high and are perceived so faintly that few people have the power to clothe them adequately in mental matter, thus formulate them comprehensibly to mental consciousness, and those few are so very scarce that the risk of such statements being unwisely promulgated is not very great.

The communications in which the esoteric teachers give their instructions need to be protected from unauthorized receivers as well. The circle of those who apprehend those instructions is widening somewhat, and these thought-forms frequently take to themselves emotional matter from the aspirant's desire to verify, corroborate, and share with the group whose thirst for knowledge is as strong as his. Sometimes this is permissible, and sometimes not. If prohibited what is the method applied to protect the knowledge then? Largely a refusal to allow emotional matter to adhere to the mental thought-form. Let emotionality fight the matter out in its world, and in so doing inhibit its matter from formulating anything on this issue. Where no desire to speak exists, and where the striving is to prevent the gathering of matter around the nucleus, another thought-form is built up, one that intervenes and protects.

The most prevalent thought-forms, and the ones that cause the most trouble, are the things said, felt, and thought, sometimes detailed, about people's work and personalities, the basis of what may very easily degenerate into gossip and slander. How shall you prevent your consciousness from transmitting to another such things as these? What is untrue in the thought-form you devitalize with love, breaking it in pieces with the power of a counter thought-form of peace and harmony and by directing a loving thought to the human being who is the target of gossip or slander. What is true in the thought-form cannot be devitalized or disintegrated, but into your heart centre you absorb it and there transmute it by the alchemy of love.

You who know so much more than the average man, will realize that a mistake in life may be conditioned by reaping, or have its basis in a good motive wrongly construed. In such a case you do not add to the talk, you do not hand on the information. As far as you are concerned the thought-form, built around the fact, has wandered into a cul-de-sac. Then you build a counter-stream of good, loving thoughts which you send your apparently erring brother: thoughts of kindly assistance, of courage and aspiration, and of a wise application of the lessons to be learnt from the deed he has accomplished. Do not use force, for strong thinkers must not unduly influence others, but a gentle stream of wise transmuting love.^{8.3.1-19}

A powerful thought-form can act like a boomerang. It can return, charged with increased force, to the one who sent it on its mission. A strong hatred, clothed in mental matter, can return to its creator charged with the energy of the hated person. If an aspirant is guilty of this hatred, it can work havoc in his life. Do not hate, for hatred returns ever from whence it came.

A strong desire for material acquisition will eventually return bringing inevitably that which has been desired. Where aspirants are concerned, they find in the majority of cases that they no longer ache for possession, but regard it as a burden, or that, in the meantime, they already possess more than they need and are satiated and do not know what to do with all that they have gained. They have arrived at the increasingly clear realization that they do not need what they desired, and did not desire what they need.

A potent thought-form embodying an aspiration for spiritual illumination – influx of causal light, reception of causal ideas – or for recognition by the teacher, the 45-self, may bring such

a flood of light as to blind the aspirant, and make him consequently the possessor of a wealth of spiritual energy for which he is unready, and which he cannot use. Again, it may attract to the aspirant an imagination-form of one of the Great Ones, and thus swing him deeper into the emotional world with its illusionism. Hence the need for humility, for a longing to serve and a resulting self-forgetfulness if one is to build truly and correctly. Such is the law.

A thought-form can also act as a poisoning agent. It may not be strong enough to swing out of its creator's aura (very few thought-forms are), and find its goal in another aura there to gather strength and so return from whence it came. But it may have a vitality of its own which can embitter and devastate the life of the aspirant. He cannot progress in consciousness development, for his contact with higher, second-self consciousness has been broken through mental self-poisoning. His vision becomes distorted, his nature corroded, and he cannot rid himself of this mental-emotional poison no matter how hard he tries or how clearly he sees (theoretically) the cause of his trouble. This is one of the commonest forms of difficulty, for it has its seat in the selfish first self, and is often so adaptable that it seems to defy direct action.

The aspirant must also guard himself against becoming obsessed by his own mental conceptions, be they temporarily right or basically wrong. All right conceptions are temporary in nature and must eventually take their place as partial rights and give place to the greater truth. A man can have grasped some of the lesser principles of esoterics so clearly and be so convinced of the correctness of his conception of them that he forgets the bigger whole and he builds a thought-form about the partial truth which he has seen. This partial truth can prove a limitation and keep him a prisoner and hold him back from progress. He is so sure of his possession of truth that he can see the truth of no one else. Then he has forgotten that his own consciousness is always very limited, that the truth that he perhaps possesses has come to him via his own causal consciousness, which is always coloured by its department (ray), and has subsequently been built into form by his personal separative mentality. If he becomes such a fanatic, he lives but for that little truth; he can see no other; he forces his thought-form on other people; he becomes mentally unbalanced, even if the world regards him as sane.

How shall a man guard himself from these dangers? How shall he build right? How shall he preserve that balance which will enable him to see the truth, judge right, and so preserve the contact between mental and causal consciousness both as for himself and as for other people?

First and foremost, by constantly practising harmlessness. This involves harmlessness in speech, in thought, and consequently in action. It is an active harmlessness, involving constant activity and watchfulness. It is not a passive and adaptable "tolerance".

Secondly, by daily guarding the doors of thought and controlling the thought life, not permitting certain lines of thought; setting off certain old thought habits by instituting constructive creative thinking; relegating certain preconceived ideas to the background so that the new horizons will be visioned and the new ideas can enter. This will entail a daily, hourly watchfulness, but only until ancient habits of thoughts have been overcome and the new rhythm has been established. Then the aspirant will discover that his attention is so focused on the new spiritual ideas that the old thought-forms will fail to catch his interest; they will die of inanition. There is encouragement in this thought. The first three years work will be the hardest. After that the intellect will be engrossed by the ideas and not by the thought-forms.

Thirdly, by refusing to live in one's own thought world and by entering the world of ideas and the stream of human thought currents. The world of ideas is the causal world. The stream of human thoughts is in the mental world. The aspirant must function free in both worlds. Note this with care. The thought is not that he must function freely, which involves more the idea of facility, but that he must function as a free agent – be independent of the collective pressure, the consensus trance ruling in the worlds of man. Through constant daily meditation (and mastering the hylozoic mental system, which he then makes the object of his meditation,

for meditation cannot run idle) he does the first. Through wide reading and sympathetic interest and understanding he accomplishes the second.

Fourthly, he must learn to detach himself from his own thought creations, and leave them free to accomplish the purpose for which he intelligently sent them forth. This fourth process falls into two parts: 1) By using a mystic phrase he severs the link which holds the thought-form, expressing an idea, in his mental aura. 2) By detaching his mentality from the idea, once he has sent it on its mission, he learns the lesson of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and “works without identification”.

These two processes will run differently according to the aspirant’s level of development, experience, and status. Each has, for himself, to formulate his own “severing phrase”, and each has for himself, alone and unaided, to learn to look away from the three worlds wherein he works in his effort to push his idea of the work to be done. He has to teach himself to withdraw his attention from the thought-form he has built to express that idea, knowing that as he lives in causal consciousness, and as energy from the second triad pours through him, so his thought-form will express the causal idea and accomplish its work. It is held together by second-triad unity energy, and not by first-triad desire energy. His work lies in the world of causes, the world of ideas, the causal world, and not in the world of effects, the physical world. The physical expression will then automatically obey the causal idea.^{8.3.24-34}

L.A. November 20, 2014.