

Munich, 6th June, 1907

We must be clear what the proper foundations are for an esoteric training and what its true nature consists of. The school to which we belong is composed of different circles. All those who have newly joined it are the 'seekers'. Those who make some progress belong to the 'practising' students, and after this stage follows the actual 'training'. Our school is composed of these three groups. We all entered the Esoteric School in order to develop certain organs within us, which can enable us to experience the higher worlds for ourselves. How does one develop organs within oneself? All our organs have been built up as a result of our own previous activity. Let us take an example to clarify this: there was once a time when none of us yet had eyes. At that time, the human being floated and swam in a watery primeval sea. He had an organ for orientating himself, which is now only present in a vestigial form. This is the so-called pineal gland, which lies in the upper part of the middle of the head, and is somewhat involuted. We can see it in some animals if we remove the top of the skull. This organ enabled the primeval human being to perceive whether he was approaching something helpful or harmful. Above all, though, it was an organ for perceiving warmth and cold. When, in those times, the sun shone down upon the earth, the human being could not see it; but the pineal gland led him to the parts of the watery ocean which it had warmed. And this warmth gave him a feeling of great delight. He would remain there for long periods, drawing very close to the surface so that the rays of the sun could warm him. And because the sun's rays fell directly upon his body, the eyes began to be formed. Two things, therefore, were necessary for eyes to develop: the sun had to shine, firstly, but the human beings also had to swim to the sun-warmed places and expose themselves to the sun. If they had not done that, but instead had said: "I will only develop what is already in me", then they might well have developed a larger and larger pineal gland - a monster of an organ - but they would never have received eyes.

We must think in this same way about the development of spiritual eyes. One should not say: "The higher worlds are already within me, I only need to develop and draw them out." The primeval people were not able to draw the sun out of themselves, but they could form the organs with which they could see it. We also can only form the organs to see the spiritual sun and the higher worlds: we cannot draw them out of ourselves. And we will never be able to develop these organs if, on the one hand, the spiritual sun does not shine upon us and, on the other hand, we do not hurry to expose ourselves to it so that it can. The places where the spiritual sun shines for us are the esoteric schools: all those who feel drawn to the esoteric schools are warmed by its rays when they heed the instructions and directions they receive there. Every organ which had a past will also have a future. The pineal gland will, in the future, again become an important organ. Those who are in the esoteric schools are already working at its formation. The exercises which we receive affect not only the astral and etheric bodies but also the pineal gland. When their effect becomes very penetrating, it permeates from the pineal gland into the lymph vessels and from there into the blood. All human beings will, in the future, have a developed pineal gland – not only those who now practise occult exercises. But in the case of those who constitute the evil race, it will be an organ for the worst and most terrible impulses, and so big that the greatest part of the body will consist of it. Just as one sees a host of midges in the distance as a swarm, so, if one looked down from space at the earth when the host of glandular human bodies are wandering about on it, one would see the earth itself as a great gland. But those who form their pineal gland in the right way will have a very precious and perfect organ.

Now we are going to examine more closely the exercises which are given to us, remembering that they are ones which render our souls receptive to the spiritual sun-rays.

The six subsidiary exercises serve as a preparation for the actual occult exercises. Whoever dedicates himself to them with proper seriousness and enthusiasm, will find that they develop in him the fundamental disposition of soul which is necessary to reap the benefit of the occult exercises.

1. *Control of one's thoughts.* We should find at least five free minutes every day and contemplate a thought which is as insignificant as possible, which does not hold any interest for us whatsoever: everything which we can possibly think about the topic should be logically ordered and arranged. It is important that it should not be a significant or very interesting theme, for it is precisely the self-discipline we need to concentrate on it for a long time which can awaken the slumbering faculties of the soul. After some time one will notice a feeling of stability and certainty in the soul. We must not imagine, though, that this feeling will suddenly and powerfully come over us. No, it is a very subtle and delicate feeling which we must carefully listen out for. Those who will say that they could find absolutely no trace of this feeling are like somebody who goes out to find a tiny delicate object from amongst many other objects. He searches, it is true, but only generally and superficially, overlooking the tiny object. We must grow very still and listen inwardly, then we will find this feeling: we will become aware of it in the front part of the head. When we sense it there, we should picture it flowing into the brain and then into the spinal cord. Gradually we will then have the feeling that rays are streaming from the forehead down into the spinal column.

2. *Initiative in one's actions.* For this one must choose an action which one thinks of oneself. If someone was to try to exercise his initiative by adopting the activity of watering a flower, which is the example given in the relevant instructions, he would be doing something quite pointless. For the action must spring from our own initiative, one must have thought of it oneself. After practising this exercise for a while we will soon have a feeling which could be expressed as: "I can achieve something", "I can do more than previously", "I wish to be active". One actually feels this in the whole upper part of the body. We then try to let this feeling flow towards the heart.

3. *Mastering joy and sorrow.* We may feel sometimes an urge to cry. Then it is time to practise this exercise. We force ourselves

with all our strength not to cry for once. The same with laughing. We try, on some occasion when we feel laughter rising up, not to laugh but to remain peaceful. That does not mean that we should not laugh any more: but we should be able to take hold of ourselves, be master over laughing and crying. When we have overcome ourselves in this way a few times, we will have a feeling of peace and equanimity. We allow this feeling to flow through the whole body, pouring it out from the heart first of all into the arms and hands, so that it can radiate out from the hands into our actions. Then we let it stream down to the feet and last of all up to the head. This exercise requires earnest self-observation and should take at least a quarter of an hour each day.

4. *Positivity.* We should know how to find the grain of goodness and beauty in everything bad and ugly, and should also be able to perceive in every criminal the spark of godliness. Then we feel that we are spreading out beyond our skin. It is a similar feeling of enlargement to that which the etheric body has after death. When we sense this feeling we should let it radiate out of ourselves through the eyes, ears and the whole skin, but particularly through the eyes.

5. *Lack of prejudice.* We should remain flexible, always capable of taking in new information. If someone relates something to us which we think sounds improbable, we must nevertheless always keep a tiny corner of our heart open, in which we say: "He could be right after all." This does not need to make us completely uncritical, for we can always examine and test such statements. When we practise this, a feeling comes over us as if something was streaming into us from outside. We draw this in through the eyes, ears and the whole skin.

6. *Equilibrium.* The five previous feelings should now be harmonised with each other by taking notice of them all simultaneously.

These exercises do not have to take exactly one month each. Some indication of time had to be given. What is important though,

is that one practises them in the particular order given here. If anyone should practise the second exercise before the first, he would derive absolutely no benefit from it. The order is very important. Some people even believe that they ought to begin with the sixth exercise, the harmonising one. But nothing can be harmonised which is not already there. Whoever does not practise the exercises in the given order will gain nothing at all from them. To begin with the sixth exercise is as senseless as if one needed to take six steps to cross a bridge and tried to take the sixth step first.

Most of us have also received a morning meditation. One should do this early in the morning at a time one has decided for oneself, which one keeps to as strictly as possible. First of all one concentrates deeply upon seven lines. For some of us these are as follows:

In purest outpoured Light
 Shimmers the Godhead of the world.
 In purest Love towards all that is
 Outpours the god-hood of my soul.
 I rest within the Godhead of the world;
 There shall I find myself,
 Within the Godhead of the world.

During meditation one should not speculate about these seven lines, but live wholly within them. One should picture them vividly to oneself:

In purest outpoured Light

Here one feels the pouring beams of the light flooding around one, permeating one from all sides; one imagines its radiance as clearly as possible.

Shimmers the Godhead of the world

One imagines that it is God who streams into one in these rays; one seeks to feel Him and take Him up into oneself.

*In purest Love towards all that is
 Outpours the god-hood of my soul.*

One imagines that one is radiating out the godly beams which one

took into oneself, pouring them out for the good of all beings.

The last lines should awaken the idea and feeling that one is wholly embedded in the divine rays and that one finds oneself within them. Whoever wishes to imagine this in a particularly tangible form can also, finally, imagine a tree which he loves, which he likes returning to.

After these seven lines we each have a word or a phrase in which we should become absorbed. This concentration on a word or phrase, for example 'Strength', is very important. It is a kind of mantram or word of power, which is precisely suited to the state of soul of each individual. One should let this word resound in the soul in a similar way to striking a tuning fork. Just as one listens to the fading tone of the tuning fork, so one should let the word quietly fade in the soul after one has concentrated on it, should give oneself over to the effect this word has had in our soul.

Finally one concentrates deeply for five minutes on one's own divine ideal. The precise nature of this ideal does not matter, it is just a question of creating the right mood of soul. It does not matter whether one thinks of one's teacher or of the starry heavens. Atheists, who said they had no divine ideal, have before now allowed themselves to think of the starry heavens in this regard, for no one can avoid feeling awe and reverence towards them.

Whoever begins these exercises should keep doing them and not give them up when he feels like it. The astral and etheric bodies soon get used to them and will revolt if they do not receive them. An interruption or a complete cessation of these exercises is certainly very dangerous.

The *evening review of the day* is also important. It must be undertaken backwards, from the end of the day to the beginning, since we ought to accustom ourselves to the mode of perception of the astral plane. During this review one should visualise everything as vividly as possible. To begin with, of course, if one has eighty important experiences to review, one cannot visualise each one of them vividly. One must then choose a considered selection, until the whole day unfurls before one like a tableau. Once again, it is the little insignificant occurrences which matter, for what awakens the powers of the soul is the effort which one makes.