

## **“LA SCUOLA DEL SOLE” MEDITATION GROUP**

### **LEVEL 2 PART 2c (Third of 4 parts)**

#### **ESOTERIC TRAINING**

Alice A. Bailey came into incarnation as a senior disciple in the Ashram of the Master Koot Humi or “K.H.” with two missions to which her soul was pledged. One was the collaboration as an amanuensis or scribe or secretary to the Master Djwhal Khul or D.K., often called just “the Tibetan,” himself a disciple in the Ashram of K.H. Their work together, which lasted 30 years, produced the books of esoteric philosophy published under Alice Bailey's name but which were entirely the Tibetan's except for four books. The giving out of this Ageless Wisdom teaching was the second of three phases of teaching intended for the roughly 150-200 year period covering the transition from the age of Pisces to the age of Aquarius. And I think we'd all agree the production of these books marked a tremendous achievement.

The term “disciple” covers a wide range of spiritual development, and it simply means “learning boy”. A disciple is someone who is learning, educating himself, training to become responsive to the indwelling divinity or Christ principle, the soul. To be specific, the Arcane School is a school for training people to be “accepted disciples”—those who are on the last stages of the probationary path and ready for training in conscious, pledged responsibility to the Plan.

Esoteric schools are to train disciples to aid the Hierarchy at a time of planetary crisis so urgent that it will bring forth the reappearance of the Christ, the World Teacher. Our task is to help establish the foundations of esoteric training, based on the Rules for Applicants and for Initiates, that may help to bridge between the current esoteric schools and those which will be supervised by senior disciples from the ashram.

In many ways Alice Bailey carried on the work established by H.P.B. The books she wrote were the second phase of a three-part release of the Ageless Wisdom for the modern world, the first being H.P.B.'s magnum opus *The Secret Doctrine*. Alice's esoteric foundation was within theosophy, and she had the rare privilege of being taught by two of Blavatsky's personal students. She and her future husband Foster Bailey met at the Theosophical Society's Krotona grounds in southern California, and both were active in leadership positions in the Society until deciding to go their separate way as her work with the Tibetan. The books that were published derived from theosophy and it is always a good idea to study the writings of Blavatsky and Annie Besant, among others.

As a result of her experiences in the Theosophical Society, Alice was vividly aware of the problems incurred when spiritual seekers are brought together on the outer levels—the all too familiar problems of the personality with its glamour's and illusions which can cloud the real soul bonds that unite a group of working disciples. So the teaching of the ageless wisdom has always been conducted at distance. No classes are held, there are no teachers.

Lessons and instruction are provided, so that the student is given guidance and support and yet is left entirely free to take or ignore that support, as he chooses.

One of the fundamental principles of the Ageless Wisdom is that the esotericism is essentially self-taught. The student is encouraged to develop an awareness of the inner self—the soul, which is the first Master; the Master in the Heart. And the first meditation work is designed to effect this contact and bring it to conscious awareness. Occult obedience is emphasized, but that obedience is not to an outer authority but to the soul, which has its life intention, its dharma or duty. The recognition of a divine Plan and of the soul's part in the Plan is brought over by some disciples who are quickly able to bring it to conscious awareness. For others, it is a recognition that is made in meditation and, for some, through the wonderfully practical lessons of trial and error. One cannot be a disciple unless he's willing to make mistakes, for those are often our greatest teachers. Our obligation is not to avoid them by doing nothing, but to learn from them. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.

The administrators of this group is there to provide guidance and to answer questions when asked, but the student must make his own choices. He or she is advised to find his own answers by study, meditation and contemplation. You are free to leave our group whenever you choose, and many leave after having received what they were looking for and deciding that it's time to move on. Others will stay up to the end of Level 3, which will take 3-4 years at least.

The training is threefold in its emphasis on meditation, study and service. The meditation techniques, which are progressive, are based on raja yoga, the science of mind. The study work is based primarily on the books of Alice A. Bailey but also other sound esoteric writings, including Agni Yoga, and students are encouraged to read widely. The service aspect is according to the student's capacities, environment and circumstances. But essentially, meditation and study without service is, as the Bible says, "faith without works". You can't have one without the other, for the disciple must learn to think, and meditation teaches one how to use the mind—to think abstractly, while applying what he knows practically and concretely. It is an occult law that all spiritual development must be shared, for "that which is received vertically must be distributed horizontally".

Group training is a fundamental feature of the new-age discipleship which is rapidly being developed today. Although students don't attend classes, except for occasional optional retreats in south and central America, you are very much a part of a group process in spiritual development and as this realization is gradually understood by the meditator, it brings a deep joy and a sense of the sustaining bonds of companionship that are such a powerful feature of the Path, but which are virtually impossible to convey to anyone else. This is just one aspect of the spiritual life about which there can be only silence in the face of those who don't yet share the Path. The subjective companionship is touched on in a number of ways by the ancient "Rules of the Road," which conclude, "the Pilgrim knows he travels not alone." This companionship is fostered through the progressive meditation

techniques of the programmed levels, which are shared by all students. The emphasis is on impersonal love and on group work, and you can't have one without the other. Impersonality has a bad connotation for many people. For impersonality is that healing balm which makes group relations not only possible, but nurturing, fostering and invocative. The soul is naturally, inevitably group conscious, for the soul knows no separation and recognizes no barriers. Impersonality means not coldness or isolation from others, but the benign indifference to the personality—the separated self. Impersonality is the capacity literally to overlook the lower self and all that divides us from each other, and to focus on our common ground, our unity in the one soul.

No obedience or loyalty is ever asked for, for the only school that matters is the inner universal school of occultism centered in Shamballa, where all true esoteric schools have their origin and foundation. All outer expressions belong to the one inner Wisdom School, and this subjective, vertical affiliation is always the important relationship.

No fees or charges are ever asked for there can be no price put on discipleship training, and it can never be withheld from one because he lacks the needed funds. However, the right use of money is important to help the world, and this view of money is a significant feature of our meditation cycle, when every Sunday we recommend meditation for the redirection of money for hierarchical purposes. It's part of a two-fold meditation effort, the other being the special Thursday meditation done by many people throughout the world to aid in the preparation for the reappearance of the Christ. The redirection of money into the hands of those who would serve and share is a fundamental development needed in order to create the proper subjective atmosphere in which Christ can work, for it will indicate that a true sense of sharing has finally penetrated human consciousness. For sharing is a fundamental outer expression of love, the energy embodied by the Christ.

Service is a pillar of our practice, along with study and meditation, for service is the most natural expression of the soul. The goal of an expanding consciousness is to become of greater and greater service to the Plan of Hierarchy for humanity. Personal growth and development are only the means to this end. Some may think of service as work with the Red Cross or delivering meals to the homebound, but it's far more than those very worthy efforts. Service has been defined as the right meeting of need on any level of consciousness, and it is a scientific process that leads, more than anything else, to spiritual development. Light can never be dammed up, retained for oneself. It is energy of the most potent kind and it must be shared freely, but also with wisdom, for service requires wisdom to be effective. Without wisdom, service can just be meddlesome interference. With wisdom, which is an expression of love, service can provide that spur to the indwelling soul that enables another living thing, be it a flower, an animal or a human being, to quicken and grow towards the light. Service is the effect of radiation, and it affects the heart center; "the seat of the life."

Meditators are encouraged and helped to discover their field of service and we know that the new group of world servers, of which all working disciples are a part, is actively serving in many phases of human living, including the three major departments of Hierarchy—government, religion and education, and the “sub-departments” within education including science, psychology, arts and culture, and finance or economics.

This realization that the new group of world servers is active today on many fronts is a great comfort, for it assures us that no one of us is required to save the world and it spares one from any messianic tendency that might lie quietly waiting to spring to life. The point of identification is found in the heart center of the new group of world servers, which is formed by the esoteric nucleus of trained occult workers everywhere in the world. And here perhaps it is useful to keep the Tibetan's perspective on service in mind: that “the disciple—if true to his soul and the ashram—serves his fellowmen as an esotericism as well as a humanitarian and a psychologist.” In other words, to serve within the world of meaning and significance where cause originates. The soul is, after all, the causal body.

The need to serve is a soul urge, not a requirement imposed by anyone. It is as natural to the soul to serve as it is to the body to breathe, for the soul aspect is consciousness, which gives awareness of relationship and, therefore, of identification and responsibility. Service is the note of Aquarius and, increasingly we find that meditators are already well placed in a particular field with opportunities to make a real difference. The training gives a spiritual context to the life's direction, techniques for developing mental polarization and the spiritual will, which is always the will-to-good of the whole.

Other meditators are still searching for their right “niche” our study of the problems of the humanity can help find soul purpose in a certain field of activity, on a particular department such as government or psychology, for example. Meditators aren't told what their field of service should be, but you are encouraged to develop a field of activity in which you can learn to serve as esotericisms; where the expression of the soul, which is right relationship, can be tried out, tested and experimented with, in accordance with the teaching that an ashram is a center in which relationship is tried out.

This definition touches on a fundamental aspect of all esoteric schools upon our planet: the fact of a hierarchy or gradation of life and livingness which is known as the great chain of being. All living things evolve and grow in capacity and potency through the stimulating effect of the higher vibration of a more advanced form of life. Hierarchy serves humanity in this way, just as humanity in turn stimulates and acts as steward to the so-called lower kingdoms, animal, vegetable and mineral. Within a group of disciples this same principle applies, and thus an ashram is a center in which relationship is tried out—where disciples empower and stimulate each other according to their levels of spiritual development. It is perhaps a sign of wisdom to recognize those who can so stimulate our spiritual growth, and those whom we in turn can aid in their development.

The new discipleship now being developed by esoteric schools is an experiment whose main objective is not the perfecting of the individual but the creation of a useful, productive group. This means that, in some cases, individual growth must be slowed to adapt to the group pace. For others, it means speeding up one's efforts—undergoing a forcing process—to meet the requirements of the group life. In the creation of an internally unified, telepathic group, criticism, analysis and judgment have no place and create only barriers to the free flow of love. In this aura of love each meditator finds it possible, finally, to lose sight of his or her own cherished, unique identity—something utterly contrary to the present world tendency which is to enhance individuality and to focus on all the ways in which oneself and one's group are different and stand apart from the larger whole. Yet, in the release of an identity that is separate and unique, one finds a wider range of awareness and of identification that is truly liberating and expansive. For, we are told, inclusiveness is the key to understanding consciousness.

A central feature of the training is meditation, for this is the means by which the head center is awakened, leading to the fusion of soul and personality, of inner and outer man. The head center is the center of reception and the ajna center of distribution, and in their fusion the soul and personality are merged in complete synchronicity of purpose, consciously, willingly cooperating in the Plan of God. From this stage then follows the developing expression of the Monad, the perfect unified consciousness—pure Life or divine essence—through the spiritual Triad, the reflection of the Monad, just as the physical self is a reflection of the soul on the lowest levels, and then one is on the way to becoming a Master. But for most of us, that is a long way ahead, and we must be realistic in our assessment of what is possible while, at the same time, developing an appreciation for the long-range goal and the span of the progression of Hierarchy. In this is no cause for discouragement—only for recognition of opportunity, for the Hierarchy depends on its disciples who function at the periphery of the one great Ashram, for they are those who have contact with and understanding of humanity and can give voice to the “cry of humanity” for the Hierarchy to hear.

We place an emphasis on the Problems of Humanity throughout the training, and this creates a point of crisis for many students. The thought form then of esotericism was previously only vertically oriented, abstract in focus and concerned only with the inner, subtle planes, whereas in fact esoteric understanding must always be applied to the outer planes of living, with horizontal distribution, for that is the sphere in need of redemption, which is the purpose of esoteric training. There is a direct link between the outer state of affairs and the inner subjective conditioning, both in the individual's personal life and the world as a whole. The disciple's task is to probe the world of meaning for an understanding of the subjective causes behind outer appearances, and thus help bring about the reorientation in humanity's thinking that is so urgently needed.

Many sincere esotericisms seem to feel that to be spiritual, one must turn away from the world, from the problems, stupidities and all too often horrors of life on earth. There are those who can look into the world, into humanity, and see both its divine origin and the source of its failures in the glamour, illusion and Maya of the three lower worlds. The

development of the esoteric view enables the disciple to see the meaning and significance behind the outer apparent reality, and thereby point the way to the solution to the world's problems, so many of which were created by humanity itself.

We know that esoteric knowledge is not intended to drive one's spiritual life more and more inward, for that leads to a spiritual introversion which is the way of the mystic. The Tibetan says that "exactly the reverse is intended; all that the disciple essentially is upon the inner planes has to become objective; thus his spiritual livingness becomes an everyday affair." Through the cultivation of the dual vision, the sense of synthesis is fostered, and it is this which is so in need of development in all true esoteric schools today. Those who are esoterically trained can convey the realization of the synthesis of life on earth to a needy, struggling and doubting humanity. And particularly at a time of transition such as this, from an old age to a new and from one 2000 year ray cycle to another, much is being called into question. Old foundations, structures and methods are no longer accepted without question, but their replacements aren't visible yet either. The inner synthesis which holds the Plan for our world in the tension of the Will to Good must be revealed by those who have made the intuitive recognition of it themselves.

One of the fourteen Rules for Disciples and Initiates given in *The Rays and the Initiations* is "The macrocosmic Whole is all there is. Let the group perceive that Whole and then no longer use the thought, my soul and thine." This sense of the wholeness, the synthesis of life—of its complete integrity and perfection in which no part, however small, is outside the sphere of divinity—is the occult view, not the mystical. And this demand, we're told, will be the basic requirement of the new schools of occultism. The mystic yearns for unison with "the other"—with something outside and beyond himself. And we have all trodden that way. The occultist, though, knows that what he seeks is awaiting discovery within, for divine Life permeates all the manifested world and "all that is, is ever present." Meditation, study of the ancient timeless truths which have been passed down from time immemorial, and service are the three-fold path, a path like that of Ariadne's thread which is spun from one's own transfigured substance, known as the antahkarana.

All true esoteric schools seek to give the disciple the keys to unlock the door to his own liberation. The need for the guru is past, because modern disciples have the education, the training and the group resources to chart their way forward. We should never underestimate the invocative power of group life in spiritual development. The increasing mental polarization of today's disciples is what makes group life possible. Without the ability to think through to reality, free—or striving to be free—of conditioning glamour and illusion, the disciple is a prisoner of the astral realm with its shifting tides and appeals. To know one's own mind is a necessary criterion for discipleship, but ultimately this, too, must be set aside in the effort to merge with the group mind—to think as and with the group. "The power of unified thought," we're told, "is little grasped as yet, and the power inherent in the light of many minds, rendering them effective instruments in world affairs, penetrating and dissipating world glamour...will be part of the new modes of work in the

new age." What could be a more powerful beacon to the world than the light generated by the world's disciples out of their transformed lives and focused in their unified thought?

### **SOME PROBLEMS OF THE PATH AND OF GROUP WORK**

The questions we should ask ourselves on starting our esoteric development can include, "Have you counted the cost to the pilgrim who treads the Path? Are you prepared to face that cost? If so, why?"

The Path of Discipleship involves personal testing and problems, and we feel reasonably equal to the task of meeting those problems on their own ground as they arise because we are deeply sincere and truly motivated in our endeavors. It is often true, however, that we tend to think more in terms of major and dramatic problems arising to test our beliefs, than of the multitude of detail, daily incidents and relationships, which are much more mundane but which constitute the background and the framework within which we must learn to apply the disciplines of the spiritual science to ourselves under all circumstances? This is the environment chosen by the soul as the setting within which we learn the needed lessons.

The first testings of the Path arise, therefore, through the every-day process of daily living and in the normal family and human relationships of personal circumstance and environment. We learn "to be faithful in the little things" before the more drastic testings of the Path can be earned and met as a right. Some of these "little things" can and often do arise to confront the aspirant almost as soon as he decides to take his own evolution in hand and to move on to the Path of Discipleship and towards greater usefulness in service. Joining an esoteric group can help to precipitate crises.

This may be due in many cases to the fact that the whole rhythm and trend of the personality life is put into reverse. The consciousness is turned inward and upward in meditation and study, and outward in the endeavor to understand human affairs and learn to serve human need. For the first time, perhaps, the focus is off the self.

The personality rebels at this process of decentralization. And as alignment with the soul resulting from occult meditation allows more impersonal soul energy to flow into and influence the personality, the condition of chaos, rebellion and precipitation of crisis may be enhanced before stabilization and balance between soul energy and personality forces can be achieved. This may take some time. And during the process the problems in the personality life may become acute, not only within the individual but also affecting his environment—his family, business and social life, and his efforts at service.

In some cases everything seems to arise at once in the life of a newcomer to an esoteric group, not necessarily because he has joined a group, but because of his decision to apply himself to a forcing process, which may include membership of an esoteric school. Personality problems and family difficulties of all kinds, business affairs and so on, all combine together to constitute a severe test of his ability to persevere in his intention and persist in his efforts. It is very usual for one so surrounded by such problems to give up in

despair and, by abandoning occult meditation and study as impossible under such conditions, to close the door on the way through the turmoil.

If these circumstances and crises could be regarded as usual and inevitable in some form or another for all aspirants, as a process through which all proceed and which can best be met and transcended by persistent effort to maintain the esoteric work at all costs, the way through can be more readily found, and group resources of energy and soul strength can aid in the process.

One of the first things demanded of the disciple before he can be used by the Master is the ability to keep going at all costs and under all circumstances. Persistence, staying power, the ability to "keep on keeping on" no matter what arises, the mental discipline of application to a task, of contribution to group effort, and the subordination of personal service to group service, are all part of the aspirant's training and essential to the work of all disciples. Disciples can only be used when it has been proved and demonstrated that they are reliable under any and all circumstances.

The first problems of the Path, therefore, are the first tests and trials of the strength and sincerity of intention and purpose, and constitute an opportunity to prove that no obstacle has the power to stop progress on the Path. We have in fact been told that there are no circumstances and conditions under which the human spirit cannot emerge triumphant. It might be of help and encouragement to meditators to realize some of these things, and to know too that association with an esoteric group can increase the initial impact experienced by the individual, because of the quality and power the group carries which affects each group worker and stimulates his soul intention. At this time of world crisis and human need the group channel is used to the utmost, and every pilgrim, every associated worker, becomes receptive to the energies pouring through the group and capable, therefore, through free choice, of aiding the work to be done and forgetting the little self in the urgency of the need to be met. In group identification and responsibility lies safety for the individual and a guarantee of successful personal effort, plus a right handling of the personal life and a right meeting of personal problems.

Thousands are now in training in our group Meditation Mata Miedo through personal readiness and choice for future discipleship service and group responsibility. What you make of your training, how you react to stimulation, how clear our vision and accurate our interpretation of events, how successfully we learn to handle energy, will determine whether or not we grasp the immediate opportunity, move forward on the Path and become useful to the Great Ones.

## LOVE AND ATTACHMENT

The word attachment is frequently used by Buddhists in English. It is intended to express the idea that we bind ourselves through our passionate, demanding possessiveness, and that we therefore necessarily suffer by being so bound when, sooner or later, the object of desire eludes our grasp. It is therefore in non-attachment, in giving up and letting go (the sign of the true love that wishes to make not itself but the loved person happy) that the way to the overcoming of suffering is to be sought.

This basic Buddhist attitude that teaches people to show first real love, real compassion, and unrestricted joy in the joy of others (while at the same time, we attain to an inner equanimity in regard to whatever happens to ourselves), was at a relatively early date reinterpreted and taken to mean that *every* kind of human attachment and love was devalued...In this way, Western Buddhism was turned into a gloomily ascetic anti-world doctrine. But being attached in the sense of inner devotion and love is a very different thing from possessive attachment (*tanha*). If a person close to me has an accident or dies, that causes suffering. And to accept this suffering is far better than to remain unmoved in cold equanimity...

The question must be asked: is not suffering a small price to pay for the privilege of loving? Perhaps it is better to take upon ourselves the suffering arising from loving others, than to be incapable of love. For it is only from this basic attitude that we can develop the capacity for compassion and sympathy with other beings. And if there were really such a thing as the state of so-called perfection in which those who have attained it remained untouched by all the suffering round about them, then we should wonder if this kind of so-called holiness is really desirable.

Many live in despair because they did not know how they could ever attain inner freedom because they have so many attachments. It seems important that they should first ask what was the nature of their attachment. If they are greedily attached to money, goods, objects, particular places and all sorts of possessions, then of course this fondness becomes an attachment that will keep them bound as prisoners. But if a man is devoted to his wife, a mother to her child, children to their parents, a disciple to his or her guru, and a guru to a student, then such devotion is an expression of love, and as long as this does not degenerate into a desire to possess, it is a positive quality. People with no attachments of this kind, who have developed no personal relations to anyone based on love, even if they should be perfect saints, doing harm to none and committing no evil deeds, seem to be cold and lack humanity. Many cold-blooded Arahants who—according to the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*—sat round the dying Buddha with stony, unmoved countenances, wrapped up in their own holiness and perfection more profound understanding of the Buddha's doctrine perhaps endows the meditator with more human qualities. Many Arhants considered that they had absorbed these so perfectly that there was nothing further that was unclear or problematic for them, and so they had no further questions to ask the Buddha before his passing. But are people who feel no attachment to anyone still living human beings?

Such people can be perfect egoists—spiritually dead, and therefore incapable of any further spiritual growth. They may be “perfect,” but they have entered a cul-de-sac and turned into perfect fossils.

We must distinguish between possessive attachment and attachment that forms an inner bond between beings who love each other, are concerned for each other and feel for each other...We should always remember that the Buddha's path is a middle way. And so, however wonderful the love between husband and wife, between mother and child, or between two friends may be, we must always be on our guard in case it turn into possessiveness. Even mother-love can be possessive, and the moment affection turns to possessiveness, it becomes a hindrance.

Let us state the position once more, quite clearly. *Chanda* as wise desire although it has its dangers, is contrasted with tanha which arises from ignorance. *Chanda* is inclination, attachment, or affection but cannot be judged solely on the nature of its object. It is far more important to know whether it is based on a tendency to possessiveness. But even possessive love can, in certain circumstances, be a factor that evokes and develops the capacity for genuine, freely-given love. Therefore we should not dismiss even possessive love as something totally negative and reject it altogether—it can be the seed from which true love and true sympathy burgeons and bears fruit.

*Chanda*—of whatever kind—is an essential factor on the spiritual path, which we should not condemn or set aside because it contains impulses aiming at possessing and grasping in the beginning. It is only with the destruction of the illusion of an eternal, unchanging ego that *chanda* can develop its full potential. As long as this breakthrough has not yet occurred, *chanda*—even if it is affection born of purified love—can and will cause suffering again and again. Not to allow love in order to avoid suffering is nothing but an extreme form of selfishness that is no better than the selfishness of possessiveness. To avoid suffering by not loving is a flight into indifference, which may be a stoic ideal but not a Buddhist one. It is better to accept suffering than to live a loveless life. The qualitative leap from Hinayana to Mahayana is marked by the fact that the Hinayanist seeks at all costs to avoid suffering, while the Bodhisattva ideal teaches us to be ready to accept all suffering for the sake of love. Without *karuna*—feeling and suffering with others—Buddhism is unthinkable. Any Buddhist who does not make *maître* and *karuna* the central force of his or her life is betraying the essence of Dharma. Fellow-feeling with every creature, whether a dog, a bird or a cat, is a thousand times better than unfeelingness. The pain that we take upon ourselves for the sake of others ennobles us, makes us deeper and lifts us out of our isolation. That is the suffering out of which great characters grow.

Therefore, we should allow all our love, as well as our affection, both personal and arising from inborn affinity, to flow toward those who respond to our inner call—those who have awakened our deepest feelings and our noblest strivings, and also those who cross our karmic path in a karmically determining and decisive situation. Our good intent may be universal and all-embracing, but our *love* can only find expression in a *personal* relationship.

And whoever loves, whoever does not hold back from such love, must be ready to take on in full knowledge the sorrow that this love might bring. Does not the power to love thus outweigh all our suffering? Is this suffering not a small price to pay for the spiritual fullness and breadth that love pours out over us?

The problem of *chanda* as attraction, affection, and finally devotion is also one of the central problems of meditation. We should not think of meditation as something separate from life that we can practice in detachment from our feelings and inner inclinations. If, in our meditation, we try to develop love and compassion for all sentient beings, then this can only happen out of the feeling, and knowledge, of our immediate relationship to all the beings that surround us. When people speak so much about universal love, often they have made a wonderful *concept* for themselves that enables them not to love.

We can see such glamour's in the list in the text book, as the distortions of love. Love always presupposes openness to a personal relationship. Under certain conditions we can perhaps feel friendship, empathy and sympathy (literally, suffering with) without having a direct relationship with others. This type of sympathy is a kind of openness. Love, however, is always a direct relationship to another being.

If we want to develop feelings of love for other beings in meditation, then we must first test ourselves to see how far, without self-deception, we are capable of this. We shall soon discover how hard it is to love certain people, while with others it is easy. In the course of our self-examination, we shall also come to realize that we only love certain people because they agree with us, let us have our way, or provide us with advantages, while we cannot love, and may even hate, those whose thinking and feeling is different from our own, who oppose us or put obstacles in our way. Therefore, if our meditation on loving-kindness (*maitri* or *metta*), is really to bear fruit, we must first start by visualizing that direct relationship to particular people we know, instead of going off into purely abstract ideas of universality.

Such self-examination, based on thought and consideration, is the necessary precondition for all following steps in the meditation on the "four immeasurable": love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (Sanskrit, *maitri, karuna, mudita, upeksha*). Because, in the beginning stages, meditation is always supported by thought. Why is this? Because our thoughts are a constantly occurring process as long as we are aware of ourselves. We cannot stop this activity even if we try. If we attempt to put it to an end by force, we have finally to admit that the process is still going on. All we can do is to watch over this activity, either by observing its movements in the constant interchange of coming and going or by following up the flow of thoughts to see where they lead. A third possibility is to channel the stream of thoughts in a particular direction by creating in our minds a clear picture of the object of our contemplation or meditation, the essential thing being that we become one with the meditation-object.

All these processes can, once set in motion, be continued indefinitely. But then there comes a point when we are suddenly aware of our consciousness as being here-and-now. In this experience of fully conscious present time and presence, we discover that there is something more profound than our thoughts. And from this experience comes the decisive change: we suddenly open up, and the miracle of the ever-renewed beginning occurs in us—the opening-up that is the beginning of real meditation.

## ACTIVE LAZINESS

### Sogyal Rinpoche

There is an old Tibetan story that I love, called “The Father of ‘As Famous as the Moon’”. A very poor man, after a great deal of hard work, had managed to accumulate a whole sack of grain. He was proud of himself and when he got home he strung the bag up with a rope from one of the rafters of his house to keep it safe from rats and thieves. He left it hanging there, and settled down underneath it for the night as an added precaution. Lying there, his mind began to wander: “If I can sell this grain off in small quantities, that will make the biggest profit. With that I can buy some more grain, and do the same again, and before too long I’ll become rich and I’ll be someone to reckon with in the community. Plenty of girls will be after me. I’ll marry a beautiful woman, and before too long we’ll have a child... it will have to be a son... what on earth are we going to call him?” Looking round the room, his gaze fell upon the little window, through which he could see the moon rising.

“What a Sign!” he thought. “How auspicious! That’s a really good name. I’ll call him ‘As Famous as the Moon.’” Now while he had been carried away in his speculation, a rat had found its way up to the sack of grain and chewed through the rope. At the very moment the words “As Famous as the Moon” issued from his lips, the bag of grain dropped from the ceiling and killed him, instantly. “As Famous as the Moon” of course, was never born.

How many of us, like the man in the story, are swept away by what I have come to call an “active laziness”? Naturally there are different species of laziness: Eastern and Western. The Eastern style is like the one practiced to perfection in India. It consists of hanging out all day in the sun, doing nothing, avoiding any kind of work or useful activity, drinking cups of tea, listening to Hindi film music blaring on the radio, and gossiping with friends. Western laziness is quite different. It consists of cramming our lives with compulsive activity, so that there is no time at all to confront the real issues.

If we look into our lives, we will see clearly how many unimportant tasks, so-called “responsibilities” accumulate to fill them up. One master compares them to “housekeeping in a dream.” We tell ourselves we want to spend time on the important things of life, but there never is any time. Even simply to get up in the morning, there is so much to do: open the window, make the bed, take a shower, brush your teeth, feed the dog or cat, do last night’s washing up, discover you are out of sugar or coffee, go and buy them, make breakfast—the list is endless. Then there are clothes to sort out, choose, iron, and fold up again. And what about your hair, or your makeup? Helpless, we watch our days fill up with telephone calls and petty projects, with so many responsibilities—or shouldn’t we call them “irresponsibility”?

Our lives seem to live us, to possess their own bizarre momentum, to carry us away; in the end we feel we have no choice or control over them. Of course we feel bad about this sometimes, we have nightmares and wake up in a sweat, wondering: "What am I doing with my life?" But our fears only last until breakfast time; out comes the briefcase, and back we go to where we started.

I think of the Indian saint, Ramakrishna, who said to one of his disciples: "If you spent one-tenth of the time you devoted to distractions like chasing women or making money to spiritual practice, you would be enlightened in a few years!"

There was a Tibetan who lived around the turn of the century, a kind of Himalayan Leonardo da Vinci, called Mipham. He is said to have invented a clock, a cannon, and an airplane. But once each of them was complete, he destroyed them, saying that they would only be the cause of further distraction.

In Tibetan the word for body is *lü*, which means "something you leave behind," like baggage. Each time we say "*lü*," it reminds us that we are only travelers, taking temporary refuge in this life and this body. So in Tibet people did not distract themselves by spending all their time trying to make their external circumstances more comfortable. They were satisfied if they had enough to eat, clothes on their backs, and a roof over their heads. Going on as we do, obsessively trying to improve our conditions, can become an end in itself and a pointless distraction. Would anyone in their right mind think of fastidiously redecorating their hotel room every time they booked into one? Sometimes I think that the greatest achievement of modern culture is its brilliant selling of samsara and its barren distractions. Modern society seems to me a celebration of all the things that lead away from the truth, make truth hard to live for and discourage people from even believing that it exists. And to think that all this springs from a civilization that claims to adore life, but actually starves it of any real meaning; that endlessly speaks of making people "happy," but in fact blocks their way to the source of real joy.

This modern samsara feeds off an anxiety and depression that it fosters and trains us all in, and carefully nurtures with a consumer machine that needs to keep us greedy to keep going. Samsara is highly organized, versatile, and sophisticated—it assaults us from every angle with its propaganda, and creates an almost impregnable environment of addiction around us. The more we try to escape, the more we seem to fall into the traps it is so ingenious at setting for us. As the eighteenth-century Tibetan master Jikmé Lingpa said: "Mesmerized by the sheer variety of perceptions, beings wander endlessly astray in samsara's vicious cycle."

Obsessed, then, with false hopes, dreams, and ambitions, which promise happiness but lead only to misery, we are like people crawling through an endless desert, dying of thirst. And all that this samsara holds out to us to drink is a cup of salt water, designed to make us even thirstier.

*(The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, pp. 18-21)*

## THE SCIENCE OF RESPIRATION

We now come to the significant words of this rule. "The man breathes deeply." This phrase encompasses many aspects of rhythmic living. It is the magic formula for the science of pranayama. Understand the art of creative life. It prompts man to tune in to the pulsating life of God Himself, and he does so through detachment and reorientation.

It is remarkably interesting as a demonstration of the conciseness and inclusiveness of the hidden phrases contained in this rule. The art of breathing is covered in three sentences, and I recommend that you consider them carefully.

First, we have the *inhalation* aspect. "The man breathes deeply." From the very depths of his being he draws his breath. During the process of phenomenal life, he draws the very breath of the soul life. This is the first stage. During the process of detaching from phenomenal living, he draws from the depths of his being and experiences life to return it back to the source from which it came. When the disciple develops in esoteric life a new and subtler way of using his response mechanism, he puts the science of breath into practice and discovers that through deep breathing (including the three stages of breath, deep, middle and high), it can activate, in the world of esoteric experiences, its vital body with its centers of force. Thus the three aspects of "deep breathing" encompass the whole experience of the soul, and the aspirant can relate them to the three types of breath discussed above.

Then we read "concentrate your forces." Here we have the stage that can be called *breath retention*. It is to constantly keep all the forces of life in the place of silence, and when it is possible to do it with ease and forgetfulness of the process, through familiarity and experience, then man can see, hear and know, in another realm that is not the phenomenal world. In a higher sense this is the stage of contemplation, that "calm between two activities" as it has been so appropriately called. The soul, breath and life have been withdrawn from the three worlds, and into the "secret place of the Most High. "He rests and is at peace, contemplating the beatific vision. In the life of the active disciple he produces those intervals, known to all disciples, when - through detachment and the ability to withdraw - nothing holds him in the world of form. Because he struggles to perfect himself and has not yet achieved it, these intervals of silence, withdrawal and detachment are difficult and dark for him. Everything is silence, and he is terrified by the unknown and by an apparently empty stillness. This is called, in the case of advanced people, "the dark night of the soul", the moment before dawn, the hour before the light radiates.

In the science of pranayama, it is the moment that follows after inhalation, where all the forces of the body (through the breath) have been raised to the head and concentrated there, before the exhalation stage. This moment of retention, duly effected, produces an interval of intense concentration, and at that moment the aspirant must seize the opportunity. Here's a hint.

Then comes the *exhalation* process. We read in this rule, "cast off the mental form." This is always the result of the last stage of the science of breath. The form, vitalized by those who breathe with the correct rhythm, is sent to carry out its work and fulfill its mission. Study this idea carefully, because it contains the secret of creative work.

In the experience of the soul, the form that is to be manifested in the three worlds is created through intense meditation, an activity always parallel to breathing. Then by an act of will, which results in an "exhalation", generated or obtained dynamically in the interval of contemplation or retention of the breath, the created form is sent to the phenomenal world to serve as a channel of experience, a means of expression and response mechanism in the three worlds of human living.

The disciple, through meditation and discipline, learns, during his life, to produce high intervals each time he concentrates his forces on the plane of the soul life, and then, again by an act of will, exhales his spiritual purposes, his plans and his life, to the world of experience. The mental form that you have built, with regard to the part that you must play, and the concentration of energy that you have managed to produce, become effective. The energy necessary for the next step is exhaled by the soul and descends into the vital body, thus energizing the physical instrument with the necessary constructive activity. That aspect of the plan that you have appreciated in contemplation and that part of the general purpose of the Hierarchy, with which your soul feels called to cooperate, are simultaneously exhaled into the brain through the mind, "casting away the thought forms".

Finally, in the science of pranayama, when the exhaled breath is carried out with conscious thought and purpose, it encompasses the stage of vitalization of the centers, until they are filled with dynamic life. No need to say more here.

In the science of "deep breathing" we have the whole process of creative work; it encompasses the evolutionary unfolding of God in nature. It is the process by which Life, the One Existence, brought into being the phenomenal world, and this rule is a summary of Creation. It is also the formula under which the individual soul works, when it centralizes its forces for manifestation in the three worlds of human experience.

The correct use of the vital breath is an art with which the aspirant, the disciple and the initiate work, bearing in mind, however, that the science of the physical breath is the least important aspect and follows sequentially the correct use of energy, a word that we apply to divine breath or life.

Finally, in the mental life of the disciple, and in the great task of learning to be a conscious creator with mental matter, to produce results in the phenomenal world, this rule contains the instructions on which the work is based. It embodies the science of all magical work.

Therefore, it deserves further consideration and study. Correctly understood and studied, it will take each aspirant out of the world of phenomena, into the realm of the soul. If its instructions are carried out, they will lead the soul back into the phenomenal world, as a creative force in the magic of the soul and as a manipulator and dominant factor in and through form.

When the Western student is trained, blind obedience is never required. Suggestions are made to him regarding the method and technique that many disciples have proven effective over thousands of years. Some rules are given about breathing, the useful process, and also for

practically living on the physical plane; but in the training of the new type of disciples, during the age to come, it is the will of the observing Gurus and Rishis to grant them greater freedom than hitherto. This may mean a somewhat slower development in the beginning, but they hope that it will bring a more rapid development during the final stages on the path of initiation.

Consequently, students are urged to advance with courage and joy during the training period, knowing that they are members of a group of disciples, that they are not alone, because the strength of the group belongs to them and also the knowledge of the group as who develops the capacity to grasp them - knowing also that the love, wisdom and understanding, of the observant Elder Brothers, support every aspiring Son of God, although apparently and intelligently he is allowed to cut his way into the light by the strength of his own omnipotent soul.

## RULE FIVE

*Three things concern the Solar Angel before the envelope created down: the condition of the waters, the Public Safety - ness of one who thus creates, and steady contemplation. In this way, they are allied for the triple service, the heart, the throat and the eye.*

## THE SOUL AND ITS MENTAL FORMS

We have dealt with the processes of creation as regards:

1. To the Creator of a solar system or a planetary scheme.
2. To the ego, when it creates its body of manifestation. It should be remembered here that the whole human family has been carried to the rally by a similar group of egos.
3. A man, when you create those through which it expresses itself mental forms, work and in turn circundan. It should also be remembered that this work creates - defined door is only possible for those who act on mental levels, the thinkers of the world and the disciples of the Masters.

As noted, in all cases, the objective was the result of meditation on the creative agent, the res - putting the subject on which he has acted generates force - gives in meditation, thus producing building form and its use through sound. This is followed by the stage where the form is objectively perceived and becomes a living, vibrant entity. So "the Word became flesh" and thus all, do universes forms, men and thoughts suls of soul come into existence.

This rule includes three factors that occupy the attention of the creating agent before becoming visible physical form in the pla - no external, and are:

1. The condition of the waters.
2. The security of the one who believes so.
3. The constant contemplation.

Briefly discuss these three, and then consider the three factors that the disciple needs to relate if they any think again become an active and strong partner of the Hierarchy. These are: The Eye, the Heart and the Throat. The intention and significance of these rules may be buy - you did as in various ways. For our purpose we will follow the one that relates to the disciple and his work, and will deal with his training in the magical work of the ego or soul, as it occupies and employs a physical form. These lessons have a practical purpose, which emphasize the training and indiscipline of the disciple, because scattered in these are signs and esoteric suggestions which, if followed, will lead to the aim - you get experience and experience truth. Those who are not true aspirants will not recognize the signs and will thus be preserved from all danger and premature experience.

Take, therefore, the three factors that occupy our attention and consider them from the point of view of being Hu hand that creates mental and not from the standpoint of a solar Creator or of an ego forms preparing to incarnate in the shape. Two accessory thoughts are of value here. One, that the process of creating thought forms in daily meditation is part of the task of every aspirant. If the student would remember that every time the morning meditation practice is learning to build and vitalize thought forms, their work could add greater quire interest. Most candidates tend to OCU parse its shortcomings in the work of meditation and their inability to exercise control over the mind; instead both aspects of their endeavor could be improved if they were concerned with the great absorbing work of constructing thought forms.

A secondary and minor idea is that those egos who are preparing to take human bodies, are pro - substantiate engaged in meditation work, and very improbable that the common medium of the seance can get to them. The only thing that can be done is establish touch with those who have recently gone to the hereafter, and in most cases are in deep and distinct abs - traction. I do not have the time nor do I propose to elaborate on this subject, but it is of interest to those who investigate such matters.

### *1. The Condition of the Waters.*

The creator, man, through the incentives of a coordinating purpose, concentrated meditation and creates agent activity Dora has built mental shape the cheering with their own vitality and directing with his will. The time has come to send that mind form to fulfill its mission and carry out the purpose of its existence. As we saw in the previous rule, the form is "expelled" from its creator by the power of the ex-breath Pulsar. This is a symbolic statement and at the same time an experimental fact in magical work. The disciple often fails in his work, due to the inability to understand the esoteric and literal significance of this expelling breath when doing his meditation work. This expulsive breath is the result of a previous period of rhythmic breathing accompanies - do a concentrated meditation, after a defined focus of attention and breath, as the purpose of the shape created is defined mentally and

finally the vitalization of the mind-form by its creator and its consequent energization toward independent life and activity.

The first obstacle is presented to the potency of the work comes from the failure of the disciple to perform if simultaneously these activities. The second cause of the failure is that it has not considered the conditions of the waters or the state of emotional substance, which must penetrate this mental form, gathering itself the subject of the plane as - tral which will become you in an entity active on that plane. In failing to do so, it becomes simple and eventualmen you in a dead form on the mental plane, because it lacks the necessary drive power of the desire to complete on the physical plane.

It is interesting to note that: If a mental form is sent - gives the emotional world to gather itself a desire body (driving force that produces all objectivity) and is sumer Gida in a "condition of the waters" which can be best des - Criță as Purely selfish, the following occurs: It is lost by being drawn into the disciple's astral body, the focal point of all the astral energy used by himself. It is sucked into a vortex of which the astral body of the individual is the cen - tro, losing their independent existence. The analogy of the re - mill is here value. The thinker is like the man who pushes a toy boat from the shore into the stream. If you push it into the whirlpool, it is eventually sucked into the central vortex, disappearing. Many forms and built by the aspirant in his meditation work are lost and fraca - san on their target, the chaotic and dizzying state of the HORN - emotional po of the applicant. Thus the good intentions not come to anything; good purpose and planned work by the Master did not materialize, because when men form - such descends to the plane of desire and emotion, makes contact only with the choppy waters of fear, the distrust, hatred or vicious desire purely physical. These, being more powerful than the insignificant form, drown it, disappearing, from sight and existence, and man realizes another wasted effort.

I repeat: the "condition of the waters" is not that of a non- self-generated whirlpool, but rather resembles that of a puddle whose waters are stirred in a frothy and boiling mass, through the activities of others. I there are many disciples who have achieved - do a good measure of self and selflessness. They are not victims of the desire and goals of the personality, and they are comparatively free from the whirlwind of selfish tendencies. But their astral bodies are repeatedly drawn into a state of agitation, by the group for which and in which they work. They are elated or depressed, satisfied or unsatisfied Chose for the results achieved; I made or not, and firmness or disloyalty of your fellow servers produce agitation and emotional upset them, and this powerful reaction there for - more mental constructed with such care and devotion become into nothingness. Their "capacity for action" is lost, because they are tied to the desired result, and then their work is fruitless.

There are numerous "water conditions" that all candidate can supply itself However, there is another on which would stop the emotional body of the disciple who must nourish and supply the mentally child (with your mental core.). is necessarily part of the emo form - planetary tonal, hence vibrates unison with said shape consider this carefully, because the body emotional is driven to a state of activity by as condition - General trial, it must be handled intelligently from this angle.

Currently, three qualities predominate in the plane - ta - fear, expectation and a climactic desire (in the human family) for material possessions. Note the word "Culminant". It has reached the acme of human desire happiness Material dad and exceeded the top of that desire, by thus mankind has achieved and overcome a lot. But the rhythm of the ages is very strong.

These three qualities must be understood and discarded by the aspirant as he tries to serve from the mental levels. The fear must be replaced by that peace which is privilege of those who always live in the Light of the Eternal; the restless - you expect will have to be replaced by the Place security, although active, the ultimate goal of which comes from the vision of the Plan of contact with other disciples and then with the Master. The desire for material possessions must be replaced by the aspiration for those possessions which are the joy of the soul - wisdom, love, and power to serve. Peace, security and correct as piracy! When these three words are understood and experience as in daily life, they produce the correct "condition of the waters" which ensures the survival of all mental form, Debi mutely engendered in meditation by the man who acts as soul.

## *2. The Security of the One who creates thus.*

I could say here emphatically, even a true recognized, very often people are destroyed (in sent hidden do and therefore more important) for their own mental forms. The creation of thoughts by concentrating ion and meditation, is a very dangerous issue. This must never be forgotten. There are mental forms that do not have enough desire matter, and by not being able to descend they poison man on the mental levels, and they do so in two ways:

1. They become so potent on the mental plane, the man falls victim to what he has created. This is the "idea fixe" of the psychiatrist, the obsession that leads to madness, thought centralized that eventually terrorizes its creator.
2. They get to multiply so rapidly that the men aura - as long as man becomes something resembling a thick, dense cloud, through which the light of the soul cannot penetrate, and love of human beings The loving, beautiful and encouraging activities of nature and life, in the three worlds, cannot pierce it either. Man drowns, is suffocated by his own thought forms, and succumbs to the miasma that he himself has engendered.

There are also other lines of thought that provoke a reaction of a poisonous nature in the emotional body. The human being can follow a certain line of thought in relation to his brother. It engenders hatred, envy, and jealousy, and manifests itself in such a way that it produces those activities on the physical plane that cause the death of its creator. This can literally your - give in the case of a murder, which most often is the result of crystallized intent, or it can with – pour out a disease. The right motive pure thought, desire and love are the real soothing disease, and when desire (which encourages many) is raised to constructive thinking, gradually eliminate the disease. Until now, many are those who wish and few who think. Remember that the Great Ones who seek not only desire and aspire, but those who combine their desire the determination to learn to use their mental bodies and get to be creative and to work constructively is cough purposes.

So you will understand why, in all systems true occult training, emphasis on straight think, the loving desire and live clean and pure. Only thus can the creative work be carried forward safely, and only thus can lower the mentally objectivity and being an agent cons - structure in the plane of human existence.

### *3. Constant Contemplation.*

You will notice that the word "meditation" has not been used. The idea is another. The process of meditation, which involves employment of thought and mental construction of form, for to complete it, improve it and agree to mental form of the group of classmates of the disciple, and therefore the Plan has been completed by man according to his ability. Now, firmly, you must contemplate what you have created, and just as firmly inspire it with the necessary life, so that it can fulfill its function.

He ceases to reason, think, formulate and build in mental matter. He simply pours his life into the form and projects it to fulfill his will. To the extent you can contemplate and stand firm, and its creation fulfill his intention and act as his agent.

Depending on how you focus your attention on the ideal, for which he created the mental form, and can link the form and the ideal, and in a sustained vision, during that time, serve their purpose and express his ideal. Herein lies the secret to the success of any successful collaboration with the Plan.