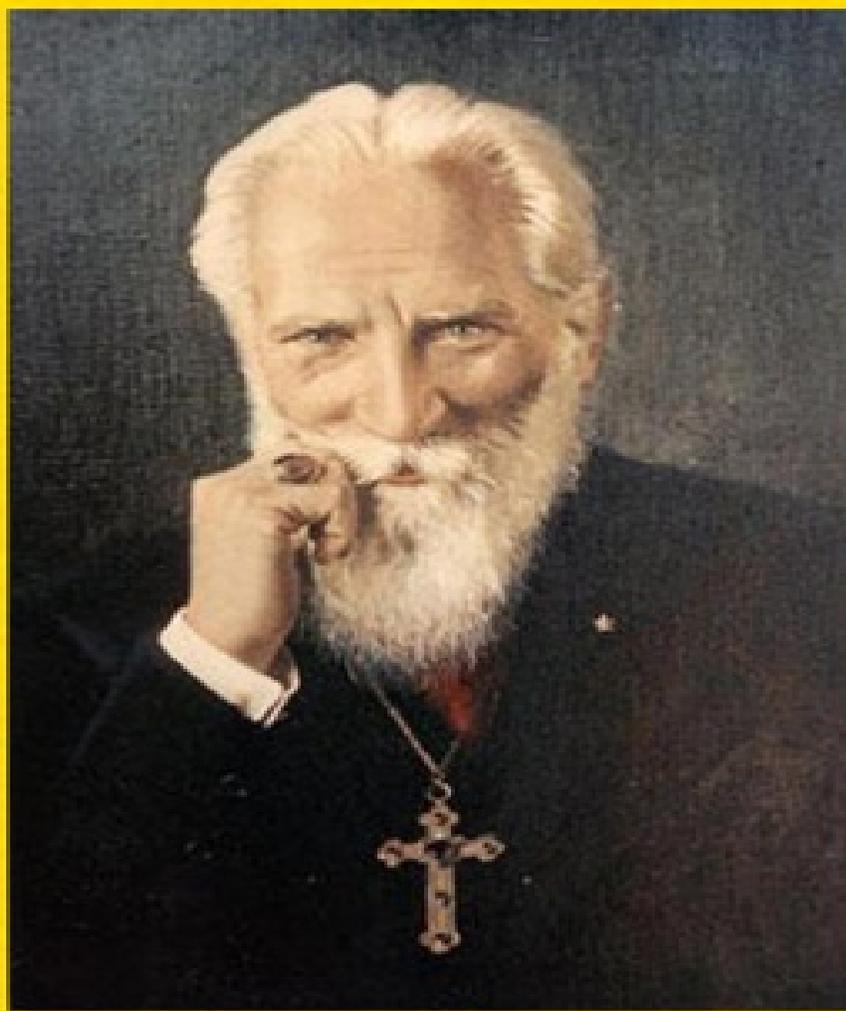


C.W. Leadbeater

Commentary on Light on the Path



TALKS ON THE PATH OF OCCULTISM- VOL. 3

A Commentary on “Light on the Path”

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AND

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FOREWORD

This book is merely a record of talks by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater—now Bishop Leadbeater—and myself on three famous books—books small in size but great in contents. We both hope that they will prove useful to aspirants, and even to those above that stage, since the talkers were older than the listeners, and had more experience in the life of discipleship.

The talks were not given at one place only; we chatted to our friends at different times and places, chiefly at Adyar, London and Sydney. A vast quantity of notes were taken by the listeners. All that were available of these were collected and arranged. They were then condensed, and repetitions were eliminated. Unhappily there were found to be very few notes on *The Voice of the Silence*, Fragment I, so we have utilized notes made at a class held by our good colleague, Mr. Ernest Wood, in Sydney, and incorporated these into Bishop Leadbeater's talks in that section. No notes of my own talks on this book were available; though I have spoken much upon it, those talks are not recoverable. None of these talks have been published before, except some of Bishop Leadbeater's addresses to selected students on *At the Feet of the Master*. A book entitled *Talks on "At the Feet of the Master"* was published a few years ago, containing imperfect reports of some of these talks of his. That book will not be reprinted; the essential material in it finds its place here, carefully condensed and edited. May this book help some of our younger brothers to understand more of these priceless teachings. The more they are studied *and lived*, the more will be found in them.

Annie Besant

PART I

LIGHT ON THE PATH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.B.—*Light on the Path* is one of a number of different occult treatises which are in the care of the great Teachers and are used in the instruction of disciples. It is a part of *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, which contains many treatises which were written in different ages of the world, but have one characteristic in common, that they contain occult truth, and have therefore to be studied in a different way from ordinary books. The understanding of these treatises depends upon the capacity of the reader, and when any one of them is published to the world only distorted views of its teaching will be acquired, if it is taken literally.

Definitely intended for the quickening of the evolution of those who are on the Path, this book puts forward ideals which people of the world are rarely prepared to accept. Only as far as a man is able and willing to live the teaching, will he be able to understand it. If he does not practise it, it will remain a sealed book to him. Any effort to live it will throw light upon it; but if the reader makes no effort, he will not only gain very little, but he will turn against the book and say that it is useless.

This treatise falls naturally into certain divisions. It was given to the Western world by the Master Hilarion, one of the great Teachers belonging to the White Lodge—a Master who played a great part in the Gnostic and Neoplatonic movements, one of the great persons who made attempts to keep Christianity alive. His incarnations have run very much in Greece and Rome, and He takes special interest in guiding the evolution of the Western world. He obtained the book as we have it, without the notes, from the Venetian Master, one of the greater Teachers whom H.P.B. spoke of as Chohans.

Fifteen of the short rules that you find in the first part of this book, and fifteen in the second part, are exceedingly old, and were written in the most ancient Sanskrit. To these short sentences which are used as a basis for the instruction of the disciple, the Chohan added other sentences, which now form

part of the book, and are always to be read along with them, to supply complementary ideas without which the reader might be led astray. All the rules in both parts of the book, except the thirty short aphorisms, were written by the Chohan who gave it to the Master Hilarion. The following table shows the fifteen short rules in Part I as they existed in the exceedingly ancient manuscript; the number at the beginning of each is the original one, but the number at the end is that which appears in the modern book.

It will be noticed from the above table (which covers only Part I of the book) that rules 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 and 21 are absent from the list. That is because they do not belong to the most ancient part of the book. Those rules and the preliminary and concluding comments are the portion added by the greater One who gave it to the Master. In addition there are notes, which were written by the Master Hilarion Himself. The book as originally published in 1885 contained these three portions: the aphorisms from the ancient manuscript, the additions of the Chohan, and the notes of the Master Hilarion. All these were written down by Mabel Collins, who acted as the physical instrument, as the pen that wrote it. The Master was Himself the translator of the book, and He impressed it upon her brain. His was the hand that held the pen. Then there subsequently appeared in *Lucifer* under the title of “Comments” a few articles which were written by Mabel Collins under the influence of the Master, and which are exceedingly valuable, worth reading and studying.

Now, taking up the book itself, we first find the following statement:

These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them.

A distinction is made here between the world and the disciples; this is not a book intended for the world in general. The word disciple is to be considered in two senses—the uninitiated and the initiated. In reading the book carefully we can trace the two distinct lines of teaching clothed in the same words; each sentence contains a double meaning, one intended for the more and the other for the less advanced. We will try to trace them out when we come to the preliminary statements. The second part of the treatise appears to be intended entirely for the initiated disciple, but this duality runs through the first part.

Many persons not yet approaching discipleship entirely misunderstand these rules, and often criticize them as holding up an ideal which is hard and wanting in sympathy. This is constantly the case when an ideal is presented which is too high for the reader. No person is helped by an ideal, however noble in itself, which to him is not attractive; it is a practical lesson for dealing with human beings that we should put before them only such ideals as may attract them. With all books of this kind that which a man gets out of them is what he brings to them; his understanding depends upon his own power to answer to the thoughts which they contain. Even material things exist for us only if we have developed the organs which can respond to them; hence at the present time there are hundreds of vibrations playing upon us to which we are incapable of giving heed. Sir William Crookes once illustrated this very well when he was trying to show how circumscribed was our knowledge of electricity, and how great therefore was the possibility of progress in electrical science. He said that it would make an enormous difference to us, would in fact revolutionize our ideas, if we had organs answering to electrical vibrations instead of eyes sensitive to light vibrations. In dry air we should not be conscious of anything, for it does not conduct electricity. A house made of glass would be opaque, but an ordinary house would be transparent. A silver wire would look like a hole or tunnel in the air. What we know of the world thus depends upon our response to its vibrations. Similarly, if we cannot answer to a truth, it is not truth for us. So, when dealing with books written by occultists we can only catch their thought in proportion to our own spiritual advancement. Any part of their thought which is too subtle or too high simply passes by us as if it were not there.

Much more can be got out of this book by meditation than by mere reading; its greatest value is that it gives directions to our meditation. Pick out a single sentence and then meditate upon it; stop the working of the lower mind and awaken the inner consciousness which comes directly in contact with the thought. One may thus get away from images of the concrete mind to a direct perception of the truth. Meditation thus enables one to obtain in the brain a large amount of the direct knowledge of the truth which the ego has acquired in his own worlds. Still, a man who meditates, but does not read or listen to a teacher as well, although he is sure to progress on the spiritual plane, will do so only slowly. If he had had the additional advantage of reading or listening, he would

advance far more rapidly. The lecture or study can tune the brain of the student so that it will obtain more knowledge through meditation. But for a man who only listens or reads, and does not meditate, hardly any advancement is possible, and progress is exceedingly slow. Both should be combined; much meditation and a little hearing or reading will carry a man far indeed.

C.W.L.—On the title-page of the first edition of *Light on the Path*, published in 1885, it is described as: “A treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of ‘ the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence.” But the book itself begins with the statement that these rules are written for all disciples. The latter description is surely the more accurate one, as the history of the book will show.

As we have it at present it was dictated by the Master Hilarion through Mabel Collins—a lady well known in Theosophical circles, who at one time collaborated with Madame Blavatsky in the editorship of *Lucifer*. The Master Hilarion had in turn received it from His own Teacher, the Great One who among Theosophical students is sometimes called the Venetian. But even He was the author of only a part of it. It has passed through three phases; let us set them down in order.

It is but a small book even now, but the first form in which we have seen it is smaller yet. It is a palm-leaf manuscript, old beyond computation; so old that even before the time of Christ men had already forgotten its date and the name of its writer, and regarded its origin as lost in the mists of prehistoric antiquity. It consists of ten leaves, and on each leaf are written three lines only, for in a palm-leaf manuscript the lines run along the page, not across it as with us. Each line is complete in itself—a short aphorism—and the language in which they are written is an archaic form of Sanskrit.

The Venetian Master translated these aphorisms from Sanskrit into Greek, for the use of His Alexandrian pupils, of whom the Master Hilarion was one, in His incarnation as Iamblichus. Not only did He translate the aphorisms, but He added to them certain explanations, which we shall do well to take along with the original. For example, if we look at the first three aphorisms, we shall see that the paragraph marked 4, which follows them, is clearly intended as a

commentary on them; so we should read it thus: “Kill out ambition; but work as those work who are ambitious. Kill out desire of life; but respect life as those do who desire it. Kill out desire of comfort; but be happy as those are who live for happiness.”

In the same way rules, 5, 6 and 7 form a group, followed by 8, which is a comment by the Chohan—and so on far into the book. These groups of three are not put so by mere coincidence, but intentionally. If we examine them we shall find that there is a certain bond between the three in each case. For example, the three rules grouped together above point to purity of heart and steadiness of spirit. One may say that they indicate what the man must do with himself, what is his duty to himself in the way of preparation for work.

The second set of three aphorisms (numbers 5 to 8) states that we are to kill out all sense of separateness, desire for sensation, and the hunger for growth. They indicate man’s duty to those around him socially. He must realize that he is one with others. He must be willing to give up selfish and separate pleasures. He must kill out the desire for personal growth, and work for the growth of the whole.

In the next set of three (numbers 9 to 12) we are told what to desire—that which is within us, that which is beyond us, and that which is unattainable. These are clearly a man’s duty to his Higher Self. Then follow aphorisms (13 to 16) on the desire for power, peace and possessions. Those are all desires which fit us for the work of the Path. The next group of rules (17 to 20) tell the aspirant how to seek the way.

The rules now numbered 4, 8, 12, etc., are explanations and amplifications by the Venetian Master. They, with the original aphorisms, formed the book as it was first published in 1885, for the Master Hilarion translated it from Greek into English and gave it in that form. Almost immediately after it was printed. He added to it a number of most valuable notes of His own. For that first edition those notes were printed on separate pages, the backs of which were gummed so that they might be attached at the beginning and the end of the little book which had just passed through the press. In further editions, those notes have been inserted in their appropriate places.

The beautiful little essay on Karma which appears at the end of the book is also from the hand of the Venetian Master, and was included in the book from the first edition.

The archaic Sanskrit manuscript which was the basis of *Light on the Path* was also translated into Egyptian; and many of the explanations of the Venetian Master have more the ring of Egyptian than of Indian teaching. Therefore, the student who can enter to some extent into the spirit of that old civilization will find it a great help to his understanding of this book. The conditions which surrounded us in ancient Egypt were radically different from those of the present day. It is almost impossible to make people understand them now; yet if we could get back into the mental attitude of those ancient times we should realize a very great deal which now, I am afraid, we miss. We are in the habit of thinking too much of the intellect of the present day, and are fond of boasting of the advance we have made beyond the old civilizations. There undoubtedly are certain points in which we have advanced beyond them, but there are other matters in which we are by no means at their level. The comparison is perhaps a little unfair, however, because as yet ours is a very young civilization. If we go back three hundred years in the history of Europe, and especially the history of England, we find a state of affairs which seems very uncivilized indeed. When we compare these three hundred years, including the one hundred and fifty years of scientific development which have played so large a part in our civilized history, with the four thousand years through which the Egyptian civilization flourished practically unchanged, we see at once that ours is a very small affair. Any civilization which has lasted as long as four thousand years has had an opportunity to try all sorts of experiments and to obtain results which we have not had yet, so it is not fair to compare us at our beginning with any of the great civilizations at their zenith.

Our fifth sub-race has by no means reached its highest point or its greatest glory, and that point when reached will be a definite advance upon all other civilizations, especially in certain respects. It will have its own characteristics and some of them may seem to us less pleasing than those of the earlier civilizations, but on the whole it will be an advance, because the successive races are like the tide when the waves are coming in. Each comes in and recedes,

and the next one comes in just a little further. They all have their rise and climax, and their decay. With us the tide is still rising, so we have not yet the settled order in certain respects that they had in some of the older civilizations. We are, unfortunately, far as yet from the realization of unselfishness—from the feeling that the community as a whole is the chief thing to be considered and not the individual. That was attained in some of the older civilizations to an extent which would make it seem to us now a kind of Utopia, but on the other hand we are growing into possession of powers which those older peoples did not possess. There was a short period in the early history of Rome when “none was for the party and all were for the State”, as Macaulay put it. Pythagoras, speaking to the people at Taormina, told them that the State was more than father and mother, more even than wife and child, and that every man should always be ready to give up his own thoughts, feeling and wishes for the sake of unity—for the *res publica*, the original of ‘republic’, the common weal or well-being of the whole, to which every one should be willing to sacrifice his personal interests. In England, too, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, there was a period of such true patriotic feeling and activity.

I do not mean that in ancient Egypt or in ancient Greece, or anywhere else in the world, all the people were unselfish. Not by any means, but all educated people took a very much wider view, a much more communal view of life than we do. They thought very much more of the State and much less of their individual welfare or progress. We shall attain to that too, and when we do we ought to realize it more fully than any of the ancient races, and also bring to it some development which the older races had not.

If, then, we could get back into that old Egyptian outlook, we should understand *Light on the Path* very much better. The student will do well to try to produce that attitude in himself in his study of it, so that it may help him to put himself into the place of those who studied it in the older times.

It is easy for some of us who have undergone the training that enables us to remember our past lives. I remember my own last incarnation in Greece, where I took part in the Eleusinian Mysteries, and another life much earlier in which the great Mysteries of Egypt, of which some remnants still exist in Freemasonry,

figured largely, and that enables me to get more good out of such books as this than I could without such memory. Even impressions from the past, giving a sense of atmosphere, are a great help. Egyptian or Indian, there is no more precious gem in our Theosophical literature—no book which will better repay the most careful and detailed study.

As already explained, *Light on the Path* was the first of three treatises which occupy an unique position in our Theosophical literature, as they give directions from Those who have trodden the Path to those who desire to tread it. I remember that the late Swami T. Subba Row once told us that its precepts had several layers of meaning—that they could be taken over and over again as directions for different stages. First, they are useful for the aspirants—those who are treading the probationary path. Then they begin all over again at a higher level for him who has entered upon the Path proper through the portal of the first of the great Initiations. And yet again, when Adeptship has been attained, it is said that once more, in some still higher sense, these same precepts may be taken as directions for one who presses onwards to still higher achievements. In this way, for the man who can understand it in the whole of its mystic meaning, this manual carries us farther than any other. These books which are definitely written for the quickening of the evolution of those who are on the Path put forward ideals which men in the world are usually not prepared to accept. Even among students there may be some who wonder at the form in which the teaching is given. The only way to understand it is to take it for granted and try to live it. In *At the Feet of the Master* it is said that it is not enough to say that it is poetic and beautiful; a man who wishes to succeed must do exactly what the Master says, attending to every word and taking every hint. That is equally true of this book. The man who does not try to live according to the teaching will constantly come up against points in it which will ruffle him—with which he will find himself quite out of agreement; but if he tries to live it, the sense in which it is to be taken will eventually dawn upon him. Any honest effort really to live the teaching always throws light on it, and that is the only way in which this priceless pearl can be appreciated

In such books there is a great deal more meaning than the actual words convey. Therefore to a large extent each man gets' out of them what he brings to

them-he brings the power to assimilate a certain part of their message and obtains only that part. Merely to read these books, even to study them, is therefore not enough; it is necessary to meditate over them as well. If one takes the passages that sound a little difficult-the cryptic, mystical, paradoxical statements-and thinks and meditates over them, one gets a great deal more out of them, although often one can hardly express it.

I try to express what occurs to me with regard to these different points, what they have meant to me but I am conscious all the time that I am not at all fully conveying my meaning. I know, very often, I cannot express the whole idea that is in my mind; when I put it into words it sounds quite commonplace, and yet I can see for myself a vast amount of higher meaning. I see that perhaps with my mental body. The same thing is true at each level. In addition to what we can realize with the mental body, there is still more that can be realized only with the causal body and through intuition. Whatever we express, there will always be something deeper still budding and coming to flower within us. That man is only an expression of the Eternal, and that nothing that is out of the Eternal can aid us, is true, and it is the truth upon which the three writers of this book constantly insist.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUR PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS

Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears.

A.B.—This is the first of four statements which describe the four qualifications preliminary to the Path proper. They describe true sight, true hearing, true speech and true standing in the presence of the Master, that is to say, true ability to serve mankind under His direction.

This and the following three statements are intended for two classes of disciples. In the first class are those who are on the probationary path, and are therefore being taught to get rid of all that we speak of as the personality; these preliminary instructions are intended to show them that they must begin by eliminating the lower self. In the second class are those who are already initiated. Something more is demanded from them. They must get rid of their individuality, the reincarnating ego, so that at the end of the Path their life will be entirely under the direction of the Monad. We shall see therefore that each of these four statements can be taken as affecting the personality or the individuality, and according to the position of the student who is trying to live out their teaching will be the point of view from which he will understand them.

It is worth while to notice and remember that these statements can be taken from two quite different points of view in another way also. These teachings come from Masters of the White Lodge, but exactly the same statements are made by those who follow the black magic of the dark side of life, whom we sometimes speak of as the Brothers of the Shadow or of Darkness. There are two ways in which the eyes may become incapable of tears, and according to his motive will be the path along which the aspirant will go. One way is that of the man who aspires to become a disciple of the dark side; he will take this statement as teaching complete indifference to pleasure and pain by means of hardening the heart and avoiding all sympathy. Anyone who tries to become incapable of tears by killing out all feeling will be going towards the dark path. The man on the other way is becoming incapable of tears only as far as his own

personal sorrows are concerned. His own lower nature does not move him, but he is fully awake to the feelings of others. Only at his peril can a man become indifferent to the sufferings of others.

We may contrast the two ways in a table:

Dark Path	White Path
1. Shuts out all feeling of sorrow.	Increases the power of feeling until it responds to every vibration of others.
2. Puts up a wall round oneself, to shut out all sorrows.	Throws down every wall or barrier that separates and prevents one from feeling the sorrows of others.
3. Fundamentally contracts the life.	Expands the life, as one tries to pour oneself into the lives of others.
4. Leads to death, and destruction, and avichi.	Leads to life, immortality, and nirvana.

The fundamental difference between the two ways is that the first tends towards separateness all the time, and ends up in a condition of absolute isolation, while the second aims constantly at union, and ends in a state of perfect unity.

The aspirant on the white path has gradually to eliminate everything in himself which can receive from the outer world anything which he feels as pain affecting himself, anything which shakes him through his personality, any sorrow or trouble of any kind which works upon him as concerning his personal self. He must reach a point where he is incapable of feeling sorrows for his own separate interest. In fact, he is to aim at making his kamic sheath entirely a

vehicle of the Higher Self, with no independent life of its own. It is to have neither attractions nor repulsions, neither desires nor wishes, neither hopes nor fears—the whole of that is to be eliminated. This should not convey the mistaken idea that the sheath is to be destroyed; but it must cease to respond on its own account to impressions from the outer world. Only the separated life must be killed out, but the sheath must be kept for use in the service of humanity.

This change that the disciple must make in his own character is definitely shown in the constitution of the sheath. In the ordinary disciple it is constantly changing its colours; but when it is purified and all the separate life is purged away it remains a colourless and radiant vehicle, only affected by the reflections that come from the inner life; it has then no colour of its own, but only that which is thrown upon it from the Higher Self, it resembles the appearance of the moon on water—a pearly radiance, in which there is a certain play which can hardly be called colour. This change takes place very gradually in the astral body of the disciple while he is working at the difficult task of making himself responsive to all the sorrows of his fellow-men, but more and more indifferent to all which affects himself. It would be very easy for him to kill out every feeling, but to become increasingly sensitive to the feelings of others and at the same time not to permit any personal feelings to come in, is the much more difficult task set before the aspirant. As he goes on with the work, however, he will find that his selfish emotions quietly disappear as they become converted into unselfish emotions.

The disciple may test the quality and genuineness of his sympathy by looking to see whether or not he feels it when the suffering of others is not intruded upon his notice. If you see a person suffering, or if you come across a case of gross ill-usage, no doubt you feel pain, but do you feel the same pain when the person is not before your sight? Our sympathy is an exceedingly poor thing if it is excited only by the sight of suffering. Send a person out into a great city like London, and he may be terribly affected by the suffering that he sees around him; but take him away from it all and he will soon forget the miseries he has witnessed and will become perfectly happy. The disciple has to learn to live as if the whole of that suffering were present before him all the time; to relieve it must be the motive of his work.

No one has reached the stage where he is responsive to the great cry of pain, spoken of in *The Voice of the Silence*?¹ unless his motive in life is to help humanity whether the suffering be before his eyes or not, for that is the real motive-power of a disciple. The best way to get rid of personality, to grow indifferent to one's own personal joys and sorrows, to become incapable of tears, is to let the mind think upon the sorrow of the world and the ways of helping it; that causes the personal self to be seen in its true place beside the larger self of the great orphan humanity.

When the disciple passes through Initiation and begins to develop the buddhic consciousness, this incapacity for tears takes on a new character. He then begins to understand the word evolution, to realize that in man it means the unfoldment of the higher triad; then he begins to see the real use and object of all the suffering and pain. He gradually becomes incapable of tears because he understands the value of the suffering to those who are undergoing it, because he sees that when pain comes to a man it does so as an absolute necessity for the higher development of his soul. It is true that theoretically the man might have avoided that suffering if he had acted wisely in the past, for it is the result of his past karma when it is not produced by his present follies; but the practical aspect of the matter is that the man has been foolish, has elected to learn through this kind of experience instead of through wisdom, because he has not always chosen to follow the best he knew, and now he is suffering, and the pain is bringing him wisdom for the future, and is thereby promoting his evolution.

Realizing this, the disciple reaches a condition in which he may be described as full of the most perfect sympathy but without regret. The sense of regret comes in only when the consciousness is unilluminated by the buddhic life. When the buddhic consciousness is felt, the disciple's sympathy increases enormously, but his regret disappears, and as he rises higher this wider view makes him incapable of tears, because in the face of the bitterest suffering to which he is learning to respond and to feel in himself, he feels also its object and end. He can share in the suffering to the full, but without the slightest wish that it should be anything other than it is. The absence of any wish to get rid of the suffering before it has done its work, can only exist when the consciousness has buddhic illumination. That is the condition which has been described as the Christ state.

The law is good and the will of the Supreme is perfect, and the suffering works for a perfect end; therefore the disciple is filled with content and satisfaction; he feels the suffering, but of grief and sorrow he feels none at all.

When the disciple reaches this stage his consciousness has become part of the life of the world. If he thinks of himself as “I” it is as part of that “I” in which all other “Is” also exist. Now there is for him nothing which is outside or separate from himself; he identifies himself with the one great life in whatever stage it may be, whenever it is in need of help. He entirely loses the sense, which is so common in the world, of some people being outside; he is in all and with all.

This realization of union makes an enormous difference to the help that the man is able to give to the world. When he is helping any person he feels his troubles as his own, not as the difficulties of another, separate from himself. He sees them exactly as that person does; therefore instead of assisting him from the outside he is helping him from within. There is a world of difference between the help given by one from the outside and that which is given from within; the former is a temporary and adventitious aid, but the inside help adds to the power of the man’s life.

The disciple can reach this state only because he has cultivated sympathy, has learnt to identify himself with the joys and sorrows of others, has made his own life a life common to all. Without that, this loss of separateness would be unattainable. The only incapability of tears that he has to know is that which makes him indifferent to the things that touch the personal self, but leaves him keenly alive to all that affects the other souls around him.

C.W.L.—Our President has explained with regard to the first four statements in this book, beginning “Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears,” that they may be taken in quite a wrong way, and are then as acceptable to the black magician as to ourselves. He would understand them to mean that he must kill out all feeling, build himself into a shell and shut the sorrows and the troubles of the world outside it. That is exactly the opposite of the teaching given to the pupil on the white path, who is taught to increase his power of feeling until he attains perfect sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-men.

We hear a good deal about the black magicians, but I fancy that few people know much about them. I have met many specimens of the genus, and can therefore claim to know something of their nature and methods. Some of them are very interesting people, but by no means desirable acquaintances. There are many different types who are classed under the general title of black magician. For instance, the negroes in South Africa and in the West Indies, and probably the aborigines of Australia, practise a good deal of petty black magic. It is a very poor thing; even they themselves admit that it does not work on white people. One has heard of certain cases in which they have succeeded in making white people exceedingly uncomfortable, but one must add that it was made possible by the kind of life those people led. Such magic depends for its success largely upon the fear of the people upon whom the incantations are laid, yet it is a real enough thing in its feeble way. These primitive people have certain drugs, they know how to hypnotize, and they have power over some low-class earth-spirits and similar entities. They contrive to cause sickness to a man, or in his family, or among his flocks and herds, or to blast his gardens and fields so that they will not bear crops; though in the latter case they are not above aiding their magic sometimes by saltpetre as well.

There is another set of people, somewhat more dignified, who are pursuing occult power for their own ends. They have learnt a certain amount of occultism—sometimes quite a good deal—but they are using their power selfishly. They often contrive to gain money and position by such means, and to maintain themselves in that position until they die. After their death they sometimes make an attempt to carry on the same general line, but it meets with indifferent success, and their plans break down; every thing sooner or later fails them and they fall back into a condition of considerable misery.² A life such as that means quite a definite step back for the ego.

Yet another and more advanced type of black magician does not desire anything for himself. He does not seek to obtain money or power or influence or anything of that sort, and that at once makes him very much more powerful. He leads a pure and self-controlled life, just as some of our own people might do, but he has set before himself the goal of separateness. He wants to keep himself alive on higher planes, free from absorption into the Logos; he looks with horror

upon that which for us is the greatest felicity. He wishes to maintain his own position exactly as it is, and furthermore he claims that he can do it, that the human will is strong enough to withstand the cosmic will up to a certain point. I have met men like that, and our President, who is always trying to save even the most unlikely souls, has set herself once or twice to convert people who have got themselves into that condition, so as to bring them round to our way of thinking—though not with very much success, I am afraid. She sometimes says to them: “You know what the end will be. You know quite enough of the laws of nature, and you are sufficiently intelligent to see whither your path is leading you. It is quite certain that in the end you must collapse. When this manvantara ends, when this planetary chain is over you will be absorbed, whether you will or not, into the Logos at higher levels, and what will be your condition then?”

“You do not actually *know* that,” they reply, “yet we admit that that appears to be what will happen. But we tell you frankly that we do not care. We are well satisfied with our present position; we are able to maintain our individuality against any effort to draw us into the Logos for a very long time, even till the end of the manvantara. Whether we can hold it after that we do not know, and we do not care. Whether we can or not, we shall have had our day.”

That is an arguable position, and the man who adopts it may be not exactly a good man, but he need not be a bad man, in the ordinary sense of the word. He certainly has a great deal of satanic pride in his composition, but he is not necessarily spiteful nor evil-minded with regard to other people. Still he is absolutely unscrupulous. Anyone who happened to get in his way he would brush aside with far less consideration than we should give to a mosquito. But to a man who did not stand in his way he might be quite a good friend, and there is not necessarily any active evil in his composition. He is not at all a monster of evil, but he is a man who has struck out a line for himself, and is following it at the cost of all that to us means progress. That is all we have a right to say against him. We are confident that he will end in great disaster; he is not so sure of that, and in any case he is willing to face it.

As a rule these people are sufficient unto themselves, and they distrust and despise everybody else. That is always characteristic of anyone who is on the

dark path; he is right and everybody else is wrong. He looks down on everybody else. People talk sometimes about a black brotherhood. There is no such thing. There could not be any true brotherhood among them, but they do occasionally join together in face of an imminent peril or when something threatens any of their plans. At best it is a very loose alliance, formidable only because of the tremendous power that some of them possess. It does happen now and again that the work that some of our Masters are doing for the evolution of the world crosses their tracks, and then they become formidable enemies. They cannot touch our Masters—I think that must be very irritating to them—but they sometimes get hold of one of Their pupils, and so cause Them a little trouble or some disappointment, if we can suppose that a Master would feel disappointment.

The reason of all the warnings given to us to beware of these people is that we shall find them trying sometimes to mislead us. Madame Blavatsky, who knew a great deal about them and had a wholesome respect for them, rather gave the impression that they were tempting demons who exult in evil for its own sake. This would be true only of those at a lower level; the more powerful of them would consider it quite undignified to exult in anything; but their plans, which are always entirely selfish, may sometimes involve a great deal of harm to certain people. They are as calm and self-contained and as passionless as any disciple of the Master; in fact, they are more so, because they have killed out all feeling intentionally. They would not injure a man merely for the sake of doing harm, but, as I said before, in pursuit of some end of their own which his existence interferes with they would not hesitate to sweep him out of their way. Those whose work it is to assist people astrally sometimes come across their victims, and in that case the man who tries to help often brings down upon himself also the determined opposition of the black magician.

To return to our main topic. It is very difficult to learn to respond to feelings, and yet not permit one's personality to show itself in any way—to be in perfect sympathy with the feelings of others, and yet have none our own. Many people are very much disturbed by the sight of the suffering of others, but if they do not actually see that suffering they forget it. Many of the richer people in a city like London, for example, when taken to see the terrible misery in the slums, are very

much affected, and will at once do all they can to relieve the particular cases that they see; yet the same people will go off to their hunting and fishing and pleasure, and absolutely forget that there is any misery. In that case the sorrow is only partly for the other person's suffering; it is largely merely the personal pain of having that suffering intruded on their notice. That kind of sympathy is a poor thing—it is not real sympathy at all.

When we fully realize the suffering of humanity we gradually lose sight of our own. We forget that we have Personal sufferings because we see that the sufferings of humanity are so great, and we realize that that which falls to our lot is after all only our part of the general burden. A man who can get into that state of mind has already very largely transcended his personality. He sorrows still for humanity, but no longer for himself; he has become incapable of tears as far as his own personal joys and sorrows are concerned.

It is not an easy matter to regard the sufferings of others accurately. The President and I some years ago investigated the question of the influence of pain upon different people undergoing what from the outside would be regarded as the same physical suffering. We found that in an extreme case one person was suffering perhaps a thousand times more than another, and that in ordinary life one might quite often feel pain a hundred times more than another. If one shows signs of suffering and another does not, it must not be assumed that the latter is necessarily braver or more philosophic. It may not be the case. We looked into the question of the amount of suffering which was inflicted on different people by the ignominies of prison life; to some persons they meant practically nothing, to others the most intense mental and emotional suffering. So it is futile to say: "I do not feel such and such a thing, and therefore other persons ought not to feel it either." One does not know to what degree or in what proportion others are feeling. I have found that many things which do not matter in the least to me may nevertheless cause serious pain to others; whereas it has been quite the reverse as regards other things, such as unpleasant sounds, for example which often cause acute suffering to those who are developing their finer senses. I have seen our President in a condition of positive agony when a great ammunition wagon went clanging by the house where we were staying in Avenue Road, in London. This does not mean, of course, that she lost control of her nerves. She

has often explained that while the disciple must increase his sensitiveness he must also control his nervous system, so as to bear without flinching whatever pain or disturbance may come to him.³

Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness.

A.B.—The disciple must become entirely indifferent to the opinions of others about himself, as far as his own feelings are concerned. If they think and speak well of him he is not to be elated; if ill, he is not to be depressed. Yet at the same time he must not be indifferent to the opinions of others as they affect the people who hold them. He is not, therefore, to be careless with regard to the impressions which he makes upon others, for if he repels them by his conduct he loses his power to help them.

The disciple, in the course of his progress, develops his psychic powers, and so becomes conscious of what others are thinking about him; he is then living in a world in which he may hear everything said about him, and may see every criticism in the mind of another. He reaches this point when he has risen above all criticism, and is not affected by the opinions of others. Some people are very anxious to develop clairvoyance before they have reached this stage, but if they realized this fact the astral consciousness which they so much desire would lose its attraction.

C.W.L.—It must not be thought that the developed person who hears uncomplimentary remarks about himself and is profoundly indifferent to them deliberately nerves himself against the feeling of irritation, and says: “That is all very dreadful, but I refuse to care; I will not pay any attention to it.” He passes, no doubt through a stage like that, but very soon he reaches a’ state where he absolutely and utterly does not care when it is just like the twittering of birds, or like the’ cicadas whistling in the trees—they may be a nuisance but that is all. He does not pick out one particular cicada and listen to its tone alone, nor does he single out the thought or the word of any one person who is saying something silly.

We must all try to reach that stage. We are constantly putting,t before people, because it is the attitude of our Masters into whose “world” we are trying to go.

They may very properly think: “How can we hope to attain to the attitude of these Great Ones?” Of course, no one can do it immediately, but we ought to be aiming at it and trying to get as near to it as we can, and one of the ways of doing that—a method which is really quite easy—is just not to mind in the least what other people say.

When we have reached that attitude the next step is to think of the bad karma these people are making in thinking or speaking wrongly about us. We may then regret it for their sake, and for that reason it is well that we should endeavour not to give more cause than we can help for foolish and depreciatory remarks—not in the least because they matter to us, but because they make bad karma for the people who indulge in them.

Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound.

A.B.—The disciple must lose everything in himself which can give pain to another. In the earlier stages he has to learn to eliminate from his speech all that can give pain—not merely harsh criticism or unkind language, but every form of word that hurts another by implying disparagement or drawing attention to a fault in his character. It is true that some people are in a position in which it is their duty sometimes to point out his fault to another; but it is a mistaken view that he is justified in inflicting pain while doing so. When the fault is pointed out in a perfectly friendly manner, the element of wounding is not present. Whenever the speech wounds it is due to some imperfection in carrying out the duty; the would-be helper has failed to identify himself with the person addressed; he is giving advice only from the outside, and therefore it hurts. If he had unified himself with the other person, and tried to help at the same time feeling as he feels, he would have brought out the other person’s emotion in a sympathetic way; through the consciousness of his sympathy the other would have had his nobler and wider side awakened, and then the advice would not have been wounding. If it is your duty to criticize another and you find that it wounds him, look into yourself to find the imperfection that caused the wound. If we are to lose the power to wound, the separate individuality must go; when we feel ourselves as one life, it becomes impossible for us to inflict suffering

upon anything, as it is part of ourselves. The way to reach that point of evolution is to begin by gradually purifying the speech, taking the more salient faults first.

C.W.L.—Anyone who wishes to approach the Master must already have given up the *desire* to wound others by his speech. But there is still the possibility of wounding unintentionally and unconsciously, on account of want of sensitiveness. As we go further and raise our consciousness to a higher level we shall more and more understand how things strike others. Those who have been practising meditation for many years will notice that they have become more sensitive, have made a certain amount of progress towards unity, and therefore they understand the people about them just a little better than those who have not made such an effort. We hear someone make what we think an unfortunate remark, in all good faith and without noticing that there is anything wrong with it and that they have wounded somebody. We who have sharpened our senses just a little by thought and study and the endeavour to live the higher life feel instinctively how the third person will take that remark. We can see that it is an unfortunate one, and wish it had been put in some other form.

A Master could not possibly say anything that would hurt another. He might find it necessary to give something in the nature of a rebuke; but He would manage to put it in such a way that the man would not be wounded by what He said. Sometimes a disciple finds it in the line of his duty to act sternly, and he is tempted, through his own feeling of sympathy, to avoid the task. But if the Higher Self asserts its dominance he will, if it is absolutely necessary) speak sternly, but also calmly and judicially, and without indignation.

Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

A.B.—This sentence has behind it a very long occult tradition, which has been given out to the world in many ways. It has to do with the teaching of sacrifice, which still appears in different religions in various forms, though they have generally lost its true meaning. The expression used here is connected with what is sometimes called the blood-sacrifice and the blood-covenant, of which the strangest traces are to be found among the tribes which are descended from very ancient races.

In looking up past lives we came across an incident which may be told to illustrate the idea behind the blood-sacrifice and covenant. Very long ago He who is now the Master Morya was a great king; he had an only son who was H.P.B., who as a boy was placed in charge of the captain of the guard, who was Colonel Olcott. One day, when the boy was alone with the captain, some conspirators who had plotted to slay him rushed in and would have killed him, but the captain threw himself in between and saved the boy at the cost of his own life. The youth was only stunned, but the captain lay upon him dying, and as the blood poured from his death-wound he touched it with his finger and placed it on the feet of the king. The king asked: "What can I do for you who have given your life for me and my son?" The dying captain replied: "Grant that your son and I may serve you in other lives for ever." Then the monarch said: For the blood which has been shed for me and mine, the bond between us shall never be broken." In the course of time the king became a Master, and the bond between them remained and ripened into that between Master and disciple, and it will remain for ever unbroken. In sacrificing the life of the body the captain made a tie which gave him the true life which the disciple gains from the Master.

I mention the story because it illustrates a great truth; just in proportion as we are strong enough to sacrifice whatever to us is the life, to pour out the life-blood of the lower at the feet of the higher, is the life really gained, not lost. All evolution of young humanity is made by the voluntary sacrifice of the lower life to the higher; when that sacrifice is completely made, it is found that life instead of being lost is made immortal. The outer sign of the sacrifice helped persons to understand the principle more readily, and drew attention to the fundamental truth that it is only when the lower life is sacrificed to the higher that it finds its own true fulfilment of evolution. On that truth the sacrifices which are found in many religions were originally based; that is how what is called the blood-bond is really made. The lower life is sacrificed for the higher life, and the higher accepts the lower and lifts it up by the bond that is never broken.

The disciple must wash his feet in the blood of the heart. He must make a complete offering of everything, that he loves and values, of what seems to him his very life; but he loses this only to find his higher life. It is not usually an actual shedding of blood that is required, though that does become necessary

sometimes; it is symbolically the shedding of blood always so far as the pupil is concerned at the time, because he feels the loss. He does literally sacrifice what to him amounts to life, and it looks as though he were giving it up completely, without any future possibility of regaining it. The great testing of the completeness of the disciple's sacrifice is made in order to discover whether the soul is strong enough to throw itself voluntarily into nothingness, to draw out the heart's blood completely, without any hope of reward. If the disciple is not strong enough to do that he is not ready to stand in the presence of the Master. But if he can completely throw away everything that he knows as his life, then all the testimony of the past and the truth of the law declare that he will find that life again in a life stronger and higher than that which he laid down. It is only when that sacrifice is made that the disciple finds himself in the higher life, standing in the presence of the Masters. Then the degree of his strength is the extent of his power to make the sacrifice without feeling it.

C.W.L.—The meaning of this sentence is that the man who wishes to stand in the presence of the Masters must have sacrificed the lower self to the higher. The feet of the soul, the personality on earth, must be washed in the heart's blood of the emotions before the higher life can be gained.

That is a general law of life. The little child takes great pleasure in playing with its toys; soon it grows up into boyhood, and the lower playthings have been outgrown and put aside, in order that proficiency may be gained in the higher kind of sports. When the youth goes to college he will many a time perhaps give up a game in the fresh air, which he would very much prefer, in order to work at his books. At other times he will put aside something he would very much like to read, in order to slave at Greek verbs or other apparently uninteresting and not very useful studies. If he goes into training for a race, or for rowing, he has to sacrifice the enjoyment of good dinners, and live in a frugal and rigid way until the race is over.

On the occult path many pleasures connected with the outer world are seen to be a waste of time. There may be cases when it is a real effort to part with them, when there is a call from the higher life, and the aspirant responds to that call at a certain amount of cost to the lower nature. Then he must cast aside the lower in

order to have the higher; but later on the attraction of the lower will have disappeared entirely. When a man once fully realizes the higher, the lower simply ceases to exist for him, but in many cases he has to cast aside the lower before he really enters into the glory and the joy and the beauty of the spiritual life.

I have known many whose opportunities were good but who shrank back just at that point, and failed because they were not ready to give up all that they had previously enjoyed, and apparently receive nothing in return for it. Sometimes a man is afraid to let go of one thing until he can grasp the other, and so he holds fast to the lower; but it does not satisfy him, because he has glimpsed the higher. To give up everything at the Master's call—one wonders whether one could do it; one always thought and hoped that one would, but when it comes to the point can you do it fully and cheerfully? Many have worked for years and years, and wonder why they do not attain, why they are not among those whom the Master is able to draw very close to Himself. The reason is always the same; it is the personality in some form that keeps them back. This giving up of everything is not a thing to be done with constant backsliding—giving up one day, and grasping and trying to keep the next—nor is it to be done with pride, with the pose: "I have given up everything." That is quite the wrong attitude; it should be done as a matter of course, and cheerfully. The person who is going to succeed will feel that there is nothing else for him to do but to make the great renunciation when the moment comes.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST RULE

Kill out...

A.B.—The expression “kill out” appears at the beginning of the first six short rules. It is important not to misunderstand it. There are two ways of getting rid of or killing out an evil thought, an evil habit or an evil act. Let us consider the thought first, because when that has been removed the other two very easily follow. Suppose an evil thought comes into a man’s mind. He finds that it tends to repeat itself. Then his first inclination is generally to fight with it to throw his energy against it and violently turn it out, just as he would deal with a physical enemy. He wants to get it out of the mind, so he takes it by the shoulders and flings it out.

That is not the best way. It ignores the great law, which works throughout nature, that action and reaction are equal and opposite. Take a ball and throw it against a wall; it will rebound and strike you, gently if you have thrown it gently, but with great force if you have flung it violently. The same principle is true everywhere. Suppose you turn a thought out of the mind with violence; there will be a decided reaction. The recoil will give you a definite sense of exhaustion, and the thought may come back to you with increased force. The strength that you have put out has then taken form as thought, and has come back to you again, and you have to repeat the struggle. In that way a man may in some cases fight for weeks and months and even years, and yet be none the better for it. Still, in time it is possible to kill out evil thought by this means, though with it you will also kill out a large amount of your own force and energy, of your thought-power, so that a certain hardness and lack of responsiveness of some area of the mental body will be the result of the struggle.

The other way of killing it out is to substitute for the bad thought a good thought of exactly opposite nature. You first deliberately study the matter and decide what is the opposite, the exact antithesis, of the evil thought. You formulate the new thought quietly in your mind, and then, at the very moment

when the evil thought comes into your mind, you substitute for it the opposite good thought. Thus for pride you might substitute kindness, for anger affection, for fear admiration, and for low material desires thoughts of purity, dignity, honour, and the like; or you might dwell with devotional thought upon the mental image of the Master as having the good quality, and forget yourself in thinking of Him.

The human mind cannot concentrate on two separate things at once; so when you give your attention to the good thought the result is that the evil thought is expelled without your directing any force towards it. Thus no mental energy is wasted, no vitality is lost. The good thought soon gains strength, and the mind becomes impervious to the attacks of the bad thought, and irresponsive to its kind; so you have practically killed out the evil by intensifying and vitalizing the opposite good. It is as if we sucked the life out of the bad thought, and left it a mere shell. Bad thoughts are most effectively killed by such devitalization.

We have thus two ways of killing out; the former on the line of death, the latter on that of growth. One is the plan which is chiefly used by those who are beginning to tread the left-hand path, who are turning against the way of the divine Will. The other is that of evolution in accordance with the divine Plan. We are free to choose which we will follow of these two great roads. All the things of the world are in evolution, moving on one or the other of these paths.

Those parts of the world in which Ishvara is developing His Image have a certain free will, which consists-in their being able to work with the divine Will or away from it as separate individuals. Those who work with Him ultimately tread the right-hand path, but those who deliberately choose the separated self are preparing themselves to tread the left-hand path. Speaking generally: all that leads to isolation tends to turn a man's direction to the left, and all that tends to unity towards the right. People of the left-hand path kill out sympathy, affection and love, because they find that those qualities bring misery, and also stand in the way of their gaining power. The killing out process is generally taken therefore by those who want to gain power and the other things that they consider desirable in this life, for the firm establishment and the enjoyment of the separated self, careless of the good of the whole, entirely bent upon their own

individual progress and gain. They will kill violently all that side of their own nature the response to which would be an obstacle in the path of power. They will kill out affection also, because it is an avenue of pain, and it is far easier to become indifferent by killing out affection than by becoming more and more sensitive.

But the way we have been taught is that of union, the path in which the disciple becomes responsive to every cry of pain, as was so emphatically taught in *The Voice of the Silence*.⁴ () The disciple must intensify his life, not minimize it; he must submit to the law, not fight against it. Then of course the law will be with him. His method is something like that art of wrestling which is taught in Japan, in which conquest is gained by yielding to one's antagonist; the man constantly yields to his opponent, but at the critical moment he turns in such a way that the force of his antagonist tells against himself. This is the nature of the yoga of the right-hand path; of it Shri Krishna says in the *Gita*: "In this there is no loss of effort, nor is there transgression."⁵

C.W.L.—Many people, when they are told to kill out a desire, start making what may be described as a violent raid upon it. They want to kill out a certain evil quality, so they set themselves very strongly, angrily almost, against that quality. One result of this is that one stirs up whatever forces exist, inside and outside, which are tending in the opposite direction, into the most violent opposition possible, and the consequence is a serious struggle. If a man is sufficiently determined he will come out conqueror in the end, but in many cases he will waste a large amount of his own force and energy and thought-power, and leave himself much exhausted and depleted.

I can testify that the method of substitution works very much better, for I have tried both. It is a sort of moral *ju jitsu* whereby you employ the force of the hostile power to help you. You do not so much attack the foe as concentrate all your attention on the opposite virtue. If for example, a man is inclined to be readily upset and disturbed, he should not fight hard against that, but instead should think constantly of calmness, of peace and philosophy. Presently that thought will become established by habit, and he will find that the old worry and lack of calmness have passed away without his making a desperate fight. If he

surrounds himself with thought-forms such as “Do not be irritable,” and so on, they are still of the colour of irritability, and they react undesirably on him. But if he thinks strongly, “Be calm, be gentle, be peaceful,” he sets up vibrations appropriate to and productive of peace and harmony. We do not want to set one vice to fight another vice, but we want to ignore all these things and work up the opposite virtue; by doing that the effect will be just as good and we shall achieve it with far less trouble.

We say: “Kill out desire,” but not, “Kill out emotion.” The higher emotions must be encouraged always, and the stronger they are the better. Especially is this true of love and devotion, which one should deliberately cultivate. When a man feels a great rush of such an emotion as these his aura expands: his astral body becomes perhaps ten times its normal size in the case of the ordinary person, and much more than that when the man really knows how to use his higher vehicles. When the great paroxysm of feeling is over the aura contracts again, but not exactly to what it was before; having been much stretched it remains at least a little larger than before. The first effect of the expansion is a rarefaction of the astral body, but it very speedily draws in more astral matter to fill the larger space, so as to make it up to about its normal density⁶.

The astral body is definitely needed in order that by means of it one may be able to sympathize with people, and also because of its function as a reflector of the buddhic body. In the case of a developed person there is no colour in his astral body except what is mirrored from the higher planes; it only reflects and shows the most delicate tints of colour.⁷

There are three ways in which the higher Self is connected with the personality.⁸ The higher mind is reflected in the lower. The buddhi or intuition is reflected a stage lower than the mind, in the astral body. There is also the possibility of connection between atma and the physical brain. The last is the most difficult to understand; it shows tremendous power of will, which moves without consideration of the means by which its object is to be achieved. It is the method of the first ray, to which Dr. Besant belongs. She has that great power of deciding that something shall be done, without stopping to consider the methods to be employed until afterwards. We do not know the limits of the human will. It

has been said that faith may remove mountains and cast them into the sea. I do not know whether there would be any particular purpose to be served in doing that, if it can be done, but I have certainly seen very wonderful results accomplished by the human will and I do not know where the limits of that power are set. Incredible things are done, more especially on the higher planes, by the mere action of will. When I had to take up the study of materialization, for example, according to my way of progress I had to learn exactly how it was to be done—a complicated process involving a good deal of knowledge of the different materials to be brought together and how they could best be arranged. But I have known a person, who knew nothing whatever about it, to drive straight in by the tremendous force of will and produce the same result, without gathering together all the complicated things that were necessary, and without in the least knowing how it was done. Such will is one of the divine powers latent in all of us, but in very few does it ever come to the surface and produce such a result without a long course of careful training.

I think that for most people the easiest of the three ways of making connection with the higher Self is to bring together the higher and lower minds, by passing from concrete to abstract thought, or from analysis to synthesis. But I have seen cases in which a person has been able to reach the buddhic consciousness without disturbing the relations between the mental and causal bodies at all. When it can be done, I have heard on high authority that this unification of the buddhic and astral bodies is the shortest of all roads to the goal, but the capacity to do it is gained only as the result of much suffering in previous lives. Those for whom that is the line raise themselves by the intensity of their love of devotion into the buddhic vehicle and effect a junction there, before they have developed the lower mind to anything like a level where it can work in with the higher mind, and before they have developed the causal body itself. Of course these two bodies must be developed, they cannot be overlooked; the aspirant will work upon the lower mind from the astral body, developing it and learning whatever has to be learnt, on account of his love and devotion. The pupil loves his Master so intensely that for His sake he will learn what is needed, and will thus develop whatever intellect is necessary. He also acts upon the causal body from above, and pours into it the buddhic conception, and so forces it to express that as far as it can do so in its own way.

Kill out ambition.

A.B.—We now turn to the first rule, dealing with ambition in particular. The undeveloped man is strongly held by the attractions of the senses; he desires physical luxury and bodily enjoyment. He does not feel ambition, which is the desire for power, until the mind is highly developed and the intellectual power has grown strong. The note of the intellect is “I”. It causes the man to feel himself separate, and that invariably leads him to wish to exercise power, because that desire is the self-assertion of the individual soul. He feels himself superior to all around him, and that shows as a desire for physical authority. From that comes the temptation to seek and grasp social and political power. In the political and social sphere ambition is the great moving force; for the man who by his intellect has gained influence over his fellow-men, stands out as their leader and this is a position which is incense in the nostrils of the proud and superior man.

Then the man begins to despise *outer* power over the bodies of men, and there comes into his mind the realization of a subtler form of power, which he now seeks to obtain. He no longer wants to lay down laws with physical authority; he has the subtler longing to dominate and rule the minds of men. That is intellectual ambition—the ambition to be a leader of thought. It is not an ambition which would move anyone who had not a largely developed intellect.

Still later, when that desire has been outgrown, ambition reappears in a yet subtler form, when the man passes on into the spiritual life. He thinks of the spiritual progress as made by himself for his own sake, because *he* wants to grow and understand and progress; the old ambition is really still holding him, and it is more dangerous because it is higher and subtler. That is why in the note to this aphorism the Master makes the remarkable statement that the pure artist, who works for the love of his work, is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the occultist who fancies he has removed his interest from self, but who has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to things which concern his larger span of life. The occultist is no longer confined to the ambitions of his present incarnation, yet his ambition may not be dead. He no longer cares to be a law-giver or ruler of

mankind, nor even an arbitrator in the thoughts of men; but he desires to be high in the spiritual world. He realizes that he is going to live life after life, and his ambition extends to the whole span of that greater life. He is still longing to be first, to be separate, to be what others are not. Yet that too must be overcome.

When one speaks to those who desire to be part of the universal life, the very first thing that one must tell them is to kill out that which makes for separateness. There would, however, be no gain in putting such an ideal before the ordinary man. He cannot leap at once from the worldly life into a spiritual life in which he is in full activity, but nevertheless doing nothing connected with the personal or the individual self. If you tell an ordinary man of the world to kill out ambition, and if he does it, the effect will not be a desirable one, for he will fall into lethargy and do nothing.

Suppose a man is further on than that, is on the probationary path; how should *he* read this rule about ambition? Most wisely by applying the word kill to the lower form of ambition; he should in fact understand it to mean transmute. He should get rid of ambition for the things of the world, but put before himself something higher for which he can be ambitious. That would be the desire for spiritual knowledge and growth. At this stage a man does not get rid of ambition totally; he enters an intermediate state, and will make great progress if he puts before himself as his goal the attainment of spiritual knowledge and the object of finding the Master and ultimately becoming a Master himself. Really these are all ambitions, but they will help him to shake off many of the lower shackles which enwrap his personality.

This quality of ambition which the disciple has to kill out had its uses in his earlier evolution. It was a means to make the man's individuality firm and steady. In the earlier stages he grew by his isolation. It was then requisite for the evolution of the physical and mental bodies that there should be competition and fighting; all those stages of combat and fight were necessary in order to build up the individual, to make him strong so that he could hold his own centre. He had to have a place defended from outside aggression, in which he could develop his strength. He also needed such worldly position as ambition seeks, just as when you are building a house you need scaffolding. Ambition had many uses in the

earlier stages—to build up the walls and make them denser, to strengthen the will, and to help to raise the man step by step. A man in whom ambition predominates also kills out sexual and other lower desires, because they hinder him in his intellectual growth and his search for power, and thus he dominates his lower passions. In the early stage man thus needs ambition as a means of growth.

You would not say to the man of the world: Kill out ambition,” because ambition stimulates him and draws out his faculties. But when as a disciple the man is to grow into the spiritual life, he must get rid of the walls that he built round himself in earlier stages. As after a house is built the scaffolding must be taken away, so the later part of the man’s evolution consists in rendering the walls translucent, so that all life may pass through them. Therefore these rules are for disciples, not for the men of the world.

C.W.L.—Ambition in the undeveloped man shows itself as the desire, let us say, to gain wealth so that he may satisfy his craving for physical luxury and bodily enjoyment. Later on, when he develops intellect, he becomes ambitious for power. Even when a man has transcended the ambition for power and the prizes of this world, and is working selflessly for the benefit of humanity, there still remains very often the ambition to see the result of his work.

Many people are devoting their time quite willingly and quite earnestly to doing good work, but they like others to know it, and to say what good and useful people they are. That also is ambition; mild certainly as compared to some other kinds, but still it is personal, and anything that is personal stands in the way of the disciple. The lower self has to be eliminated entirely. It is hard to do it because the roots are very deep, and when they are torn out the man is left bleeding, and feeling as though all the heart were gone out of him.

When we have got rid of the desire to see the result of our work, we still have the desire for recognition in a higher form. We still, perhaps, are ambitious for love; we want to be popular. It is well and good for a man to be popular, to draw the love of his fellows, because that very fact is an additional power in his hands. It enables him to do more than he otherwise could, also it surrounds him with a pleasant atmosphere which makes all sorts of work easier. But to desire that in

the sense of being ambitious for it is also a thing which we must avoid. We may rightly be happy if love comes our way; that is well and good—it is good karma; but if it does not, we must not be ambitious for it. We cannot seize upon a person and say: “You *shall* love me, you *shall* appreciate me.” If his feelings run that way he will; if not he cannot, and to pretend would be worse than all.

We have to rise above all these stages of ambition which are still found in the ordinary world. We must give for the joy of giving, whether it be work, or substance, or love or devotion; whatever it is we must give freely and heartily, and never think of any return; that is the only real love, not the sort of love which is always saying: “How much does so-and-so love me?” The real attitude should be: “What can I do to pour myself out at the feet of the one whom I love? Of what service can I be? What can I do for him?” That is the only feeling that is worthy of so grand a title. All that we know perfectly well, but we must put it into practice. It seems to be difficult, sometimes, to do that, because there is still a remnant of the lower self to be removed.

For the ordinary man—maybe even for the one who is approaching the Path—I think it would perhaps be well to qualify this rule to some extent, and say: “Kill out the lower ambitions.” It is not advisable to set before the man, who is just beginning, a standard of conduct which he can only hope to reach after many years of effort. If a man has worldly ambitions he cannot be expected at once to drop them all and have nothing to fill their place; that would be scarcely possible for him, and it is even doubtful whether so sudden a change would be good for him. He must first transmute his ambitions. Let him, if he will, at first desire knowledge earnestly, desire to make advance in occultism and progress in unselfishness; let him desire to draw near to the Master, to be chosen as a pupil.

Most of us have desires of that sort, but we call them aspirations; the change of name seems to connote a total change in our attitude, but of course they are still desires. We shall reach a stage when even those desires will disappear, because we shall be absolutely certain that progress depends on our own efforts only; then we shall no longer desire anything. The Master once said: “Do not desire a thing; desire is feeble *Will!*”⁹ Do not think of some quality you want to develop: “I should like to have it,” but say: “I *will* have it,” and go and develop

it. That is the only line for a man to take, because these things are absolutely in his own hands to do or not, as he chooses.

It is a case of transmuting at first. The desire for spiritual growth is a thing that those who are approaching the Path should no longer be encouraging in themselves, but there is that intermediate stage when it is very natural. We who are students ought to be getting to a stage at which we take our spiritual growth for granted, and fix all our energies on trying to help others. At first a man does need a personal motive; then he gradually comes to forget himself and to make his advancement for the sake of the Master, for the sake of pleasing Him, and eventually he learns that he is simply a channel for the great divine forces, and that he must be a good channel and must have no anxiety whatever about the result. His one care then is that nothing on his part shall hinder his being an expression of the Divine—as perfect an expression as is possible for him. He does not worry in the least about it; he does not desire that his force may be used in this direction or that; he is simply a tool in the hands of God, that he may be used as arid how and where God wills.

Of course, we can attain that attitude only by degrees; but we should set it before ourselves as the state of mind at which we should aim. We must begin by forgetting ourselves, by rigorously weeding the self out. What if we are not gaining the advancement which we think to be due to us after so many years of thought and study, or what if the people whom we help are not grateful for being helped—generally they are not—all that does not matter.¹⁰ Let us forget ourselves and do the work and let us be entirely indifferent as to any return. Karma will look after that; we need have no fear. The great laws of the universe are not going to be altered in order to do an injustice to any one of us, we may be quite sure. They will work with equal balance; justly they work, even though it be after many days. *Forget yourself*; that is the first and the last word of advice on the occult Path—there is no other way. However hard it may seem it has to be done, and has to be done perfectly.

We come now to the first note of the Master Hilarion, which is attached to the first rule. I will take it bit by bit. It begins:

Ambition is the first curse; the great tempter of the man who is rising above

his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward.

That is rather a curious way of putting it, but it is obviously true. The first temptation that comes to a man who knows he is rising a little above the rest in some way is to think of himself as a great man, and this leads him to resolve that he will rise still further, so that he may enjoy the pleasure of his pride even more.

Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually.

How true that is no one can know who is not clairvoyant. Those who are pupils of the Masters necessarily, I suppose, have the habit of regarding all the people they meet more or less from the point of view of their possible discipleship. One sees a man who is in some ways obviously a good man; the first thought that comes into one's mind about him is: "How near is he to the point when he can become a pupil of the Master?" To us it is the greatest reward, the most precious piece of advancement that can come to any man, that he should reach the stage where he is worth taking in hand by one of these Great Ones, so that his future evolution may be assured. Attainment is after that merely a matter of time and, of course, of perseverance and much hard work.

Though it is quite true that for every human being progress is merely a question of time, for many human beings it is clearly a matter of so very much time that they may be taken *en bloc*, so to speak, dealt with in the mass; but the moment that a man comes near to the stage when conceivably a Master might take him in hand, he also becomes an object of very keen interest to the pupils of the Master, and their desire is always to try to help him to the point where definite contact may become possible. It should always be remembered that it is merely a question of the man's deserts in the matter; there is no favouritism of any kind. The moment it is worth the Master's while to expend as much energy as would be required to teach that man He will do so, but it is only worth His while when He will be able to do more work through the man than He Himself could do with the same energy devoted to other work.

We meet a large number of people who seem as though they were not far from that point. They are so good in one way or another, and some are so

hopeful all round, that it seems to us that surely with a very little more of the right direction of their energies they would be fit for discipleship—and then we are disappointed to find that it all comes to nothing and they spend their lives in the ordinary way. Most especially I have noticed that with boys and girls, among whom it has always been my lot to have to look for hopeful cases. There are many young people who are quite near the point where, if their energies were just turned in the right direction, they would make very good subjects indeed for such progress, and yet they fail to grasp the opportunity. They get drawn into the competition of ordinary school life, and are swept into a world of lower thought. It is not bad thought, I do not mean that—though that may happen sometimes—but they are swept into a sort of whirlpool of comparatively worldly thought. The goal put before them is generally that of success in some material way—to become great engineers or great lawyers, or to succeed at the head of some mercantile house.

Not only is a worldly career expected of them by their parents, but the general trend of public opinion also influences them in that direction, and it is very hard to escape from the effect of public opinion. It is pressing upon us all the time in all directions, and so it comes about that these young people, who seem so nearly ready for the higher thing, seldom reach it. Instead they take up a very estimable and useful career, but it is just not that higher thing. I have followed up some cases that seemed to me specially likely, and I have found that the same thing has sometimes occurred to egos for a number of incarnations. For a dozen or twenty incarnations they have been very nearly ready, within measurable distance of taking that great step, but each time they have turned aside from it, and practically always it has been worldly ambition that has led them away from their higher possibilities.¹¹

When the Master Hilarion says that men of intelligence and power are continually led away from their higher possibilities by ambition, I think He must have had cases in mind very similar to those which I have just described, because those to whom the higher possibilities lie open must necessarily be men of intelligence and power, not mere ordinary men. He does not say that ambition ruins their lives, but only that higher possibilities exist for them from which it leads them away. It is surely not bad for a boy that he should wish to be a great

engineer, a great lawyer, or a great doctor. These are all fine professions, but there are other things which are even more useful, and if he could see and choose the more useful line it would surely be better for him. We cannot say that the worldly work is bad, but only that there is better work. When one says better work one is not depreciating any of these professions or their value to the world; one means that most well-educated men with ordinary capacity could take up those duties and make more or less of a success of them, whereas only those who have a history behind them from the occult point of view can take up with success the narrow and difficult path of occult training. Those who follow it can do more good even than the man who wins high distinction along any of those other lines, so when there is a child who wishes to take it up, who obviously would be able to do so, no one should stand in his or her way.

Yet it is a necessary teacher. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment.

The man who attains that which he has so long and so earnestly desired, often finds later that it is not quite what he hoped it would be. Men who scheme to obtain power and high position find that the power is to a great extent illusory, that it is hampered in all directions, as in the case of Lord Beaconsfield, which I mentioned before. It is possible that he might have done more good by giving all his energy to the pursuit and spread of occultism. His works are not very much read, nowadays, but his occult knowledge shows through them as, for example, in his wonderful tale of *Alroyd*.¹²

But though this first rule seems so simple and easy, do not quickly pass it by. For these vices of the ordinary man pass through a subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple.

For the disciple there are special temptations, special difficulties. The ordinary man is proud, perhaps, of certain things he can do. The pupil of the Master knows full well he must not be proud of any advancement that comes to him. Indeed, knowing the Masters, he cannot well be proud, for all sense of pride falls away from any man who really knows Them. He may be able to do many things that others cannot do, but yet he is constantly, by the necessity of the case,

in the presence of one or of many who can do quite infinitely more than he can. And so pride, to do them justice, is not often found in the pupils of the Masters. Yet the whole thing is very subtle. The pupil, if he is not careful, will find that he is proud of not being proud; proud to find how humble he is in spite of the wonderful things he can do and think and say. Or he may try to elbow himself to the front among those who are serving the Master, because in his pride he thinks that he can do the work best and that his presence at the top is essential. But Madame Blavatsky said in her *First Steps in Occultism*: “No one can think, ‘I am better or more pleasing to the Master than my fellow-disciples’ and remain a pupil of the Master.” And Dr. Besant once said: “One of the first rules for an occultist is to be as unobtrusive as possible, so that his personality will attract the smallest possible attention.”

Those who are students of occultism, but not yet pupils, may more easily fall into the error of pride. It is a great difficulty for those who develop psychic powers. They find that they can see so much that others cannot; so much is open to them that is unknown to others, that they begin to feel themselves superior to their fellow-men, and very often that leads to rather disastrous results. When we find psychics who show great pride, I think we may generally take it for granted that they are not as yet trained people, that though they are developing the higher faculties they have not yet come into contact with the Master, because the absence of pride is a sure sign of one who is learning his lesson properly.

It is easy to say: “I will not be ambitious”; it not so easy to say: “When the Master reads my heart He will find it clean utterly.”

That is quite a different thing. We can so easily persuade ourselves that we are not ambitious, that we are never selfish, never irritable. We can persuade ourselves of many things, but the Master sees with the all-seeing eye that discerns the facts and not the gloss and the glamour we throw over them when we look at ourselves.

The pure artist who works for the love of his work is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the Occultist who fancies he has removed his interest from self, but who has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to the things which concern

his larger span of life.

Cynical people might remark that the true artist in that sense is unknown, but that is not so. I have had a great deal to do with artistic circles both in England and in France, and though there is much jealousy and want of generous appreciation among artists in general, yet I also surely have known more than one artist who did live and work for the love of his art and not for gain. Because he so worked, he often threw away many obvious chances of worldly advancement, thinking that to take advantage of them would involve disloyalty to his art. A man who is willing to do that for the sake of his art has already made some progress on the way to getting rid of the lower self. There may be a higher form of selfish ambition at the back of it, but at least he has gone a long way in eradicating the mere lower self when he has lost the ambition for worldly wealth and success.

There is a stage at which the occultist has quite conquered all desires connected with the personality, has risen above all the ordinary ambitions of men, but still has ambition for his separate individuality or ego, and is thinking generally of its progress instead of the good he can do to others. So it may well be that an artist who did altogether sacrifice the thought of self, even though he knew nothing about occultism, might have his feet more firmly planted on the right road than such an occultist.

The same principle applies to the other two seemingly simple rules. Linger over them, and do not let yourself be easily deceived by your own heart.

The Master here refers to Rules 2 and 3, which we shall deal with in the next chapter. These tell us to kill out desire of life and of comfort. He warns us to be cautious with regard to all three, for the mind is extraordinarily, even quite diabolically, clever at making excuses for us, at finding all kinds of reasons for doing what we want to do. We may not think of ourselves as particularly clever or intellectual, but if we look back over the excuses we have invented for doing things we have wanted to do, we usually have to admit that we have shown amazing capacity in that direction.

For now, at the threshold, a mistake can be corrected. But carry it on with

you and it will grow and come to fruition, or else you must suffer bitterly in its destruction.

C.W.L.—This is the end of the Master Hilarion's long note to Rule 1. The more a man advances on the path of occult development, the deeper he will bury any fault which has not yet been eradicated. Suppose it be selfishness, the greatest and most common of all faults, because it lies at the root of so many others. He may have got rid of all its outer evidences, and may imagine himself to be entirely free from it, and yet the fault itself may still be unconquered. The further he goes on the Path the more deeply it will be hidden. In the meantime he is gradually raising the strength of the vibrations of his vehicles so that all his qualities, whether bad or good, must be greatly intensified. If there is an evil quality the existence of which may be quite hidden, both from the man himself and his friends, it will be growing stronger and stronger, and inevitably some time it must break through and show itself. Then just because he has made considerable advance it will produce a much more serious disaster than would have been the case at an earlier stage, and he certainly will suffer a good deal in its destruction.

A.B.—The man on the path must do his work thoroughly. On the threshold mistakes can easily be corrected. But unless the disciple gets rid entirely of the desire for power while he is in the early stages of his spiritual apprenticeship, it will become stronger and stronger. If he does not weed it out where it is based in the physical, astral and mental planes, but allows it to take root in the spiritual plane of the ego, he will find it very difficult to eradicate. Ambition thus established in the causal body is carried on from life to life. The' physical, astral and mental bodies die, and he gets new ones, but the causal body does not die till the end of the kalpa; so let the pupil beware of permitting spiritual ambition to touch the causal body and build into it elements of separateness which more and more encase the life.

Work as those work who are ambitious.

A.B.—I have taken this sentence out of its place in the book, where it occurs at the beginning of Rule 4, and brought it in for consideration here, where it specially applies. It is the comment of the Chohan upon Rule 1. In each case we

will take the rule and then the comment that the Chohan gave in explanation of it. Put them together, and you get the sense. Thus you read: “1. Kill out ambition, but work as those work who are ambitious. 2. Kill out desire of life, but respect life as those who desire it. 3. Kill out desire of comfort, but be happy as those who live for happiness.”

Desire for power, life and happiness forms the motive power of the world. These are the prizes that Ishvara holds out before all beings, and the result is that evolution goes on. All the struggles that a man makes for these things bring out his qualities and cause him to evolve. Suppose the whole of this is suddenly removed—a man loses all ambition, all desire for life and for happiness. That represents a stage through which men pass before the longing for the spiritual life awakens fully in them. It is called vairagya, and is the result of satiety.¹³ The man has enjoyed power and has found that it does not bring, happiness; he has worked for it and grasped it, but has found that the effect of it on the inner ego is only disappointment. It is not what he expected, and it does not bring satisfaction. Take the case, for example, of the late Emperor of Russia, who stood at the summit of human power, was thoroughly tired of it, and heartily wished himself free of it. It is not an uncommon thing in history that a man who wields absolute power gets a fit of vairagya and abdicates his position.

The result of that is a collapse, a lessening of all the motives that had animated him up to that point. Then the man droops down, and says: “Why should I exert myself any more? I do not want power; why then should I work? I do not want life; why then should I continue to live? I do not want comfort; it gives me no satisfaction; why then should I do anything to gain it?”

The question for us is: How may such a man be stimulated into renewed activity so that he may continue to grow and may finish his evolution; how may he be aroused from his state of collapse? Only by attracting into activity the divine life in him, that lives by giving, not by taking. He is now at the critical point in his career. If he is still to cling to the separated self his future lives will be full of weariness and disgust. Is it possible to awaken in him the desire of the true life, which consists in pouring oneself out in service, not in indrawing into selfish idleness?

In his present state the man is a worthless creature in the world, useless to himself and everybody else. Before he reached this condition he was a force that helped the general evolution of the world, because he was affected by those things which attract normal men and enable them to evolve. Into this condition of perfect collapse and uselessness into which he has been plunged by the loss of ordinary lower motives, there comes a special appeal—an appeal which meets him on the three points where he had lost his motive.

It is to the man in this condition that the command comes: “Work as those work who are ambitious.” That is joined to the first teaching: “Kill out ambition,” that taken alone would lead to lethargy. The separated self being killed, the man has now no motive for work, so the cry comes: “Work as those work who are ambitious.” Then comes the second command: “Respect life as those do who desire it,” and the third: “Be happy as those who live for happiness.” These are the three new commands that are to begin the new life, the three new motives that replace the three old ones. The man is lying there as dead. The life of the form is dead. Now he has to waken up the life of the consciousness; that will be done by these three appeals. He has to begin to work again, but now it must be the spiritual man who lives and works, while the personality acts like a machine. He has to live more than ever he did before, though the desires for life, happiness and power have all been extinguished. This is the answer to his question: “Why should I work?”

If a man does not find the answer, he will remain in the dead condition and will grow no further. It is the point known to students of mechanics as a dead point, the point of equilibrium, in which there is no force to push him on; the higher forces have counterbalanced the lower ones and destroyed his former selfishness and ambition, but are not yet strong enough in him to send him forth full of energy and purpose in their cause. That equilibrium is not the object of evolution. What new motives can be put before the man so as to arouse him from this state and make him active? There is only one which can stir the soul from within—his identifying himself with the life of Ishvara in the world, and acting as a part of that life instead of with the desire for the fruit of action.

There is no better commentary on this sentence than that which you will find

in the third discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where reasons are given why a man should work after he has lost the common motives, the desire for the fruits of action:

But the man who rejoiceth in the Self, with the Self is satisfied, and is content in the Self, for him verily there is nothing to do;

For him there is no interest in things done in this world, nor any in things not done, nor doth any object of his depend on any being.

Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform action which is duty, for, by performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme.

Janaka and others indeed attained to perfection by action: then having an eye to the welfare of the world also, thou shouldst perform action.¹⁴

That which is described here is a still higher stage than that of the man of whom we are now thinking. We have been considering only the beginning of that Path which leads to this full realization of the Self. But the motive which is given here applies to him; he has realized the emptiness of the non-self, and is in a position to respond to the appeal of the one Self. He is prepared to work with the motive of benefit to the world. Such a man may now think of trying to gain spiritual knowledge not in order that he himself may thereby become wise and great, but because it will help the world; he is gradually making that his object—something outside his own individual self.

Finally he will drop that motive of lofty desire also, and only wish that he may be an organ of the higher, and may do that which Ishvara wishes. Then he will learn that he is not even to desire spiritual knowledge, nor even to become a Master, but simply to become an instrument for the higher Life. Thus being active as they who are ambitious, but with the motive of being a channel for the higher Life, the man will get rid of the last vestiges of ambition. His energy is now merged in the Will of the Logos; that becomes the motive for his working.

In the verses of the *Gita* quoted above Shri Krishna explains how a man should work in order to reach the Supreme, to realize the presence and power of the Divine. Then He goes on to show that such attainment and realization lead to

fuller activity than any ever known before. He explains that it is the active work of Ishvara that sustains everything:

There is nothing in the three worlds, O Partha, that should be done by Me, nor anything unattained that might be attained; yet I mingle in action.

For if I mingled not ever in action unwearied, men all around would follow My path, O son of Pritha.

These worlds would fall into ruin, if I did not perform action.¹⁵

He works for the welfare of the world, for the turning of the wheel of the universe, and the sole motive of His activity is that the world may grow and develop till the cycle is completed.

Shri Krishna then goes on to show the reasons for which a man should work—for the benefit and maintenance of the world and of mankind. No longer identifying himself with the separated forms, he has to identify himself with the one Life which is carrying on separated lives in order to bring them to perfection. Thus identifying himself with the one Life he should work entirely for the welfare and maintenance of his fellows and of the whole world—that everything moving and unmoving may reach its appointed end, may become that which is in the thought of Ishvara, although in manifested life they have not reached that point. The whole universe of Ishvara exists perfect in His thought, and gradually in many stages He works that thought out in matter. Those who realize this as part of His life must work as He works for the complete manifestation of that thought, that is, in order to turn the wheel of life till the turning is complete.

It does not follow necessarily that the man who has this true and spiritual motive believes in God or thinks about Him. But in any case he feels and responds to the divine Life in the world, and serves it with utter devotion. Such, for example, was the case with my old friend Charles Bradlaugh, who did not believe in God as understood in his time, but was nevertheless always ready to face suffering and danger, to lay his own body in the ditch if it could thus be useful as a bridge over which others might walk to a higher life.

Yet those who have thus felt the Will of Ishvara so that it has become their motive in life must not, unsettle the minds of others who are not yet able to feel this and are acting from desire. Shri Krishna goes on to say:

As the ignorant act from attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world.

*Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action; but acting in harmony with Me let him render all action attractive.*¹⁶

The spiritual man must throw himself into the work of the world and set an example, because the standard which is set up by the wise will be followed by others. A man who is looked up to by the mass of the people sets a standard by which activity will be carried on by the others; if he becomes indifferent to action they will also fall into indifference. Though his indifference may come from a higher motive they do not know that, and it is quite a natural thing for them to mistake his motive. In them indifference would grow out of tamas, and that would prevent their further evolution.

A man might say: "I don't want results here or in swarga. Why then should I try to help other people along the road which leads to those enjoyments; why should I try to make them active on those lines that I deem to be useless, that they may gain what is worthless? Why should I throw my activity on the side of giving that which is undesirable?" The answer is perfectly clear. Those fruits of action are absolutely necessary for the mass of the people. Unless they desire these pleasures of the world, these comforts and ambitions, these things which move them to action, their evolution will be stopped. If they do not want enjoyment here, then swarga may be their motive. Somehow they must be encouraged to move, grow, evolve. If you persuade them that these things are useless they will not evolve.

It is therefore important for the evolution of mankind that an example should be set of work done thoroughly and perfectly well. It is never done perfectly well while we are men working from desire. Though in that case the man may show an admirable example of energy and perseverance there will be the taint of selfishness in his work, which will make his example imperfect. He may work

with great accuracy, but he is working for himself. He is not really doing his best, because he is not thinking entirely of the work, but partly of a result for himself.

The Lord works perfectly so that the world may go on. We should, then, work in the same spirit. We must work better than the best worldly man, because our motive is that of service to God and man, and not our own gain. We will work for the cause of humanity. We will not run about to find activity for the sake of being active. Many men work thus for the enjoyment of action, because unless they are busy they do not feel alive, but are bored. That condition is one very far removed from the man who is content in the Self. He is never bored, never searching for an outlet in activity.

He works because it is his duty, and has no desire for activity when there is no duty. Thus he realizes inaction in action. In the fourth discourse of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna remarks on action, wrong action and inaction:

“What is action, what inaction?” Even the wise are herein perplexed. Therefore I will declare to thee the action by knowing which thou shalt be loosed from evil.

It is needful to discriminate action, to discriminate unlawful action, and to discriminate inaction; mysterious, is the path of action.

*He who seeth inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is harmonious even while performing all action.*¹⁷

Even the wise people are confused, it is said, as to the limits of each of these things. The right action is duty, that in which the man is expressing the life of Ishvara *in his own place*. In that he is to be a channel or agency, working with the knowledge, accuracy and completeness that the man who is not ambitious shows. If you take his work and put it beside that of the man who is ambitious you will see that it is equally well, nay, even better done, because it is done with absolute self-surrender and perfect balance.

If you find a man who is not working in that way, having lost desire for the fruit of action, but who is doing less than he ought to do, is working with less

energy, less interest and less punctuality because he has no longer personal motives, then you see one who has not learned the duty of action before he took to inaction. It was said to me regarding certain people: “These men are beginning inaction before they have done action—by intellectual recognition of the worthlessness of the fruit of action before they have reached the point where they could work unselfishly. They are neither good men of the world, as they have stopped doing that, nor are they spiritual men throwing their energy into the evolution of mankind.”

There are two lives which a man may live who has reached the condition where the fruit of action does not affect him. He may retire to the jungle to live in seclusion or he may be busy amid the affairs of men.¹⁸ If he is sufficiently evolved to work energetically in the mental or in the spiritual plane, that life of physical inaction may be the best; that man is helping the world much more than he could do amid the bustle of the world. Yet such a man will often be sent back by his Master to lead his last life in the world. He will then live a life untainted by action, will show in the world the example of true action, will lead a life of perfect activity with all the energy that the most ambitious man can show.

When a man is living the spiritual life in the world it is not possible usually to tell by external means whether he is moved by desire or by duty. But there is one test which never fails by which one may always judge one's own motive. How are you affected when the fruit of action is before you? If the slightest element of ambition enters into a man's work he will show disappointment if it fails or elation if it succeeds. If there is no suffering for him in his failure, no element of personality has entered into his work; for if he has been working because Ishvara works, for the welfare of mankind, he will know his failure is not the failure of Ishvara, but that the failure is part of His Plan. From the standpoint of Ishvara failure is impossible, and often in human life failure is quite as necessary for ultimate success as success is necessary for ultimate success. His people may be sent sometimes to play the part of the failure so as to become stronger, to realize that where there is failure there is also success.

Whether a man is really working as part of His Life will be shown by his perfect contentment whether he succeeds or fails. If that contentment is perfect,

without a shadow of dissatisfaction, he has been working absolutely for the maintenance of mankind; then the work does not bind him and he has solved the problem of inaction in the midst of action. He has learned the use of the vehicles and the gunas, without identifying himself with them. In ordinary cases the gunas work the man, but the man on the Path works the gunas. Most men are carried about by the energies of nature; they work as those energies are active. But the man on the Path takes those energies as instruments of labour and, standing behind them, utilizes them. The ambitious man is driven by the gunas when he thinks that he is working, but the man who has transcended them is directing them along the road of evolution traced by Ishvara, and does not identify himself with them. This is thus taught in the *Gita*:

Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, always content, nowhere seeking refuge, he is not doing anything, although doing actions.

Hoping for naught, his mind and self controlled, having abandoned all greed, performing action by the body alone, he doth not commit sin.

Content with whatsoever he obtaineth without effort, free from the pairs of opposites, without envy, balanced in success and failure, though acting he is not bound.

*Of one with attachment dead, harmonious, with his thoughts established in wisdom, his works sacrifices, all action melts away.*¹⁹

So the man who finds himself at the point of balance, of indifference, must discover some means to increase the higher influences within himself, so that these may spur him into this life of spiritual action. He must use meditation; he must try to utilize whatever emotion he may possess; he must deliberately take every opportunity of service. He must move even without the desire to move, and even against the desire not to move. He *must* move. If he can find anyone for whom he has reverence, whose example inspires him to activity, that will be a great help to his getting over this transitional stage, where otherwise he might drop out of evolution for the time being. If the desire to please someone whom he admires should arise in his mind, he may use that to urge himself on until he is in a position to feel the impelling force of Ishvara's Life, and thus use the

emotion to carry him over and out of his condition of collapse.

C.W.L.—Having put aside ambition for himself the man is then told to work as those work who are ambitious. There are usually three stages through which men pass. There is, first of all, the work for worldly result. Then comes the stage when the man begins to work, still for a result, but for a heavenly result. That is put very much before us by the different churches. We are to give up this world to live for ever in heaven; we shall stand nearest to God's throne, and so on. Most people pass through these two stages of working first for the worldly result and then for the heavenly result. Some of them somewhat improve upon that second idea, because they work in order to please their Deity. Many Christians, for example, work for the love of Jesus, and that is admirable because it is unselfish; it is a higher stage than to work for a personal result, even though it be a heavenly one.

There is still a higher stage, that of doing the work for the work's sake, but most people do not understand that yet. Many artists do; there are artists who work for the sake of art in whatever their line may be. As one great poet said: "I do but sing because I must." He meant that he must express that which came through him as a message to the world. Another, feeling the same thing, said that he valued his poems not because they were his own, but because they were not. So there are some who work for the sake of art—not for themselves or for their own renown, not to please other people, not even to please God as that idea would be commonly understood, but because they feel the message coming through them and they must give it. That is a high stage to have attained.

Then there is the highest stage of all, when a man works because he is part of the Deity and as part of Him he desires the fulfilment of the divine Plan. People sometimes delude themselves and think they are working for that when they have still a considerable flavour of the lower ideas about them. We can always test ourselves with regard to that—best, perhaps, when we happen to fail, which occurs at times to all of us. As our great President has often explained, if we are really working definitely and knowingly as part of the Deity, as part of the whole, we are not in the least disturbed by any failure that comes to us, because we know that God cannot fail. If for the time being a certain activity appears to

be a failure, *that* is in the scheme and so is a necessary thing, and therefore is not really a failure. Nothing can be a failure from His point of view, so we are not in the least distressed. The only question would be as to whether it was our fault; but if we have done our best and the thing is still a failure, we know that all is well.

Such considerations as these must not, however, cause us to become negligent or indifferent to time. It is part of our work to convert others from the doctrine of inertia to the path of service, and even one such gain means that some distinct advantage has been achieved for the world. Whatever is, is best certainly, but only when we have done our best. If there is anybody who has failed to do his best in his share of that work, then whatever is, is not best, because it might have been better. It is only when we have done absolutely all, that we have the right to take refuge in that. "Well, I have done everything I can. If after all I am not successful, I bow to a higher power than mine." I am very sure that that which has been done is after all not lost, and whatever happens to all these people in the end is really what is best for them.

It may be only an illusion but it is a very powerful one—that high philosophical view that whether you get anything now or in a million years does not matter. I feel it matters to me; therefore I think it must matter to other people, and if we could get them to take the earlier opportunity of advancing, we should be doing a very great thing for them. What difference it makes in the long run to the Logos in whom all this is moving, I cannot tell, but it is very likely His wish that we should evolve and if He wishes that to be done, then also He must wish that it should be done as soon as may be. We are clearly carrying out His will if we try to press onward along the Path which leads to full unity with Him, and if we help others along that Path, so I cannot see that it is all the same whether people enter the stream in this world period, or this chain period, or wait till the next. I shall do all I can to help people to enter it in this one.

Perhaps another test would be as to whether we are willing to take *any* work that is His work—whether we are willing to help high and low alike. To Him there is neither high nor low in the matter of progress, though some part of His scheme may be at a higher and another part at a lower point in that progress. It is

very much like the turning of a wheel; some part of it is approaching the top as it turns, but all of it alike is moving along as the wheel turns. Our work is to help the whole forward, to push any part of the wheel. The life at all levels is the divine life; it is more unfolded at some stages than at others—more unfolded in the human than in the animal, in the animal than in the vegetable, in the vegetable than in the mineral—but the life is the divine life everywhere, and if we are helping forward any part of that we are helping the divine plan. That which is higher or lower is the form in which the life is cast; the form permits- of greater or lesser unfoldment, but the life is one life. That certainly must be part of His point of view, which is very different from our outlook—the idea that all life is in reality the same; there is no high nor low from that point of view, because the whole is moving together. That does not alter the fact that there may be some in whom the life is more unfolded, who are capable of giving greater assistance, and others who may be capable only of a lower grade of assistance; the point is that those who find that what they can do best would commonly be called lower work should not be in the least disheartened, because they also are pushing the same wheel—they are helping the unfoldment of the same divine life.

CHAPTER 4

RULES 2 TO 4

2. Kill out desire of life.

Respect life as those do who desire it.

A.B.—We have already to some extent considered this aphorism and the next. The same general principles that apply to the killing out of ambition yet the working as those do who are ambitious apply to these two aphorisms also. The disciple must get rid of the desire for personal life—everything which energizes the personal self and responds to the gratification of his personal desire. He must no longer rejoice in the mere pleasure of expanding his own life by taking into it more and more of the outside things.

All over the world men are to be seen in eager search for a fuller life; they grasp it with many varieties of greed, struggling and fighting for more and more of everything that appeals to their hot and untutored imaginations, and thereby bringing about great quantities of personal and social trouble. But the disciple must get rid of that desire to increase and expand, his own individual and separate life. He must enter into the higher Life, and have only the desire to be wherever in the universe he is wanted at any time as an expression of the one life. There are many things to do in this universe. When all desire for separate individual life has been transcended, and all personal preferences are gone, the need of the time guides the choice of the spiritual man. Wherever help is wanted is the place of work for such a liberated soul; he cares only to be an instrument, wherever the instrument may be wanted. His life is to him only useful and valuable as it is part of the Universal Life.

The man who has lost his desire of life arrives at a point of danger—he may regard life as worthless for all, because the things that it offers are worthless to him. He may take up an attitude of contempt towards the world and his fellow-men. He may look down upon and despise them; as foolish people, may speak of them contemptuously, and consider their motives paltry. That attitude towards

them is very natural, but it is full of danger, and fundamentally evil. It shows that he has not realized the Self, though he may have realized the non-self as such. If he looks down upon any life, however Undeveloped, he forgets that that manifestation is a part of Ishvara, and to him therefore the message is necessary and urgent: "Respect life-as those who desire it."

If he asks why he ought to look upon it with respect, the answer is: because it is divine. It, is a stage in which Ishvara is working, a stage which to Ishvara is quite as important as the higher stage in which *he* now is. When we speak of high and low we speak from the standpoint of evolution and time—the succession of changes which make up time. That is not the way in which Ishvara regards His world; to Him there is nothing great nor small, hateful nor dear. Everything is at a stage on a road on which all are travelling to the same goal; the lowly is just as necessary for the scheme of evolution as the form we usually call higher. So the disciple must not fall into the blunder of despising: and disregarding any life, because it is in what we call a low stage of evolution. Each thing in its place is right and good. The recognition of that fundamental truth means that a man must love his fellow-men, must learn to care for them as part of the Universal Life in evolution.

Granted that a man in a low stage is foolish, sensual idle, exceedingly unattractive; his lack of attraction lies in the form, not in the Life. We are blinded by the form. Because our looking down upon another, our turning aside from him, is a sign of our, superiority, there follows a feeling of superiority, which breeds contempt. But the truth is that the only thing in which we are superior is the evolution of the form. The essence is the same; his possibilities are equal to ours, and looked at from the centre he is as we are. The man who is on the Path tries to see things from the centre as well as from the circumference. He must therefore respect Life, and realize that the Life of Ishvara is the only Life; the form is that in which Ishvara chooses to manifest for a certain time, and if it is good enough for Ishvara it is quite good enough for us.

In the universe there must be form in all stages of growth. No one is higher or lower; all are equal. There is difference when we ourselves are in process of evolution; but no difference when we have outgrown it. When we have given up

interest in it and thrown aside all question of forms and fruit, then we can respect Life in all its manifestations. The partially evolved man, bound up by the forms, is willing to help those who are comparatively near himself and who can repay his trouble. He will not be inclined to help those who are low down. But the man who helps from the standpoint of Ishvara helps all. His duty is to help them wherever they are. His activity is to be the activity of Ishvara. He helps those who come in his way, whether they be high or low, and he respects the Life in each of them, and helps that where help is required. He does not allow himself to be confused by the fact that the whole of the Life is not present in the man. He knows that the work of Ishvara is carried on so that that life may be brought out, and he works to unfold it into manifestation. He is not led astray by thinking that to be in the Self is everything. He works for manifestation, respecting and loving Life. And so he utterly avoids the danger of contempt, which would otherwise hinder the unfolding of the Life in himself by producing a wall of separateness.

There is in this an immense difference between the way in which Life is regarded by an ordinary man and by one who lives in the Eternal. The latter sees the Life in its full possibilities, those possibilities to him being in view now, even though undeveloped; for he lives in the Eternal, and when Life is looked at from that standpoint it is seen in the beauty of its fulfilment. Below that state we see it only in a particular stage, in time and not in Eternity, and therefore we do not respect it as we ought to do. But the liberated soul who lives in Eternity sees it as it is, and although he looks at the -stage at a particular time in which it has arrived, he cannot feel repulsion, because he knows that that stage is perfectly normal.

The practical outcome of it is that the higher a man stands the more is he tolerant of all Life, and the greater is his compassion with all, approaching as it is the compassion of the Logos Himself. As a man destroys in himself the desire of Life, that is the desire of the separated self, and yet respects Life as those do who desire it, he begins to acquire that sense of Eternity which enables him to respect life in whatever way it may be manifested. For him then any contempt for those who are below him becomes impossible; he recognizes each in its place as an expression of the Perfect Life.

C.W.L.—Here, as in the case of the former rule, we may take the teaching at two different levels. Undoubtedly the beginner has to kill out the desire for one kind of outer life rather than for another, such as would interfere with the work to be done. A man who becomes a pupil of the Master must be absolutely willing to do whatever is put in his way, to go here or there, to leave this thing or that, and have no feeling about it. If he thinks: “I am doing this kind of work and I am doing it well, and I want to keep on doing it,” he may come to harm because he is becoming conceited. Suppose he is taken away from the work he feels he can do and is put to something which is new to him; he must accept it with perfect cheerfulness. The change may be made because this other work is more necessary, or because, since he has learned to do that one thing, he must now learn to do something else.

Quite outside the special training of the pupil, we frequently find that the evolutionary forces work in that way. Every man likes to do what he feels he can do well, but the evolutionary forces want to develop the man all round, and very often they take him away from what he can do and put him to something else that he cannot yet do well, because they want him to develop some new power. If at first he cannot do it, he must work at it until he can. That is the way that evolution in general works, and the same thing applies to the training of the pupils of the Master. If they can do a thing well they may be kept at it for some time, but then quite suddenly they may be sent along some other line, and they must be equally willing to do that other work also. So, certainly, the desire for one kind of physical life more than for another will have to be killed out.

At the higher level the same thing is true with regard to the life of the ego. The disciple knows, if he looks back on past incarnations, that his ego has come along certain lines, but he has developed certain qualities and can, from the point of view of the individuality, do well along those lines. He may be suddenly taken away from them.: The individuality, the ego, must accept that which comes to it in the course of its training, and there also we must be free from any feeling that this work or this way is better than that: This is brought home to us when we meet with people of other ray& or types. We feel that our ray and type is the best one. In theory we would admit that the others must be just as good as our own, but very few of us can feel really hearty sympathy with them. Thus, for example,

one who has been working along philosophic or scientific lines might find it a little trying to have to turn his activities to art or ceremonial service. It is difficult to turn our sympathies round and let them flow freely along another line, but that is one of the things we must learn to do if necessary.

As soon as a man feels unity he gains the dispassionate view of things. All lines of work are then, in effect, the same to him—not that he can equally easily take up all, but he sees that, they all lead to the same point. The undeveloped man never understands this. Always he thinks that the man taking the, higher standpoint is cold and hard and unsympathetic; that is because the lower man is thinking of himself and is wanting all sorts of personal satisfactions, whereas the other man is thinking only of the work to be done and is putting all his energy; into that. When once the Plan of work of the Logos dawns upon a man's horizon he sees that to the exclusion of every thing else, and throws his energies into it, and whatever is best for that work he tries to do, even as regards the smallest detail of every-day life.

He hitches his wagon to a star. He puts before himself ideals very high and very remote from the ordinary understanding, and it is quite inevitable that the people who still look on things from the personal point of view will misunderstand him. If he suffers because of that misunderstanding, there is still a little personal touch in that; he still wants to be understood, but even that he must give up. He must give up hoping that his efforts will be appreciated, and realize that it does not matter whether they are appreciated or not. All that matters is that the work shall be done. If people will not give us credit for our work, no matter; let it be done as perfectly as possible. We shall have the appreciation of the Master—that much is sure—but even that must not be our reason for doing it. Our reason for doing it is that it is God's work and as we are one with Him what He wills is our will, what He would have done it is our highest pleasure and privilege to try to do.

When we realize that all Life is divine Life, of course we shall respect all the manifestations of it. We, who see partially, do not always respect life in all its forms and in all its manifestations. We see that many of them would be eminently undesirable for us, and therefore there is a tendency to regard those

particular manifestations with contempt. That is always a mistake. We see a great deal around us which from our point of view is going very wrong, and often it really is going wrong. All the expressions of selfishness and greed and uncontrolled desire that we see in the world are certainly wrong in the sense that it would be very much better if they were different. It is not at all a mistake for us to think that, because it is a fact; but when we allow ourselves to feel contempt for the people who are at that stage, we are going further than we have any right to go. Their state of development accounts for these manifestations, and they are very often the only expressions possible for them at that stage, and it is through them that they will learn.

When we see a man showing selfishness and greed and lack of self-control, we say: "What a pity!" Yet it is a pity only in the same sense that we might say that it is a pity that a little child of four has not grown up to be a man. If we allow ourselves to be uncontrolled, or to show greed and selfishness we might feel a sort of contempt for ourselves, because we know better, but it would be wrong to feel that for any other man. If it seems that he ought to be doing better, probably he has not taken advantage of his opportunities; then we should feel sorry for him and try to help him, when we can, to see the better side, the higher possibilities, but it is the greatest mistake to draw away from him, though we cannot always help feeling repugnance towards the things that he does. For example, if a man gets drunk it is because he is at that stage. He is a younger soul, therefore it is possible for him to yield to temptation of that kind instead of making a stand against it, as he ought to do. In many cases he has tried, perhaps, but he has so far failed. All that we can do to help him should be thoroughly and entirely at his disposal, but we must not feel repugnance for him. It is the old Christian idea; we may hate the sin but we must be sorry for the sinner, otherwise we are doing worse than he, because we are losing the sense of brotherhood and destroying our power to help.

The one Life is behind all and we must respect it even in manifestations which we dislike and feel to be undesirable. We must never forget that it is divine. It is difficult to remember that sometimes when the things that are done are so very ungodlike; nevertheless we must try. It is the old idea of the hidden Life, which was taught to us in the Egyptian mysteries thousands of years ago.

The hidden Life was in every man, and however deeply it was buried and however little it showed forth, we were always to remember that it was there, even when we could not see it. The hidden light in us could not shine upon and evoke the hidden light in another at once, but if we were sufficiently patient and sufficiently forceful we must call forth a response, sometime and somehow. In these days we put the teaching in somewhat different terms, but it is equally true now as then.

The man who lives in the Eternal sees what will be as well as what now is, and when he looks at a manifestation of Life which is eminently undesirable he says: "Yes, at present, from the point of view of time, that is what I see it to be—a low and unworthy manifestation; but the divine Life in it will some day blossom out." Many people do not think how very illusory a thing the present is. No sooner have we thought of it than it has passed. We say: "Such and such a thing is in existence at present," and while we are uttering the words that present moment has become the past. In reality there is no such time as the present; it is a kind of knife-edge between the past and future; it is merely a term which we use for convenience—the thing itself is shifting every second of time. v- We must read the future into the present, and see what will be. If we could only get out of these bodies and these brains for a few moments into an altogether higher life and look down upon it, we should understand this matter exactly. We should see that by thinking of that future we make it more easily attainable for the present. If we look at a man who is definitely sinning, and think of his sin, we fold that sin more closely about him, but if we look at him and think of the future, when he will have risen out of it, we open the way to that future for him, and bring it more within his reach.²⁰

3. Kill out desire of comfort.

Be happy as those are who live for happiness.

A.B.—In the early stages of growth a man puts out all his efforts of brain and body in order to gain the means which will make him comfortable; the desire of comfort forms the motive of the majority of mankind. It is a very useful stimulus to bring out certain qualities of man. It teaches him that he must control his body, that he must dominate his lower nature, and that he has also to develop his

bodies, so that they may subserve his purposes, of enjoying comfort in them.

The desire for comfort gradually disappears as the things that attract the man rise higher and higher in the scale. A man may get rid of desires for physical comfort and enjoyment by throwing his interest into the mental life, for example. At first there will be a sense of effort, a certain feeling of pain and loss; but the man prefers the mental to the physical pleasures because he knows that they will last longer. Then, as he practises self-denial, he finds that the feeling of loss becomes less and less as the joys of the intellect attract him more and more, until the lower desires do not attract him at all.

At first there is deliberate self-denial at each stage, and then comes the loss of the power of attraction in the physical object of the desire. Later on, the same change will come with regard to the joys of the intellect. When the man is looking up to the spiritual life his great attraction for intellectual things will gradually diminish, and he will be less and less attracted by the enjoyment of the powerful intellectual force; he will deny himself the joys of the intellect and rejoice in those of the spirit; he will withdraw himself from the intellect and fix his consciousness on the spiritual level.

The destruction of the desire for comfort also brings its danger. This is the third great danger. The first was inactivity, the second was contempt, and the third is the tendency not to be happy, but to be neither happy nor unhappy, neither one thing nor the other.

How shall the man become happy? The answer is: by realizing that the Self is bliss. It is said in the *Brahma Sutras* that Brahman is Bliss, Brahman is Ananda. The man has now to realize this. He is no longer moved by pleasure nor by pain. They have ceased to attract him; they came from contact between forms, but he has reached equilibrium. He is therefore likely to sink into the condition of being neither happy nor unhappy. But he must learn to be happy as those are who live for happiness.

It is the bliss of the Self, that deep abiding bliss, the sense of contentment and joy, which is an essential part of the spiritual life, and the most difficult part of that life to realize in consciousness. It is a very marked fact about the great

Mystics and Saviours of men that the side of sorrow has shown itself very much in their lives. Jesus was a man of sorrow. Gautama, the Buddha, left his splendid palaces and gardens and loving friends to seek the cure for the sorrow of the world. The same is true when we look on the lives of all the great leaders of mankind. Sorrow touched them very deeply. But they were not overcome by the sorrow. In those men there was an abiding joy, and the sorrow is profoundly exaggerated by the man who looks upon them from outside. As grief hovers over them, as anxiety, harassments, troubles, worries, and woes rain upon them from all directions, naturally they are judged by men to be sorrowful. But that does not follow. They are not worried, harassed or distressed by these things, however much they may attend to them, and may do whatever may be necessary for the sake of the world. Underneath it all there is the heart of peace. Therefore you always find them saying: "My peace remaineth."

The disciple feels the sorrow of the world. That he cannot escape; it will throw a shadow over him—an unavoidable shadow. The whole of the world's sorrow has to find its echo in him. He feels sorrow, and continues to feel pity for the ignorant and the suffering, for their rebellion and revolt. At the stage we are considering there is danger for him—that he may cease to feel for others; then just in proportion as he ceases to feel he loses his utility. The Great Ones feel helpless pity for those under the sway of karma; pity because of Their own inability to help them, for there are places where They cannot help, where men must go through their experiences by themselves. Despite the knowledge that it should be so, and despite Their absolute contentment with the Law, They are standing aside and watching it work; still there is this pain and sympathy—pity, which has in it a certain element of sorrow.

That will always remain as something of a shadow. In losing the power to sympathize a man would lose the power to help. Just as his life flows into the ignorant he feels the pleasure and pain of the ignorant, and he lightens their trouble by feeling it himself.

With all this pressing upon him it is ever necessary that the disciple should be reminded that the Self is bliss. He must keep the heart of joy, must deliberately cultivate in himself the spirit of contentment and happiness. One way to do this

is to practise meditation upon the divine bliss—deep, intense bliss, not equalled by anything belonging to this earth, because it is the very essence and nature of the Self. A man can develop that aspect only by the deliberate cultivation of joy and contentment, and by looking at the world and recognizing that evil is avidya, unwisdom. In the midst of sorrows he is to be happy; he must teach himself that pain is in the vehicle while the life is ever joy.

C.W.L.—This rule does not mean that people may not be comfortable, though many have taken it in that sense. Yogis, hermits and monks have taken similar statements in other scriptures in that way, but it is absolutely wrong and foolish. Some monks in the Middle Ages wore hair shirts; and some Indian yogis sit on spikes and sleep in the hottest weather in the midst of a circle of fire, all with the object of making themselves uncomfortable. That is, the result of choosing one text and running it to death. It is particularly stated in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that those who torture the body torture the Divine One seated in that body, and their way is not the way of progress.²¹ So this rule does not mean that we may not be comfortable, but simply that we must never let our desire for comfort stand in the way of any work which we have to do. If to do what ought to be done will cause us great discomfort, we must not on that account refrain from doing it.

To make ourselves unnecessarily uncomfortable only puts difficulty in our way. People talk much about the virtue of suffering and the extent to which progress is made through it; but if we look at the cold facts we shall find that the progress is made after the suffering is past. It is not actual suffering itself which causes the progress, but in many cases that wakens a man to conditions which otherwise he would not have sufficiently noted. It sometimes weeds out of him qualities which made progress difficult for him, but it is only after the suffering is over that the progress is made, because only then is he in a fit state of mind to attend to higher things.

We must not think that there is any virtue in making ourselves uncomfortable. On the contrary, when the physical body is comfortable we are much better able to think of higher things. Yet I have known people who would persist in doing it. For example, in India where meditation is best understood, it happens to be the

custom to sit cross-legged. I have known scores of white people who would weary themselves out and even cause themselves pain by trying to follow the Indian custom in meditation, not understanding that that is merely an outer detail and the Indian only adopts that position because he has been accustomed to it from childhood. It is exceedingly futile for people who are not accustomed to it to force themselves into what is to them a position of discomfort. Patanjali's direction is to take a posture "easy and pleasant".

There are two objects with regard to the position of the body during meditation. First, it should be comfortable, so that one can easily forget it, for that is what one wants to do. Secondly, it should be such that if in meditation we leave the body—which may happen at any time—it will not hurt itself. In such a case the effect on the body will be as though, we had fainted. The Indian who is sitting on the floor simply falls backwards, and no harm is done. When we meditate we shall do well, therefore, to sit in some sort of armchair, so that we may not fall out of it, if the body loses consciousness. The recumbent position is not good if it increases the tendency to sleep.

There are joys of the emotions and of the intellect, and many people who would despise the idea that their physical comfort mattered to them in the least, are yet exceedingly unhappy when they are not emotionally comfortable, that is to say, when they imagine that they are not getting the response they deserve to their emotions. Many people are painfully sentimental and expect the rest of the world to be equally so, and are much hurt because it is not. They pour out what they call affection, but it is often tinged with selfishness. They will create all kinds of disturbance, and even do things which harm those whom they profess to love, all for the sake of what they call the return of their affection. They do not understand that there are different types of affection, and that it may be absolutely impossible for the person concerned to return it in their particular way. This difficulty comes from the insistence of the desire for emotional comfort, which should never be permitted to interfere with our own progress or that of those whom we love.

In the same way there is intellectual comfort. People want others to think exactly as they do, so that they may rest mentally content, without disturbance.

Constantly we come up against that difficulty. There will be some promising young person deeply interested in Theosophy, for example, who wants to join the Society, but his parents vigorously oppose him. They would not be intellectually comfortable if they thought that their son or their daughter were adopting a line which they could not share. They feel sure that they are right and that there can be no real wisdom outside the limits of their own particular opinions. Therefore if a son or a daughter thinks differently from them they are quite outraged, not realizing that the fact that an ego happens to be born in their family does not necessarily mean that he is of the same temperament as themselves.

Each ego has his own way, his own power of appreciating the truth; he must receive it along his own line. For others to try to force him to take it along their line, which is not his, is a mistake; the whole inner Self revolts against it. The result, in hundreds of cases, when children have been intellectually pressed, is that they fall away altogether from their parents' beliefs. Again and again, for example, the son of a clergyman ends as an atheist, because the father and mother have unwisely tried to force him to think along their lines. This harm is done only because they themselves want to be intellectually comfortable. The disciple must always be careful that his desire to be emotionally or intellectually comfortable does not make him interfere with other people's rights, and that he does not let it stand in the way of duty or of help that he might give.

It is essential that we should be happy, as the Chohan says here, although certainly we do not live for happiness. I think many forget the duty of happiness. They do not regard it as a duty, although most emphatically it is that. It is a necessary part of progress. The person who is always mournful and depressed about what is happening is making no progress, and it is well that he should understand that. As I have said before, it is necessary that we should become more and more sensitive, because unless we bring ourselves into that condition we cannot answer in a moment to the slightest signal from the Master. It is unquestionably difficult to be very sensitive and at the same time radiantly happy, yet that' is what we must be. There is a great deal that calls for the deepest sympathy, and it is difficult to feel sympathy with those who are suffering, without also feeling sorrow; yet, as I have explained, the Master

sympathizes far more than we can, but certainly does not feel the sorrow as sorrow.²²

There might be very much less suffering and very much less sorrow if the people to whom the sorrow and suffering are coming now had lived quite differently in other lives, perhaps thousands of years ago, but considering that they lived as they did, that which is now happening is the best that can happen for their progress. We cannot help being sorry that it is not better, but our sorrow is not for what is going on now, but for the previous happenings which made this necessary. Possibly that sounds a little cold, but when we understand how utterly the result is part of the cause, we can see that what is happening now is actually part of the causes which the people themselves set in motion long ago, and it could not be other than it is while the divine law of cause and effect is operating.

All this suffering can only be altered now by bringing in new forces. We can sometimes relieve sorrow and suffering to a certain extent. Whenever we do that, it is not in the least that we abrogate the working of the law, it is not at all that everything does not flow in harmony with that law, but that we introduce a new force which also comes within the operation of the law, and mitigates much which otherwise would have been the effect of what went before. But though we can sometimes relieve and help, it is, as I explained before, quite difficult for many of us to get always into the attitude of being perfectly sympathetic and yet recognizing the necessity of the suffering, though we can do it quite well in certain things. Suppose some friend whom we love very much has to undergo a surgical operation. Of course we are sorry that it should be so, but it does not occur to us to say that it ought not to be so, because we recognize that the operation is intended to do good, and we trust that its result will be an improvement in his health. Therefore however sorry and anxious we may be, we regard it as an unfortunate, a regrettable, necessity. All sorrow and suffering are nothing but that—operations to remove dangerous growths.

Much of the sorrow of the world can be avoided, because a great deal of it does not come from the past but is the result of men's present foolishness. They take things in a wrong way. For example, we frequently allow ourselves to be hurt or offended or worried. That is not karma from the past. In many cases

seven-eighths of the trouble which comes to people is not from without at all; it is due entirely to the way in which they take their experiences. The karma that comes to us from without is only a small amount, but we magnify it very greatly; that is our present fault, and it can be remedied.²³

Most people who live for happiness seek to attain that happiness in various ways: by surrounding themselves with the people with whom they feel happy, by going where they expect to find enjoyment, and so on. That the disciple should not do, because he ought to be in the position of being perfectly happy in himself, without reference to particular outer conditions. That is difficult for us, because, through many lives we have been very largely the sport of circumstances. If we observe people we shall find that most of them are in that condition still. The majority of people in the world make very little effort to change the conditions in which they find themselves. If they find themselves depressed or readily offended and therefore unhappy, they should set to work to change those conditions. Instead of doing that they grumble about those who offend them, and say that it is quite impossible to get on with such people. Yet those others are probably people very much like the rest of the world. Our happiness depends upon how these people are taken, upon our attitude towards their attitude. If our study of occultism has brought any fruit we will say: "I do not mind what position they take up; that is their business, not mine; my business is to take care that I am not offended and worried, that I preserve a peaceful condition, whatever these other people do or think."

One may say that it is very difficult to do that, if other people are aggressive or insulting. But is it not obvious that the effect produced by the insulting and aggressive attitude depends upon the way in which it is met? If we allow ourselves to be affected by it, a great deal of disturbance is set up. We on our side show something of the same nature, and to the onlooker it would seem that some of that aggression is justified. But if we are perfectly calm, the man who abuses us puts himself in the wrong, and the outsider can see that we are not in the wrong. Of course, we should not remain calm in order to appear in the right, but we should adopt a philosophical attitude, because we do not feel these attempts to attack us or to interfere with us; and thus we can be happy.

That seems a sort of negative happiness, to avoid pain or suffering. We can do a great deal more than that; we who are trying to live according to the precepts of occultism—students of the inner life—must be doing something of the world's work. Assuredly no one can see the Plan of the Logos, and the work that is to be done to carry out that Plan, without trying to do as much as he can for it, and the fact that he is engaged in that work keeps a man busy and happy. We should have no time for depression, no time to worry about all these outer things. If we are all the time busily engaged in pouring out' good thought, in sending strong wishes, strong currents of goodwill to all around us, we are fully occupied, and are happy in the work itself.

It is sad to see the way in which people all about us are constantly talking about doing things "to pass the time". They do this or that for the sake of having something to do. It is both ludicrous and pitiable, because the world is full of opportunities to do good and noble deeds, and these people are not even looking for the opportunities. They are just trying somehow or other to amuse themselves, that they may get through the time—a most extraordinary attitude to take.

The student of occultism finds that he cannot get time enough to do all that he would like to do. All those who are really willing to work are overwhelmed with work; there is always more to be done than they can possibly do. Dr. Besant works indefatigably from early in the morning until very late at night without any rest, and hers is a very different thing from the ordinary man's idea of work. Some men who are in business are certainly closely occupied the whole time, but most people's idea of work is to do a little and have a rest, and then take the matter up again and spend a little more time at it. They would call that very close attention to work. That is not the way in which she works. Even while she is listening to some story that is being told to her, she will continue writing and still know every word of what one is telling her, and be perfectly ready at the end of the story to give help or advice. She loses no single moment. She is always prepared, if she happens to be waiting at a railway station, to take out a little dispatch box and begin writing articles or letters at once. It is not given to every one—and think of the age which her body has now reached—to do that, especially as a great deal of the work is of a very searching character, and calls

for quick decision in many different directions. People who are paid for work do not do it in that way. It is precisely because all that she does is done for the love of it that she is able to do so much. Certainly she is happy in her work, always ready to meet people with a friendly smile, and is thus a great inspiration to all those who come into contact with her. We would do well to follow in her steps as far as we can, remembering always the duty of happiness. If we are not happy, then we are not doing enough; it is a sure proof that we are wasting time. We should get to work and do something, and at once the unhappiness will vanish, because there will not be time for it. The interest in the work is so keen and the amount to be done so great, that we shall find ourselves thinking of that, and we shall have no time to think of anything in the nature of unhappiness.

Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it. It lives fruitfully in the heart of the devoted disciple as well as in the heart of the man of desire. Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death. And it is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himself innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured; it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life: it may not come until the last. But, O disciple, remember that it has to be endured, and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the Eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought.

C.W.L.—This is the remainder of Rule 4, the Chohan's comment on the first three rules. The giant weed is the heresy of separateness—the idea of the separated self—which is truly the source of evil. We are directed to kill it out by stages. We are told first to unify the lower and the higher self, that is to say, to merge the personality in the individuality. For most of us the personal self is still so near that it tends to shut out the higher things. We have to work our way through that and gradually to transcend it, to get entirely rid of all selfishness. Then we have to begin upon the individuality.

Now, the individuality, the ego, is a very wonderful thing—complex, exceedingly beautiful and marvellously adapted to its surroundings, a glorious being indeed; yet eventually we must realize that even that is only an instrument that we have created by the working of many ages for the sake of the progress of the Monad. Because we have had to develop the idea of the separated self in the earlier stages of our progress, the giant weed; or the seed of it, is in the heart of everybody. That has to be killed out at one time or another, yet only the strong can tear it out from themselves at the beginning of their development. The weak must wait and let it go on growing while they are developing sufficient strength to kill it out. That is unfortunate for them, because the longer it is allowed to persist the more closely it becomes intertwined with the nature of the man. Those who can summon the courage to tear it out now will make rapid and much surer progress. Terrible as the struggle is to get rid of this separated self at any time, it will be thousands of times more difficult if we leave it until the later stages of our progress. Until it is finally destroyed we shall be subject to all kinds of difficulties and dangers from which we can escape only by getting rid of it here and now. Obviously, therefore, it is best to kill it out in the beginning.

All systems of occult teaching agree in advising students to try from the very beginning to get rid of this illusion. The difficulty in the way, apart from the habit of thinking of ourselves as separate, is that this idea has been the source of all our strength in the past. When the ego was first formed as an individual he was distinctly weak. He had been, until then, part of a group soul, and the idea of separate identity was not strong in him. It had to be intensified through the savage life. The man's strength gradually grew from the feeling, "I am I". In the earlier days it would be: "I am a great fighter and a swift runner; I am a mighty headsman; I can lead armies; I can guide men; I can make them do as I will." Later on, it would express itself on a higher level as: "I have a mighty intellect; I can trust myself; I am proud of myself; I am a great man; I can think more strongly than other men and therefore I have power over their minds, and can sway them to do this or that." It is through the sense of separateness that we have learnt to be self-reliant.

Later there comes a stage when self-reliance means reliance upon the Higher Self. The man no longer relies either on the skill of his hand, the fleetness of his

foot and the strength of his muscles, or on his intellectual powers, but comes to realize that there is a strength of the spirit which is greater far than all these outer manifestations, and when this stage is reached he soon begins to see that the strength of his spirit is the strength of the infinite that lies behind it, because it is one with God Himself. Thus our self-reliance at last becomes reliance on Him—on the mighty Power behind. We are He, and in relying on God we are relying on ourselves, because each of us is a spark of the Divine, and the Godhead is in us. We only need to realize that and to unfold it, and then the self on which we rely becomes the great Self which is the All.

This idea of the separated self is ingrained in us and is part of the very ego which is the one permanent thing about us as far as we know. We have still to learn that there is the Monad; that will seem the true Self when we have laid aside the individuality. Yet when that time comes we shall see far more clearly than we do now that those Monads are only sparks of the Eternal Flame. We know it now theoretically, and true realization of it will come to all in due course; it has come to some already. I have explained before that when the consciousness is focused in the highest part of the causal body it is possible to look up the line that joins the Monad and the ego. Looking up that line into the Monad of which we know so little, and beyond it, we can see and know with a definiteness and certainty that no words can express down here, that all we have thought of as the Self and as belonging to us, is not we, but He; that if we had any intellect, any devotion or affection, it was not we at all, but it was the intellect, the devotion, the love which is God, which was showing itself forth through us.²⁴ When a man has had that experience he can never be quite the same again; he cannot come down again in the same way to the personal point of view, because he knows with the certainty that convinces. Some experience like that is needed to counteract the result of the development of the separated self which at present is a great trouble and causes us much sorrow and suffering by obscuring our view of Life. We are in this curious position that our self-development is due to the idea of separateness up to a certain point, and it is only when we have reached that point that it becomes an evil, and we have to get rid of it. Humanity has now reached a stage where it ought to be realizing that. That is why the duty of unselfishness is impressed upon us so strongly by all occult

and high religious teaching. Humanity as a whole needs that. It is still in the selfish stage, trying to grasp this and that for itself. The whole of our strength must be turned against that tendency.

At the same time we must try to be very tolerant about it. We often feel impatient with the rampant, the brutal selfishness found everywhere, but that is useless. These unfortunate people are only carrying on now what was necessary for their development thousands of years ago. We should help them, if possible; we should always be gentle and tolerant, but very firm as to the necessity for getting rid of this point of view. Some of us find it helpful to try to realize the progress of humanity as a whole and to make a practice of thinking of ourselves as part of it. We try to act on the advice given by one of our Masters who once put it thus: "If you succeed in taking a step of some kind, if you succeed in making definite advancement, you should not think: 'I have done this, I am really getting on'. The better way to put it is: 'I am glad that this has happened, because humanity through me is just that much nearer to finding itself—that much nearer to the final goal which God means it to reach; humanity through me has taken this step, and the fact that it has done so means a very little advance for every other unit.'" One may thus think of the whole of humanity, as a man thinks of the whole of his family, as a unit, from the baby to the old grandfather, and so considers the welfare of all.

We are told that we should live neither in the present nor the future, but in the Eternal. He who lives in the Eternal is the Logos, the Deity. He, living in the Eternal, sees the future as well as the present, sees the fulfilment of all these things. If we could raise ourselves up into His point of view we should be able to live in the Eternal as He does. That is not a thing that we can achieve to-day or to-morrow. We must fight our way towards it. A divine dissatisfaction is a necessity for our progress towards it. We must never be satisfied with the condition we have reached; that would at once mean stagnation. We must always aim at doing better and better, and by living in the future we shall learn how to do that.

At the same time, while we are always reaching forward, always striving upward, it is a mistake to allow ourselves to feel discontented or worried with

regard to transitory happenings to the temporary condition of ourselves and others. It is wiser and better to project ourselves into the future and live in it. We should say: "I am at the moment such and such a person, with certain faults and failings. I am going to transcend these faults and failings. Let me look forward to the time when they will no longer exist." It is a great thing to live for to-morrow and not for yesterday. The world at large is living for the centuries which lie behind it and is clinging to old prejudices. We should look forward to the future and live for that.

Keep your thought hopefully on the future, not regretfully on the past. The present is very largely an illusion; so we are not really dissatisfied with what we are doing, but with what we have just done. If we want to get on we must keep our eyes in front of us. To look behind is not the way to make progress. If that course were persisted in on the physical plane we should not go far without meeting with an accident, and the same thing is true in these higher realms also. The more we think over it the clearer it becomes that in the three aphorisms we have just been examining, *viz.*, "Kill out ambition, kill out desire of life, and kill out desire of comfort", all that moves the ordinary man to exertion has been absolutely cut away.

A man's life is first of all directed by the desire to keep himself and his family alive, "to keep his head above water"; he has always the ambition of rising to higher levels; he wishes for greater comfort for himself and for his family. These are precisely the mainsprings which move the ordinary man, and it is obvious that if all of them should be absolutely removed from him, he would be left supine—he would be left without any reason to bestir himself at all; he would be like a log. He would say: "If I am not to have ambition of any sort, if I am to cease to desire either life or comfort, why should I do anything? Why should I move at all?" He would be left without any adequate motive for exertion of any kind, and all progress for him would be at an end. It is obvious that for him the killing out of these things would have a bad effect.

Even the man who is nearly ready to tread the Path, who has ceased to feel any interest in lower things, reaches a stage when there is danger of his falling into a state of inaction. Intellectually he is absolutely convinced that all these

lower things are not worth pursuing, and because they have ceased to attract him he does not feel inclined to put forth energy in any direction. That is an experience which comes to nearly every one in the course of his evolution, and is a very real trouble to numbers of people. They have got rid of the lower and not taken on the higher. They are at a transition stage between the two; they have not sufficiently realized the unity for that to be the great motive power in life, but they have realized enough of it to know that the desires of the separated self are not worth following. So they remain in a condition of suspended animation. It is for some students a very great difficulty to rouse themselves out of this state. Nothing is worth while; nothing has any longer any interest for them. They want to die and be done with it.

The only way for a man to get beyond that unsatisfactory condition is to go a little further, and then he will begin to see that there is a higher and truer life which is infinitely well worth the living. He will find that when he has glimpsed the divine scheme he wants to throw himself into it—he cannot do otherwise. In identifying himself with the One Life, and acting as part of that Life, he finds the one motive which can stir him to action. When he takes that one step further and begins to realize the Life of the Self, then instead of wanting to fall into annihilation and to be done with everything, he will long to possess more and more energy in order to throw it into this glorious work. The motive power of the One Self will stir him to far greater activity than ever before, because it is infinitely more powerful than any lower motive, and the man who works with it to fulfil the high purposes of the Deity will gain infinite happiness and infinite peace.

CHAPTER 5

RULES 5 TO 8

5. Kill out all sense of separateness.

Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the Eternal, can aid you.

A.B.—This teaching is specially given in this book, intended for the disciple, because he has to learn to stand utterly alone. Nothing that is embodied, that is out of the Eternal, can aid him. All help that comes from the embodied is secondary help and may fail him in the moment of his greatest need. The biographies of the great Christian mystics show it to have been an invariable characteristic of their lives that they felt forsaken by every one, and had to stand absolutely alone. The same truth comes out also in the Christian Gospels, which contain in the symbol of the life of Jesus an account of the experiences through which every soul must go in the stages of discipleship. There are there two scenes which are connected with this statement; the first is that which is spoken of as the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, when He found that His friends and followers could not watch with Him even for a little time, and He learned that He must go on alone; the second was the cry from the cross: “My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?” These experiences are connected with the fourth great Initiation, when the man is thrown back upon himself and learns to rest upon the inner Self alone, to realize that he himself is only an expression of the Eternal in the outer world. There is always a danger that in this last great test the disciple will break down.

A double task lies before the disciple. He must kill out the sense of separateness, but he must learn to stand alone in order that he may be strong with the strength of the divine within himself. He must be like a star in heaven, that gives light to all but takes it from none. He can learn that only from the experience of isolation. Yet the sense of isolation is illusory, for he is in the Eternal. The illusion is due to the breaking away of all the forms before the realization of unity—of being the Eternal—develops in the consciousness.

This aphorism with its comment also contains other important thoughts. There is a stage at which the aspirant must stand aside from the body of men, because of his weakness, not of his strength. Sometimes a man is so near the condition of other men around him, who still lead the lower life that he has left, that he feels that by keeping company with them he is likely to be dragged down into their vices. At that time the sentiment of repulsion is useful; and although it does show that he is in a lower stage of development yet he will do well to follow it and avoid their company.

When a man speaks with horror of a certain vice you may be sure that in the near past he has been in the grip of it. In the recent past there has been a fight against that vice, and his inner consciousness, from which nothing disappears, now warns him against it. There is a stage when a man has risen higher, when he need not seek such isolation from those who are still sinning. But so long as that is not the case, so long as he is liable to fall into vice on account of an impulse from outside, a man's safety lies in his running away from the temptation, until he is strong enough to go amidst that vice without being attracted by it. Only when a man has got beyond the power of falling into attraction by vice will he usually get over his horror and repulsion.

Then he has come to the stage at which he ought to think of the sinner as in need of his help. The very thought of his own past faults will now enable him to help others. We cannot help them as long as we ourselves are liable to fall, but only when we are neither attracted nor repelled, when we recognize our identity with those who are struggling. We then remember that the sin of the world is our own sin-^the profound truth that no man can be perfectly clean while another remains unclean. While a man remains part of humanity its life is his; to escape from that, he must go outside humanity. The vice of any man is our vice, until he also has got rid of it. Upon that truth the saving of the world entirely turns.

That should be the thought of any disciple if he should find himself under special temptation. He should realize that he must not yield to the temptation, because in his fall there is a fall for the whole of humanity. Such knowledge ought to be sufficient to keep him from evil. Suppose you attempt to realize in consciousness the life of humanity, and then try to conquer a particular

weakness; you will then feel that your own conquest is not a conquest for yourself, but for all. The whole of humanity is helped because one part of it has struggled and conquered. This idea will very often give you great strength. It is indeed worth while to struggle for the sake of the whole, if not for your own personal self.

C.W.L.—People sometimes make these instructions harder for themselves than they need be, and perhaps also a little unreal, by exaggerating them. We have to face the fact that there is separation down here on the physical plane. We may feel as completely fraternal as we can, but the fact nevertheless remains that in space our physical bodies are separate. Sometimes people want to deny that fact; they try to carry the idea of non-separate-ness to such a point as to make it unreasonable. That can never be right in occultism. Occult teaching is always the very essence of reasonableness and common sense, and whenever anything is put before us which is obviously unreasonable, we may feel sure there is a mistake somewhere. In some cases it may appear unreasonable because we are not in possession of all the facts, but when the facts are all before us and the statement still has an unreasonable appearance, we are justified in doubting it and waiting for further enlightenment.

Though our physical bodies are separate in space there is really less separation than there appears to be. We all react upon one another to such an extent that no man can in any sense really live to himself alone. If one physical body has a certain disease, all the others near are liable to contract it. If the astral body is diseased in the sense of being, let us say, given to irritability, envy, jealousy, selfishness and so on, it is also infectious, because it radiates out its vibrations, and other astral bodies in the neighbourhood must be to some extent affected by such radiation. When, for example, people sit together at a meeting their astral bodies interpenetrate to a considerable degree, because the astral body of an ordinary person extends about eighteen inches around the physical body—in some cases still further—so that, although they are still quite separate, they must react considerably on one another. The same is true of the mental body, and even our causal bodies are separate in space and in condition. So we must understand this killing out of the sense of separateness in conformity with the facts of nature.

There is no separateness on the buddhic plane. There consciousnesses do not necessarily merge instantly at the lowest level, but they gradually grow wider and wider until, when we reach the highest level of the buddhic plane, and have fully developed ourselves through all its different subdivisions, we find ourselves consciously one with humanity. That is the lowest level at which the separateness is absolutely non-existent; in its fullness the conscious unity with all belongs to the next plane—the nirvanic.

Suppose that all of us could develop the buddhic consciousness within ourselves simultaneously. Each one would realize that he had risen to that level, and that his consciousness included that of all the others, but he would still feel that inclusive consciousness to be his consciousness. None of us would have lost his sense of individuality at all, only in it he would include very much more than he had ever done before. He would feel himself as manifesting through all these others as well. Really what we are experiencing is the one consciousness which includes us all, the consciousness of the Logos Himself.

It is on the nirvanic plane that we realize most intensely that all that we thought to be our consciousness, our intellect, our devotion, our love, were in reality *His* consciousness, *His* intellect, *His* love, *His* devotion, manifesting through us somewhat as a light might shine through a lens. That realization does not come fully to the man in the buddhic world, but it does so come to him in that next above.

In the *Stanzas of Dzyan* it is said, referring to man; “The spark hangs from the Flame by the finest thread of Fohat.”²⁵ That, I believe, is applicable at various levels; for us it may be taken to mean that the ego hangs from the Monad by the finest thread, and that thread runs through the buddhic plane. The finest thread of which you can think is all that represents the ordinary man at these buddhic levels. As soon as he turns his attention to higher matters—when he is regularly thinking of them and aiming at them—that thread begins to thicken. It gradually becomes more and more like a cable, and later on it appears as a funnel, because it widens out up above (I am speaking of it now as one would see it clairvoyantly), and comes down into the causal body, which is a thing of definite size for the time. Later on the causal body itself is enlarged by the

inrushing of forces, and the funnel becomes very much larger, widening out at the bottom as well as the top. At the first Initiation (for many, this experience comes before that), the man abandons the causal body and plunges into the buddhic plane. At that time, as I have explained before, the causal body absolutely vanishes—the one thing that has seemed permanent through his long line of lives, since he left the animal kingdom, disappears.²⁶ When that occurs this funnel shapes itself into a sphere. There are more dimensions there, so that I cannot actually describe it, but this is how it appears to one who is able to see it.

After a man has taken the first Initiation the sense of separateness is one of the failings which have to be entirely conquered before he can take the second. It is the first of the ten *sanyojana* or fetters which he has to cast off on his way up the steps of the Path. It is made possible for ‘him finally and irrevocably to cast it off by the experience which is part of that first Initiation. He gets then merely a touch of the buddhic consciousness. It does not mean necessarily that he can go back into that condition of consciousness whenever he will, but at least he has experienced it, and having once felt the unity, he knows that it exists even though he may be incapable of re-entering it without the aid of the Master. He knows, therefore, that the sense of separateness is an illusion. It is practically impossible for us down here in the physical body to grasp that really. We constantly speak of it and we try to persuade ourselves that we feel it, but as long as one is in a physical body and until one has had that higher experience, frankly I do not think one can feel it. We persuade ourselves of it intellectually but really to feel it is a different thing.

When a man begins to function on the buddhic plane, he enters it at its lowest level, but he is unable at first to make the most even of that lowest sub-plane. He will feel an intensity of bliss which no words can express, and an extension of consciousness which by contrast with anything which he has ever felt before, will no doubt give the idea that the whole world is included. Nevertheless it is not so at all. When he is sufficiently accustomed to this higher level to analyze it, he will find that the extension of consciousness, though a very great one, is by no means as yet full or universal. Gradually he extends the sphere which he can effectively occupy. It is somewhat like the way in which an army occupies a conquered territory. He establishes himself first, and then gradually extends that

part over which he has definite power, until it includes the entire country. He then proceeds to try to push his consciousness into the next sub-plane; but even after he has worked his way through sub-plane after sub-plane until he reaches the highest, he has not necessarily built the buddhic vehicle. The man who has the buddhic consciousness within his reach by meditation or by effort can always raise himself into that condition. The man who has definitely built a buddhic vehicle has that consciousness all the time in the background of his lower physical, astral or mental consciousness. That is another and separate achievement and a difficult one, because to do that the causal body must be eliminated, must be destroyed as a separating wall.

One whose consciousness works on the buddhic plane during meditation finds that although he is one with all the wonderful consciousness of the plane, yet there is a little circle of emptiness shutting him out from the rest. This little barrier is, of course, the causal body. In order that the buddhic vehicle shall be developed, even that must disappear. Then the man feels the reality of unobstructed Life in a way impossible to describe down here. Madame Blavatsky expressed the idea as a circle with its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere—a very beautiful and expressive description.²⁷ Of course it is a paradox, but all things that can be said about these higher conditions must necessarily be paradoxical.

When the unity is fully realized the man feels, however paradoxical it may sound, as though his vehicle at that level filled the whole of the plane, as though he could transfer his point of consciousness to any place within that plane and still be the centre of the circle. It is an experience which is quite indescribable. Along with that feeling, permeating and accompanying it always, is a sense of the most intense bliss—bliss of which we can have no conception at all on these lower planes—something vivid, active, fiery beyond all imagination. Most bliss down here, at the rare moments when we feel anything deserving of the name, consists chiefly in the absence of pain. We are happy and blissful down here when, for a moment, we are free from fatigue and pain, when we can relax and feel that we are taking in pleasant influences. That is rather a negative feeling. The bliss of the buddhic plane is the most intensely active, vivid feeling. I do not know in the least how to express it. If you could imagine the most intense

activity that you have ever felt and then replace that vivid and strenuous activity by a feeling of bliss, then somehow raise it—spiritualize it—to an altogether higher plane, to the *n*th power, it would convey some idea of what that feeling is.

It is an active reality which is quite overpowering in its strength. There is nothing at all passive about it; one is not resting. Down here we live lives of so much strain and strenuousness that rest is always a very prominent part of any ideal we may have; but there it is not in the least a feeling that one is resting or wanting to rest. One is a tremendous incarnate energy whose expression is to pour itself forth, and the idea of rest or the need of rest is entirely outside one's consciousness. What to us here seems rest would seem a kind of negation up there. We have become one with the expression of the divine power, and that divine power is active life. People talk of the rest of nirvana—but that is from the lower point of view. It is the intensity of power that is the real characteristic of this higher life—a power so intense that it does not show itself in any sort of ordinary movement at all, but rather in one vast resistless sweep which might look like rest when viewed from below, but which means the consciousness of absolute power. It is impossible to express all this in words. When we have achieved this we have finally conquered the giant weed—the great enemy, the sense of separateness. It is the hardest task, on the whole, that is before us, because it involves everything else.

It is only after the buddhic body is fully developed on all the seven sub-planes that the man has the full fruition of the whole plane, a complete power of identification with the whole of humanity, so that he can learn through that relation what all these people think and feel. Before that buddhic consciousness is gained we may labour to reduce the sense of separateness and it may be done with great success intellectually, but we still remain outside, in the sense of not understanding others. They will still be an absolute mystery, for man is the greatest of mysteries to his fellow-man. We may come into very close relations with people for quite a long time, and yet not really know them inside. It may be that until the buddhic level is reached no man ever really knows any other man thoroughly.²⁸ When a man reaches that condition he is able to pour himself down into the consciousness of others and see what they do and why they act in that particular way. There all things are within him instead of outside, and he

studies them as parts of himself. It sounds impossible down here, but that is something of what he feels. All the joy of the world is his joy; its suffering is his suffering. When he chooses to put himself down through any one of the million tentacles—the consciousnesses of other people with which he is one—then he can and does experience all which that person is experiencing. In this way all the world's suffering is within his reach, but he knows with absolute certainty that it is a necessary part of the plan and has no existence on those higher levels. He is in no way less sympathetic with it, yet he knows that “Brahman is Bliss”, and that to be one with the divine is a state of perpetual inner joy. It is only when one gains that development that one can fully help others.

When a man touches that consciousness he has for a time withdrawn from these lower physical levels where he can be perturbed or upset, and he is himself part of the divine joy. When he comes back again into his mental, astral and physical bodies he may permit little troubles to annoy him. This ought not to be so; but still there is a great gap between the higher life and that lived in the physical body, where small things can still be very irritating. The possibility of being momentarily annoyed by something on the physical plane remains even when a very high level has been reached, but it is then merely superficial. The things from which people really suffer in this world are those which they feel to be hopeless. No one can ever have any feeling of hopelessness after he has touched that higher consciousness, because when we are absolutely certain that the reality is always joy, we know that all suffering at lower levels is only temporary, and that even that would not come to us if we were nearer to perfection.

The power of identification is gained not only with regard to the consciousness of people but with regard to everything else on the buddhic plane. Everything is learnt from the inside instead of from the outside. If we wish to study any subject, any organism, the working of any law of nature—it does not matter what—up to and including the consciousness of the causal body we have to study it from without, looking out at it. In the causal body we are able to examine it with an enormously widened' consciousness, with the power of knowing vastly more about it than we could possibly know on lower planes. But when we get to the buddhic plane the difference is a fundamental difference.

That which we are examining has become part of ourselves. We examine it as a kind of symptom in ourselves. It is difficult to put into words because down here we have nothing exactly like it, but this looking at things from within instead of from without does give one a very great advantage. It is so different in its characteristics that we are probably justified in saying that that is the first glimpse we get of the way in which the Deity looks at His universe, because He must have exactly that experience—that that at which He looks must be part of Himself because there is nothing which is not part of Him. Therefore His consciousness must be this buddhic consciousness raised to the power, and with all the insight and glory and splendour of which we can have no idea on any plane as yet. One can understand very clearly why that world is spoken of as the real, and all these lower ones as the unreal, because the difference is so great and the attitude is so entirely changed that any other way of looking at things does seem unreal, even ridiculous when once one has learned to see them from the inside.

It is not so utterly impossible as many students think to attain to that higher sight. A reasonable number of people have succeeded in this incarnation, here and now, in gaining it. It is certainly within reach of those who will try hard enough, if they are willing to follow the rules—willing to adopt the utter selflessness which is required, because so long as there is anything personal in the disciple's point of view he cannot make any progress with this buddhic consciousness, which depends on the suppression of the personality.

The idea of separateness shows itself in certain ways in daily life, and it is well to watch against those manifestations. One way in which people show it very much is by their desire for power over other separated selves. One half of the world is everlastingly trying to interfere with the other half. This habit is so ingrained in us that we do not notice it; we usually regard it in the light of good advice. About one case in two thousand may happen to be that, but in most of the others we are simply asserting our separated self by endeavouring to impress ourselves upon the other people.

Physically, we try to make other people do things our way and to give way to us; we are perpetually trying to get them to adopt our particular plan, whatever it

may be. Because it is ours it is the best plan in the world and we want to force it upon every one else. We find the same thing at the intellectual level. People try constantly to force their opinions and their ideas upon others. When a man has developed a keen intellect he begins subtly, slowly, to want to dominate other people by means of that intellect. Just because his thought becomes keener and stronger than that of others he tries to mould their thought by his. It is well and good that we should want to share with others all that we know; that we should set before them what we have found so good for ourselves. But as a rule that is not the idea which exists behind this desire to dominate other minds. It usually co-exists with a certain amount of contempt for the other people. We think: "These people are like sheep; we can sweep them along; we can make them think what we like." It is to a large extent true that a man who has learned to think, as we should be learning by meditation and study, can dominate the thoughts of others very easily; but we should not do it, because anything like domination is bad for the other man's evolution and not good for our own. So even this desire for intellectual domination must be resisted. It is part of the vice of separateness.

When we have got rid of that there is still a higher possibility along that line—in the realm of the spiritual we may also try to make people take our path. That is at the back of all endeavour to convert people from one religion to another. It is perhaps not quite fair to put it in that way, because Christianity at least starts with the gigantic delusion that unless people believe its particular shibboleths they will have a very unpleasant hereafter, therefore its attempt to convert others comes to have the colour of altruism. It assumes: "Orthodoxy is my doxy and heterodoxy is your doxy," and: "What I believe is true and you must come into line with it." When we have developed spirituality, when we have learned many things that others do not know, it is right and proper that we should preach our gospel, that we should wish to tell others what we have found and give them every opportunity to follow us into these realms of higher thought; but if that wish is tinged with a desire to dominate them—a desire that is often found along with many good qualities—there is still a touch of the old separated self about it, and the "giant weed" is not finally uprooted.

We must also get rid entirely of the wish to dominate others because so long

as a man is working for the separated self he belongs to that great mass of separated selves which is such a terrible burden in evolution. The moment he begins to realize the unity, he ceases to be part of the weight which has to be lifted and begins to be one of the lifters.

To stand alone and isolated means that one must not be dependent on anyone outside oneself, because no separated person or thing can really ultimately be of use to us. Help must be found within ourselves. The Master can help us all the time in our efforts, but even He cannot do the actual work for us. He is constantly suggesting things to us, pouring help into us in every way, but at every step it is we ourselves who must do the work. As we go on we must learn to stand apparently entirely alone, without the Master's direct help, but that is an illusion because no one can ever really be separated from the Master, or from the Deity of whom that Master is a part. Still, we must act as though we were alone, and at certain stages in our evolution we shall feel absolutely alone; yet if we can bring the intellect to bear upon it, though it is a difficult matter under such circumstances, we at once recognize that we never can be really alone. We are part of God and cannot cease to be so, because if we did we should altogether cease to be, we should be unconscious.

We are part of something which can never cease to be, and therefore the idea of loneliness is an illusion, though it causes great pain and suffering. On the physical plane a man is often least alone when he thinks himself most alone; when he is in the midst of a crowd the higher things can touch him less easily, therefore he is more separated from them. But when these separated selves are not so close around him the influences of the non-separated Self can play upon him much more fully, and so it is really true to say that the man is least of all alone when he thinks or feels himself most alone.

It is hardly possible to form any conception of the awful feeling of being absolutely alone in the universe—a point floating in space. That is the condition called *avichi*, which means “the waveless state”. It is a condition of consciousness in which a man appears to himself to stand outside the vibrations of the Divine Life, and is said to be the most terrible experience that can come to a man. That is the end of the black magician, who for many lives has striven

definitely and determinedly for separateness, who has directly set himself against the unifying forces of evolution. The pupil of the Master must learn to sympathize even with the black magician who suffers avichi; therefore once in his development a man must experience that state of consciousness. He touches it only for a moment but he can never forget it, and henceforth he will always be able to understand the suffering of those who remain for ages in such a condition as that. When for us that moment comes, we should remember that whatever is, is God, and that we cannot be separated from Him even though we feel that we are—we must realize that it is a final illusion which must be conquered.

We all have to stand alone and isolated because each of us must learn to depend upon himself and to realize that he is God, that the divine spark in him is in truth part of the All. Until we can do that we are not entirely reliable for the higher phases of the Master's work. In the meantime, for all our ordinary work in life, whether physical, astral or mental, the knowledge that the Master envelops us and is close behind us all the time is a very great strength and comfort. We do our regular work each night on the astral or mental plane, as the case may be, and in doing it we know always that the power of the Master protects us. If at any moment we encounter something enormously stronger than ourselves which threatens to overwhelm us, just as on the physical plane a great storm or earthquake might do, we always know that we can draw indefinitely, infinitely, on His power. Even that the disciple must learn to do without, when the time comes, but only in order that he may become as strong a centre as the Master Himself.

Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourself, though in a less degree than your friend or your Master. But if you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated.

C.W.L.—This is the first part of a long note by the Master Hilarion. Of course we all hold in theory that humanity is a mighty brotherhood and is really a unity. The Master here admits that there are degrees in this unity, and that there

are therefore degrees of separateness, that we are to some extent more separated from the bad and the foolish than we are from our friend or our Master. The idea of the brotherhood of man is often twisted to imply the equality of man, which it really cannot mean. In any family of many brothers there must be considerable differences of age among them, and there must similarly be differences of soul age among these members of the greater human brotherhood. Again, just as in the physical family it is the business of the elder to help and train the younger, so in the family of humanity must the elder protect the younger and help them in any way they can. Brotherhood implies variety; it requires this difference of age, and also that many people shall be doing different kinds of work.

One of the finest symbols of brotherhood that I have come across was a vision of one of our members of an Eastern temple supported by many hundreds of pillars. He said: "All these pillars are helping to support the temple, and they are therefore symbols of individual souls who form a part of the temple of humanity. Some of these pillars are on the outside, are seen and admired all the time. They also face the sunshine and the rain. Others are far away in the interior of the forest of pillars, never having the sun shining directly upon them at all, never being admired by people as they pass. Some of these pillars are in places where the worshippers gather round and sit leaning against the plinth of the pillar all day long. Other pillars are in less approachable places, but each one is an integral part of the temple and is doing its work. That is like the brotherhood of humanity. Some people may feel that they are doing a great deal; others may never know of a single opportunity of help that comes to them, and yet they are all bearing their part and are just as much pillars in the temple as those which are more prominent in the public eye."

Many of our students are eager to claim unity with the Master and the saints, and not so anxious to claim unity with the criminal, the drunkard, the inefficient, the sensual, the cruel. But since humanity is one, we must be one with the less evolved people as well as with the greater; in the one case there is a part of ourselves towards which we must reach up, but in the other case there is a part of humanity which we must try to help. How can we help them? First of all by thinking in the right way about them. If we shrink from them with horror, if we hate them, we are making their path more difficult. If we allow the natural and

justifiable feeling with regard to the evil that is being done to influence our attitude towards the person who does it, we are making an error. It is scarcely possible to avoid that sometimes, but we can always to some extent reason ourselves out of it.

Doctors meet with cases of the most loathsome and horrible diseases—which in many an instance the man concerned has brought entirely upon himself. But no doctor who is really earnest in his work thinks of that when the patient is before him. He does not shrink from the man with horror, but regards the disease as an enemy that has to be fought and conquered. That is a very good example of the attitude that we ought to be able to adopt when we have to deal with a degraded person. Undoubtedly the probabilities are that we could not produce very much effect upon an absolutely degraded drunkard, whose will is almost gone; but to shrink from him in horror or to feel contempt is not the way to help him. In the same way when a man commits a terrible crime we may have the greatest possible horror of the crime, but not of the criminal. It is difficult for us to separate them, but we have to do it.

There is another curious little point about that. The things which horrify us most are those to which we have a certain leaning ourselves—from which we are conceivably in danger. When one is absolutely free from the slightest tendency towards a particular crime one looks down on it without horror; but if one feels oneself filled with horror at a particular human failing, he may take it that it is a fault which has been a real danger to himself not long ago—perhaps a life or two back.

When we go among evil influences we sometimes have to surround ourselves with a shell in order to keep them off. That is often the best policy, since we are still very human; but to have to do that is to a certain extent a confession of weakness.²⁹ The absolutely strong man walks straight into the middle of all these perils, certain that they cannot affect him, but that would not be a wise thing for all of us to do. Our force is limited and by making a shell we can save ourselves from using up a certain amount of it unnecessarily. A man who is perfectly sure of his own power can walk unharmed among all sorts of dangers, because he *is* sure of himself. Perfect strength destroys all shrinking. We draw back from a

case of infectious disease because we are afraid we may catch it; if we were certain we were immune from that disease the idea of catching it would not occur to us.

The idea that we must not think of ourselves as separate from the wicked or the foolish man does not necessarily imply that we must always be in close association with such people, though contact is sometimes useful. There are many good people who endeavour, in a great city like London, for example, to help the poor by going to live among them in the slums. Some of our students hold the opinion that that is also our duty with regard to the wicked and the foolish people. That is not always the best way to help them. We may learn from the Masters' conduct in that respect. The Great Ones do not come down and live in the slums of our great cities. Why do They not do so? For one reason, They would be unable to carry on Their work for humanity. It would take nearly all the time of the Master to clear a place where He could work at all, and the amount of work done would be reduced to perhaps one hundredth part of what it would otherwise be.

So with us; it is not in the least necessary that we should put ourselves into the worst conditions. On the contrary we can often help more effectively by not hampering ourselves in that way. If a man finds himself in a peculiarly unpleasant crowd, perhaps filled with some savage feeling or outburst of passion, he can throw a shell round himself and so protect himself from the evil influence, but he cannot do very much with that crowd while he is occupied in doing that. On the other hand, if he were away from it he would be able to pour more force upon it. Even then, if a crowd of undeveloped men is under the sway of some crude passion, very little can be done with it from higher planes, because the force poured out could hardly affect it while it was in that state. Therefore we need not enter evil surroundings unless we see clearly that we can do definite good there, although we must do the best we can if we find ourselves in such an environment. I have heard, for example of preachers who have gone into drinking saloons and started a religious service, and there have been cases where such a bold move as that was actually successful. There would, of course, be many occasions when such a procedure would end in a fiasco. In these things, as in war, a very bold and apparently rash move may occasionally turn out well,

but usually more can be accomplished by working in a reasonable way.

Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it; your karma is inextricably interwoven with the great Karma.

We do not realize that down here, but on reaching the buddhic plane we see that it represents a real truth. There we feel: “I am part of that which humanity cannot avoid; something exists in it which is a shame to *me*” and we feel it so because we as part of humanity have caused it. On the other hand we have our share in every good that has been done. When one man has taken a step forward we feel it as a triumph for all; through him all humanity has come a little nearer to its goal.

And before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn with horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain, not that yourself shall be kept clean.

This passage, with which the Master Hilarion’s note concludes, has often been misunderstood; some people have interpreted it to mean that each individual at some time must have committed all possible sins. It does not mean that, because the wise man does learn something from the experience of others. When we have seen a person burnt by putting his hand in the fire we need not put our own hand into it also before we are sure it is not a good thing to do.³⁰ So we need not commit all possible crimes in order to make up our minds about them. We have all at some stage of evolution risen from a primitive human condition and have passed through the various stages of life between that and our present condition, but there is no reason to assume that we did badly in each stage. There is some reason to suppose that most of us in the course of our long series of lives have sampled the different types of mistakes which it is possible for a human being to make, but we certainly did not go through every detail. When one form of a particular evil is touched, that, I think, stands to the wise

soul as experience of a wide range of similar mistakes.³¹

Then there is another consideration. Every man when he reaches the buddhic consciousness looks out through that and experiences all that others experience. We think of the glory and the wonder of the buddhic consciousness because it brings us into union with the Masters. We must not forget that it also brings us into harmony with the vicious and the criminal. Their feelings must be experienced, as well as the glory and the splendour of the higher life. So when we are able to touch the buddhic plane we may gain experience of the lower and more unpleasant aspects of life by entering into the consciousness of the people who are going through those particular phases. We do not require to do this as a lesson, because we already know by the hypothesis that these are things which are impossible for us. But we must have sufficient experience to be perfectly sympathetic, or we cannot give help to others. The perfectly sympathetic person knows intuitively the difficulties and temptations of others, and so is full of love even for the erring one. By sympathy he makes the “soiled garment” his own. When we have finally abandoned separateness and realized unity we shall find that we are merged in the divine Life, and that the attitude of love is the only one which we can adopt towards any of our fellow-men, whether they be high or low.

6. Kill out desire for sensation.

Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder.

A.B.—The disciple must observe the working of sensation in himself, so that he may gain some self-knowledge from it. He can attain to such knowledge only by the deliberate study of his own thoughts. The first effect of trying to study your own thoughts is to stand away from them, to separate them from yourself. The very fact of your studying them has drawn your life away from them, so as to destroy for the time being the identification of yourself with your thoughts which habitually exists. A man does not identify himself with the object of his study, with the thing at which he is looking. It is a saying among the followers of Shankaracharya that subject and object can never be the same. So the very effort

of study weakens the forms, and in that mere act you are gaining freedom.

Closely allied to this advice is the instruction to test experiences, the object being that the man may experience the condition of being no longer affected by them. When a man is observing his own sensation, in order to learn from it, he may experience that sensation, but at the same time he may do with it something higher—he may measure this force without yielding to it. There will come times too, when the disciple who is practising this observation of sensations will find that dormant sensations in himself are being re-awakened.

All of us have reminiscences of the past, which may be said to hang about us as our dead selves, and are liable to be revived from outside. They may come to life again by contact with other men's thought-forms along the same lines, or they may be awakened by the deliberate action of some power which is working for our purification, or is testing us either from the dark or the white side. Suppose a man has that dead self vivified he will then feel what is usually called the force of temptation. The disciple, having studied the way in which these things work, recognizes what has happened; he measures the power of the resuscitated thought and says to it: "You are not my living Self; you are merely my 'I' of the past—so get away from me."

Sometimes in a moment of temptation it is helpful to recognize that it is merely your past that has been revived, and then you are right to say: "This is not I." Then you look on it as outside yourself, as no part of your being or activity, and you know that it cannot hold you or stain you.³² The patient confidence that arises from this knowledge has a great element of strength in it. You know that you are drawing nearer the time when you will not even feel this temptation. Presently it will not have the power to affect you at all.

In the deliberate process of weighing, measuring, and observing his own past feelings and thoughts, the disciple is killing the very last possibility of life in that dead self. The *Voice of the Silence* means this, when it says with regard to desire: "Take heed lest from the dead it should again arise." The old feelings and thoughts are done with, not when they are merely buried out of sight, but when the very last fragment of them is worked out to the end, when the man looks at them and sees with perfect clearness just what they are and that they are no part

of himself. In this quiet study he then kills them beyond all possibility of recall to life.

C.W.L.—We have first to learn to observe the working of sensation in ourselves from outside. So long as we are being swept away by it we cannot learn anything from it, because we are then slaves to it, but if we can rise and look down upon it, and think of it as something belonging to our past we are then in a position to observe and study it.

Waves of sensation are flowing all over the world and we have to learn to understand them so as to be able to help others, but of course we can do that only when we are no longer swayed by them. Doubtless it is largely a matter of temperament, but for many it is one of the greatest difficulties that sensations and emotions swirl them about, and as yet they do not understand fully how to control them. It is like standing in the breakers and trying to master them. A man cannot govern a thing which knocks him over again and again and sweeps him away; but people do not realize that emotion is really not an external force like that, but that it is within one-self and may be brought perfectly within one's control if one understands how to do it.

The way is to get a firm grip on it in the very beginning. A wave of anger, depression, jealousy, or any of these passions will start in a moment and grow rapidly into a very big thing. It comes up so suddenly and people are so accustomed to regard it as the self that they do not for the moment recognize it, and so do not at once pull up and stop it, and say: "This is not I; I decline to be swept away; I stand firm." If we remember to do that in time the emotion disappears promptly. Most people make the resolve not to be overcome when they are quite calm, but unfortunately when the wave of sensation arrives with a rush upon them they do not at the moment want to resist it. The soul inside is not immediately awake to the danger, so it allows itself to be swept away and to be identified with the emotion or sensation. We must therefore learn to catch it exactly at the moment of its coming, for if we let that slip it is a very difficult matter, when the sensation is in full blast, to check it suddenly, though sometimes another person can do it for us. Afterwards, when we remember, we regret it. The practical thing to do is to try to control the sensation each time a

little sooner, and if we can suppress it once before it gets into its swing, the probability is that we shall be able to do so invariably after that.

It is difficult at first only because the man as a Self has abdicated his rights on so many previous occasions that he has got out of the habit of asserting them. But if he will once assert them at the critical moment he will find that he can do it again and again, because the elemental that is the cause of the difficulty will begin to be afraid, will begin to realize that he cannot sweep everything before him. At first he is quite confident, like a dog that rushes at a man, barking and snarling because he thinks him to be afraid; but if the man does not turn and run away the dog hesitates and begins to be a little doubtful about the enterprise. The elemental has not the intelligence of a dog. He may or may not know that we are stronger than he, but if he does not, it is only because we have not asserted ourselves. We should let him know that we are his master; when once he feels that, he will hesitate at the very beginning to start his wave. Check him at the beginning, and there will be no further trouble.

We have to learn from sensation by observing it in others also. In this way we come to understand human nature. We can see how other people make fools of themselves under the influence of emotion, and seeing how bad it looks in them, and how much harm it obviously does them, we learn to repress any touch of the same thing in ourselves. It is naturally much easier to see things in others than in ourselves, when we are standing outside as spectators. We should not, however, look at other people in order to criticize them and pick out their faults, but only to see what we can learn from them. When we see them distinctly not living up to their best and highest, because of some passion or emotion or some feeling of repugnance, we can make a mental note of that, without feeling in the least that we are better than they, and we can think: "Might not the same thing have happened to me? Let me see that it shall not happen." Thus without getting into the habit of criticizing, which is always bad, we can learn from the mistakes of other people. When we see another person come to grief, however sorry we may be for him, there can be no harm in thinking: "Let me not fall over the precipice too; it is enough that one person has done so."

Great waves of sensation flooded the world during the war. Among them was

a tremendous amount of repugnance and hatred against the powers with whom we happened to be at war. I am not in the least meaning to defend the atrocities committed by those powers. I know that they occurred, because I have myself, astrally, seen a very great deal of them, that filled me with shame for humanity. I do not for a moment wish to deny those facts, to gloss them over, or to excuse them. But there was also great danger and harm in the strong rush of feeling against those who committed the crimes. The people responsible for the atrocities were those who committed them, and the individuals by whose orders they were done—not the whole nation. Assuredly a great many things were done by Englishmen in the past with which we should not like to identify ourselves—and that has been the same in every nation. We must not let ourselves be carried away into injustice in thought any more than into injustice of speech or of action.

Our enemies intentionally went to work deliberately to stir up hatred against us. That may, perhaps, have been effective for the time, as one of the tricks of the campaign. They may have found that it paid in getting recruits and money, and so on; but it was a serious moral mistake. By it they put themselves quite conclusively in the wrong, as far as all higher aspects of the matter were concerned. But there is danger in such a case lest we should feel hatred too. One has to be absolutely determined in the fight against evil, to carry it through to the uttermost, and yet be entirely free from anything like a thought of hatred. Remember how the Lord Buddha said: “Hatred never ceaseth by hatred.” On the contrary, it is always stirred up by it.

When one hears of terrible atrocities perpetrated upon women and children, one cannot but feel intense indignation. There is no harm in feeling indignant against such evil-doing. It is a terrible thing, and all right-minded people will and should denounce it decidedly, without any sort of palliation or excuse; but it would be a great mistake to hate the unfortunate man who commits the crimes. He is to be pitied much more than blamed. It is not our business to blame him, but it is our duty to make it impossible for him to do these things again. Our attitude should be that which a man would take towards some wild beast that is attacking his children. He would not dignify it by hating it, but he would put it out of the way. We should be exceedingly sorry for the unfortunate people who did such things, because we see what the karma of it must be.

It is a terrible thing that women and children should be massacred, more terrible, perhaps, for the relations than for the victims themselves, but it is worst of all for those who commit the crime; it is they who are most to be pitied, because their suffering in the end will be very far more terrible.

As far as lies in our power we will take steps to prevent what has been done from being done again, but we must have no sense of hatred. It is a case of *noblesse oblige*. We stand quite infinitely above the sort of person who does that kind of thing; we are ages past him in evolution and development; we stand as far removed from him as he stands from the animal kingdom, and since that is so we ought to show our higher development by not sharing that passion of hatred.

We can study the effects of sensation only if we dissociate ourselves from it, if we stand outside and try to control the feeling and to learn from it. We must not be swept away in any such maelstrom of popular feeling, but we must try to see where it is wrong, and do what we can to put it right. Many people, who are under the influence of that sensation of tremendous passion, think of us as rather apathetic, and cold; it is even possible that they sometimes think of us as lacking in patriotism if we refuse to hate. Of course that is not logical, but then people are not logical when under the influence of these great waves of hatred. We can explain to them that patriotism does not call on one to hate other countries, but they sometimes do not see that we can love our own country without being obliged to hate another.

Our attitude towards these things is very much that which we should take towards the troubles of little children. A child breaks a doll and is in a tempest of tears and a passion of regret over it; we do all we can to sympathize with that child, but we are quite philosophical, we do not share the passion of regret. We are not in despair because a doll is broken or because this or that small matter may have happened in the school-life of the child. We realize that there is a future, and that as compared to that future all these little matters are only temporary and not of great importance, although they are tremendously so to the child. We should be failing in our duty if we did not give the sympathy, but we should be foolish if we felt as much as that child felt—we should ourselves be acting in a childish manner. It is exactly the same with the man who is learning

to adopt a philosophical attitude. He sympathizes with the people who are so passionately upset over these things, but he himself is not disturbed. Just as one says to the child: "Oh, well, never mind, it will be all right by and by," so we should like to say to those who are surging under these emotions: "If you would only believe it, everything will come right and all will go well." If we say that, we are considered unsympathetic, but it is absolutely true. We often find it difficult to avoid wonder as to how people can be so blind. We see them surging wildly about things that do not matter in the least. They are often people with splendid possibilities, but they do not see them, and they allow themselves to be overwhelmed by mad surges of desire. We did the same thing ourselves thousands of years ago, perhaps. Therefore we learn to be patient, understanding that it is a stage in evolution, though a very undesirable stage. So those of us who are still in danger of yielding to emotions of that sort must pull ourselves up and say: "Twenty lives ago this was perhaps excusable, but now, the time for it is past." If in every-day life we see a man of mature age throwing away all his time in pleasure we know that that may have been all very well twenty years ago, but now he ought to be thinking about the more serious things of life. In the same way we ought to have risen to a level where our emotions are the higher emotions, where we have the one great idea of the work that God wills us to do.

7. Kill out the hunger for growth.

Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the Eternal. But it must be the Eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity; in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

A.B.—In the later stage of growth the disciple will feel himself opening out into the Eternal and realizing its beauty more and more. The wish to grow that he may be greater than his brother then becomes impossible for him. Before that stage is reached he is still in danger, because of the greatness of what he has already achieved. If he thinks of his growth as belonging to the separated self, and feels that he is himself becoming great, he is likely to fall. The only way to avoid that danger is to get rid of the wish to be great, to yield not to the desire for

growth for one's own sake. For when he is on the higher plane of human growth the disciple must be indifferent as to whether he grows or not, but must care only for the divine Life and the divine Will, and think only of the joy that that can bring to all who welcome it into their lives.

C.W.L.—We are to grow as the flower grows. Why? Because the flower grows unselfishly, absolutely altruistically. It grows not to display itself, but in order that its race may become greater by its death. It exists not for the sake of obtaining fruit for itself, because the fruit does not come until the flower is dead. Its entire growth is not for itself, but for other plants yet to come. So it is not by thinking of ourselves, but by striving for the good of others that we must press forward. The one great idea—that of helping in the work of the Logos—must draw us on. We must work for the attainment of all virtues and powers simply in order that we may be of more use in His service; by forgetting ourselves in unselfish work we grow as part of the whole and so “develop in the luxuriance of purity”.

CHAPTER 6

RULES 9 TO 12

C.W.L.—As far as we have gone in this book we have had the negative side of things before us. We have been told to kill out certain desires, but now we come to the positive side and learn what we may, and indeed must, desire. It may strike us as curious that we should be told to desire anything. Those who have studied the Indian books will remember that this is a point on which even the Upanishads differ. One Upanishad deprecates desire of all kinds; it argues that even to desire the right must be avoided, because we must be absolutely without any preference for this or for that. Another of those great scriptures directs that we must have the desire for progress, and says that when all other desires are conquered but the desire for the growth of the soul then there is for a man no more possibility of grief. We can reconcile those two statements if we take the first one to mean that if we have the desire to cooperate in even the higher work of the world as a separate self, thinking of ourselves and of the great things we can do, there is still a tinge of the idea of separation; but if we are able to think of ourselves as a part of humanity and as earning our advance on behalf of the humanity of which we are a part, and there is no longer any thought of self, then we have raised and purified our desire into an aspiration which is altogether desirable.

9. Desire only that which is within you.

For within you is the light of the world—the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere.

The thought expressed in this comment is common to all religions, though they put it in different ways. We get it in Christianity, but as a rule only the Christian mystics seem to have understood it. We have it in the beautiful verse:

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,

But not within thyself, thy soul shall be forlorn;

And on the cross of Calvary He hangeth but in vain,

Unless within thy heart it be set up again.

It is easy to see what that means. If a man does not believe in his own inherent divinity there is no hope of progress for him, because he would then have nothing within him on which he could work; nothing within which would lift him to anything higher; but if he knows that there is within him the wonderful Christ principle, then he recognizes that to unfold that divinity is only a question of time, and that his share in the work is to bring his outer vehicles into harmony, so that this inner glory may shine through. That is the meaning of the words: “Christ in you the hope of glory.” The hope that we have within us is this divine spark; the man who refuses to believe he has that within him places an insuperable obstacle in his own path, until he realizes his mistake.

It is indeed true that salvation can be gained only through the Christ—not a man who lived and died, but the Christ principle within us.³³ Within us is our saviour. This is the true Christian doctrine, in support of which we might quote many texts. All the ways in which the modern presentation of Christianity has—if one may put it so—gone wrong and made itself ridiculous, arise from the misunderstanding of that great idea. It should always be remembered that Christianity started with the beautiful Gnostic philosophy, but the ignorant among its followers refused to include in their scheme of religion anything which was beyond their comprehension, or anything which took years of study to learn. So they cast out the great Gnostic doctors as heretics. They applied to religion that unwise method of coming to a decision, the majority vote, with dire results.

Originally Christianity had a most beautiful statement of philosophy—the one philosophy that lies behind all religions. When the Gospel story, which was meant as an allegory, was degraded into a pseudo-historical account of the life of a man the religion became incomprehensible. Consequently all the texts which really refer to this higher side of things have been distorted, and of course, they will not fit in with the truth which lies behind the idea. Because Christianity has

forgotten much of its own original teaching, in these days it is customary to deny that it could ever have possessed any esoteric teaching. There is, however, sufficient evidence to convince the unprejudiced student that this higher knowledge did exist and was well known to the apostles and Church fathers. I cannot go fully into that at present; suffice it to remind the reader that Origen, the greatest of the Church fathers, asserts the existence of this secret teaching. He draws a distinction between “popular irrational faith” which leads to what he calls “somatic Christianity,” and the “spiritual Christianity”. By “somatic Christianity” he means that faith which is based on the Gospel history, and adds that it is a very good teaching for the masses, but that the spiritual Christian has the Gnosis, and therefore understands that all the incidents related therein—the birth, the baptism, the illumination, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension happened not once only in one place, but are steps in the spiritual life of every Christian man as he progresses.³⁴

Modern orthodoxy still bases its beliefs on the ignorant faith of the undeveloped multitude, and persists in disowning what now remains of its once magnificent heritage, in the shape of a few priceless fragments of the Gnostic teaching. Having lost the higher interpretation it makes a desperate effort to present the lower one in a comprehensible form, but that cannot be done. Students of Theosophy have the knowledge which enables them to interpret all these strange doctrines, and to see sense and beauty even in the crude utterances of the street preacher, because they understand what he would mean if only he knew a little more about his subject.

So what we are to desire is that which is within ourselves all the time; we shall not find it elsewhere. This very same idea was presented to us long ages ago in ancient Egypt. There they centred all their ideas of religion in “the hidden light” and “the hidden work”.³⁵ “The hidden light” was the Light that is in every man, and “the hidden work” was that which would enable him to manifest it, to bring it out in himself and then to help its development in others. That was the cardinal point of their creed—that the Light is there, however much it may be overlaid: and however hopeless it may appear, our work is to withdraw the veils and let the Light shine forth.

People often make the mistake of looking for it elsewhere. They say: “We want the Masters to help us; we want the Masters to raise us.” But I say, with the greatest reverence and respect, the Master cannot do that, the Logos Himself cannot do it. The Master can tell us how we may raise ourselves. The process is exactly analogous to the development of strength in the muscle. No one can do that for another, but if he has the knowledge he can tell him how to do it for himself, and that is all the help one can have from outside. Another person can tell us that he followed certain rules and exercises and found that they brought good results. The Master or the advanced pupil can also undoubtedly pour upon us force which makes our work easier, but that is all. It is the same all the way through. If we do not feel within us the power to respond to the beauty and glory of nature, that beauty and glory will pass us by. If we cannot see God within ourselves, it is useless to look for Him outside. When we have realized ourselves as part of Him, then will the God within respond to the God without, and we shall begin to be really useful in His work, which, after all, is our chief object in life.

10. Desire only that which is beyond you.

It is beyond you, because when you reach it you have lost yourself.

C.W.L.—That again is a statement which has its parallel in the Christian teaching. Christ Himself says quite plainly: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”³⁶ That happens over and over again at various stages. Consider the man of the world living his ordinary life, which is very largely a life in his emotions—in some cases in quite the lower emotions. As soon as he begins to understand the higher side of things he realizes that there is something higher and nobler than that. But he finds also that unless he is willing to put aside that lower and coarser life, he cannot really grasp the higher; he must lose the lower in order that he may gain the higher.

At the next step the man comes to live in his mind to a large extent. He realizes that to be swept about by tides of passion is, after all, ignoble, and that the mind should select and dominate the emotions and allow only such as it approves, for the sake of progress. Presently he gets beyond that, and finds that the mind also is not fully satisfactory, but that there is a higher life than that of

the mind. So gradually he begins to live in the ego, and to look at everything from that standpoint, which is a very great advance. But eventually even that is not enough for him. He realizes that there is a unity which lies beyond that stage, and so he begins to have some experience of the buddhic plane, and when he touches that nothing below it will ever again satisfy him.

Even that wonderful buddhic consciousness will, in its turn, be transcended. Beyond it is the consciousness of the atmic plane—nirvana. Above and beyond that again is the Monad. Those who are not yet Adepts see the Monad manifesting as a triple spirit on the plane below its own, but on the attainment of Adeptship the Monad and the ego will have become one, and they will be conscious as the Monad—the Divine Spark.

At each of these stages we feel that we have grasped the truth, and entered upon the real life, but presently we realize that there is something still higher, as high again as that was beyond our previous experience. All the way up we have to drop the lower before we can really gain the higher. That is to say, we have to lose the life we know before we can reach the higher life which we hope to attain. At each stage, as we reach it, we find that we have lost the self which we have known previously, because we have transcended it. We have lost it in finding a higher self.

It is written in the books that we become one with the Logos, merged in Him. Now, that final result we know nothing of, but this much some of us can say from our own personal experience, that many such mergings at different levels take place in the progress of the soul, and in each of them it seems that we become utterly one with the highest which then we can reach, yet never through all that do we lose anything of our true Self. When we rise, let us say, into the buddhic consciousness, and lose the causal body, we have lost the lower life, but that was never more than a very inadequate manifestation of a small part of us. All that we have gained through the long series of lives is still there. What we have shed is only the outer form in which our various qualities expressed themselves. We have the qualities still, on a higher level, shining forth with greater brilliancy, but the form in which they were cast has gone. Because people so constantly identify the life with the form, to many it seems that should they

lose that form there would be nothing left. On the contrary, nothing that has been gained is ever lost.

11. Desire only that which is unattainable.

It is unattainable, because it for ever recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the Flame.

C.W.L.—This does not mean that the higher life at which we aim is unattainable, but that when we have reached one height we always see another peak beyond. We shall draw ever nearer and nearer to the Divine, becoming one with Him at level after level, but the Flame, His true consciousness, we shall never touch. There are many stages on the way, and they grow more and more indescribable in their beauty as we rise. To whatever height we raise our consciousness, into whatever ineffable glories we can rise, we always see something more glorious still beyond. The Flame ever recedes. So far as any knowledge that we have goes, that chain of increasing glory and beauty is endless. Perhaps it is not much use speculating upon that. The Lord Buddha said long ago that it was profitless to speak of the beginning and the end, because “Veil after veil will lift, but there must be veil after veil behind.”

I wish I could bring home to every one, as utterly and as vividly as I myself feel it, this absolute certainty of the progress that lies ahead, of its wonderful glory and beauty and power and wisdom and love, how from step to step it rises and becomes ever more and more indescribable down here, and more and more glorious and beautiful and true above. The road to it lies through unselfishness. Only when we rise out of the lower self into the higher life, into the wider universal Self does the way open, and there is no limit to the glory and the splendour which man may then attain.

CHAPTER 7

RULES 13 TO 16

13. Desire power ardently.

C.W.L.—The comment of the Chohan on this is:

And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.

The power that makes us appear as nothing in the eyes of men is the power of self-effacement in the work—of doing it without wanting any credit for it. Many people want to be in the forefront. That is often regarded as merely a sort of harmless vanity, but it means that they have not yet forgotten the lower self.

The disciple does not seek credit for anything he does; he seeks to get the work done and so long as it is done he cares not at all whether he or somebody else has the credit for having done it. If he has to put himself forward and draw people round him he does so, but not because he wants the credit of it. He knows it is always far better to keep in the background if possible.

It is always best not to think of results at all, but to do the best we can and forget ourselves. All occult teaching leads back to that one fundamental fact—forget the lower self and get to work. Some people are constantly thinking of their own progress. It is at least better to think of making spiritual progress than to desire worldly wealth, but it is still selfishness, only in a more refined form. My own experience would lead me to say that the very best way to get on is to forget all about one's own progress and simply devote oneself to the Master's work.³⁷ If one does that the rest will follow. It is the old truth stated in the Gospel: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."³⁸ That is utterly true; these other things come. When we are not looking for progress we suddenly find that we have really made some, and that also is well.

When a man first sees what life in the causal body is really like he also

realizes how very useful he could be at that level, how many lines there are along which his activity could pour itself out, and he may well be disposed to ask: "Is it not better that I should do this new and splendid work which I see opening before me?" I have myself made a practice of seeking the advice or wish of the Master whenever what seemed to be grand opportunities opened up, and yet there was a possibility that it might be even better still to renounce them. I would say: "Master, what do you wish me to do?" Often His reply would be: "It is a matter for you to decide." Then one can only use one's own best judgment. No rule can be laid down in such cases. I should still be disposed to try the higher; but it must be remembered that we are cautioned again and again: "Do not let desire for your own development stand in the way of any useful work that you can do. Your development will come in due course." I have always followed that plan, and I think-that it is the safest attitude.

Through the work done in that spirit of self-forgetful-ness we gain the power which shall make us appear as nothing in the eyes of men. Let us, if necessary, welcome humiliation because it all helps to put the personality out of sight and that is what is most needed. When opportunities come, we must take them, but always we should think: "It is not my work; it is the Master's work." It does not matter which of those who follow the Master has the privilege of doing any particular piece Of work for Him. Our business is to watch that we may lose no opportunity of doing any part of His work.

We should understand that there is nothing small or great in His work, but that anything, however small, done and offered to Him is as important in His sight as that which is a far greater achievement in the world's eyes. We are a little apt to want to do what we think is the greater work. That is because we do not see that all parts of the\work are equally necessary. Realize for a moment how He must look down upon the whole from His stupendous elevation of wider power and knowledge. All these pieces of work will look very tiny, but all fit into their places.

All the problems of life which seem complex, if not incomprehensible, down here, become far simpler when looked at from a higher plane. The same thing is true of much lower levels. When one examines microscopic creatures such as

live in a drop of water one finds complex and beautiful forms of life. The further one goes into these infinitely small matters the more one discovers their amazing complexity. One wonders how even to the Deity Himself these worlds could possibly be *a*, simple thing, and yet they are, for when we look from even such higher points of view as we are able to gain, we can see that it is the permutations and combinations of the seven forces of the One Life which produce all these wonderful results. The factors involved in the production are few and simple; therefore the higher one rises the more one can understand, and that which down here seems impossible to grasp proves quite within reach when viewed from higher levels.

We may reverently and reasonably assume, I think, that the Logos can hold the whole of His system simultaneously in His mind, and without any difficulty see what is being done in every remotest ramification of it. The whole system in all its multiplicity must be immediately self-evident—something one could put down on a sheet of foolscap, as it were. To the Manu and Bodhi-sattva the work of moulding and guiding the races of men, which seems to us so complex and even confused, must be quite clear and straightforward.

Our business is to serve the Master in our small sphere. The detail is our care, not His. What He wants is that the whole work shall go well, and anything that we can do to make it do so is our share in it. Those who stand nearer to Him in thought and have by such association grown somewhat into His attitude in regard to it, are always eager to do anything, however simple, which may seem of use. We can write a little letter, perhaps, which will change the current of a man's life, or we may deliver a lecture and try to change the opinion of some hundreds of people, and not succeed; the little letter is just as real a piece of work. There may be some of us who are so busy that we cannot do anything personally. In that case we are probably earning money, and so perhaps we could give some money to enable others to do that work. There are a great many little ways in which every one can work. It is no use waiting for a big opportunity with the idea that when it comes we shall be ready to take it. We are very much more likely to be ready if we get ourselves into the habit of always doing the little things that we can do now.

A man who works without any regard to his own interests and is always willing to remain in the background is inevitably misunderstood by the world. People understand and admire a man of strong will, who sets out to make a name for himself, to make an impression, and pushes his way to the front. Such a man has succeeded, from their point of view; he has shown the world that he is a strong man. The occultist may be in reality much more forceful, but he would not show his power in that way. He seeks generally to efface himself. He realizes that one of the greatest qualifications is to know when to get out of the way, to know when to let the divine power do its work without spoiling and hindering it by putting himself in the way of it. It seems so simple, and yet the fact that there are hundreds of workers who cannot do it shows that it is really a great difficulty.

The man of the world is apt to regard the occultist as a person of no particular will-power, as one who is always ready to give way. So he is, as regards the minor details of life. He lets others have their way in things which do not matter, and is even willing to be managed up to a certain point; but when it comes to a question of principle, he takes a firm stand. He cares nothing about what people say. People who talk and speculate about others are wrong in nine cases out of ten, so what does it matter what they happen to think about us? As Tennyson says, "Let them rave." Of course, I do not mean that we should utterly ignore all worldly conventions. In the early days some of our members felt that it was right to appear different from other people in the matter of wearing evening dress, and so on. We need not outrage the customs of society in this way. Moreover, it seems to me that if we wish to recommend our beliefs we must avoid offending the world unnecessarily. It is not good policy to set ourselves violently against other people's ideas. When there comes a point in which no principle is involved we must give way, merely because there is no sense in flying in the face of the usages of the world.

In all matters of principle we must take a firm stand. For example, strict vegetarianism is with us a principle, because we believe it to be best in every way, not only for ourselves but for all the world around us. It is a little inconvenient when we go out to dinner or when we are travelling, but we let such trifling inconveniences pass, and keep to our own point of view. But in a vast number of other things, which really do not matter, it saves trouble to yield

to the ordinary customs of the time. As regards our dress—to take another instance. The dress of modern man is peculiarly ugly, uncomfortable and unhealthy, but it saves trouble to adopt it. If we set ourselves against it, however much more rational, aesthetic and beautiful our costume might be, we should attract unwelcome attention, and should probably be regarded as more or less insane. It is not worth while. It is better not to make ourselves unduly conspicuous by opposing things which do not matter. But when a principle is involved we must hold steadily to what we think is right.³⁹

If we could get into an absolutely impersonal attitude about all work it would help us very much. Ruskin speaks of that with regard to art; he says that while self-praise and conceit are vulgar beyond words, undue self-depreciation is only another form of vulgarity. We should aim at the condition of mind in which we are able to view the work from the outside, and to say: “Be it mine or yours, or whose else it may, this also is well.” We must be able to praise a good piece of work when we see it, not because it is ours or our friends ‘, or because it bears a great name, but just because it is good, putting aside absolutely the question of who did it. I am afraid we do not always do this. Our reason for quoting something is not always because it is fine and beautiful, but because Madame Blavatsky said it or Dr. Besant wrote it.

There is, however, a side to that which is quite right and true. When people meet with a statement about something which they do not know and cannot verify for themselves, it is a matter of importance to them who said it. They may say: “Dr. Besant makes this statement; I have great reason to believe that she knows all about this matter, consequently I accept her statement.” After all, that is no more than we do in regard to science. There are many facts in science which we have no means of proving for ourselves, but because certain eminent men have investigated these subjects and have come to certain conclusions we accept them. But when we consider a beautiful ethical statement, it does not matter whether it comes from the *Bible* or the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Koran* or the *Vedas*; we should accept it for its worth. It is then a question of the felicity of the expression and the beauty of the idea.

Just as we accept things, or try to do so, for what they are worth, so we must

try to value our own work at what it is worth, and not think that, because we have done it, it must necessarily be well done. Most men who can do anything very well know also the imperfections of their work. When a thing is good we should gladly admit that it is so; when we see faults in our own or in anyone else's work we should not hesitate to say: "I do not agree; I think so-and-so might be better done." It is well to get into the attitude of mind that does not care whence a thing comes if it is a good thing, and also does not hesitate to put aside the evil, even when it comes from oneself.

That is difficult, truly, because when that is perfectly done it means that the man is looking down from the ego upon this lower world. Even the use of the lower mind will give much of that power, although we get it perfectly only in the causal body. The lower mind can exercise discrimination, and if we use it from the higher standpoint and do not allow it to be clouded by personal feeling, it is a very fine and beautiful thing when fully developed. We are rather proud of our intellectual development in this fifth sub-race of the fifth root race, which emphasizes this discriminating work of the lower mind, but what we call intellect is only a very small thing as compared with that which is to develop in the course of the next round, which will be that really devoted to intellect. We are proud of the achievements of the lower mind, and not without a certain amount of reason; it has done wonderful work in science and invention. But only those who are able to look forward into the future and have also seen the Masters, who are men of the future, realize what we shall be perhaps in the course of a few thousands of years. I can bear witness that our highest intellectual activity now is but child's play compared to what it will be in the future, so it is clear that there is a splendid vista opening before us.

What the ordinary person calls his mind is exclusively the lowest part of it. In his mind there are four subdivisions, consisting of matter of the seventh, sixth, fifth and fourth sub-planes of the mental plane respectively, but practically he is using matter of the lowest or seventh sub-plane only. That is very near to the astral plane; therefore all his thoughts are coloured by reflections from the astral world, and so they are much mixed with emotion, feelings and desires. Very few people can deal with the sixth sub-plane as yet. Our great scientific men certainly use it a good deal, but unfortunately they often mingle with it the

matter of the lowest sub-plane and then they become jealous of other people's discoveries and inventions. If they can rise to the fifth sub-plane they are already getting much more free from the possibility of astral entanglement. If they can raise themselves to the fourth sub-plane, which is the highest part of the mental body, they are then in the very middle of the mental plane, and next to them is the causal body. They are then far away from the possibility of having their thoughts affected by astral vibrations.

We can understand how these things work. A vibration is most easily received by that which is in tune with it. If a man feels very angry he is liable to stir up the emotion of anger in the astral bodies of other people around him. That will also disturb their lower thought; but it will not affect their higher thought, if they have any—most people have not as yet. One of the things we as students are trying to do in our thought and meditation is to awaken the higher parts of the mental body and bring them into working order. Those who meditate regularly on the Masters and on the things connected with Them, must be using the higher part of the mental body to some extent, and the more it is used, the more will our thought be unaffected by desires, passions and emotions. But since most people do not get so far as that, the great mass of thought in the world is very much coloured by desire, and most thought-forms that we see are loaded with astral as well as with mental matter.

We all live much too close together, with the consequence that even while other people may not be thinking of us they affect us. Of course we in turn affect them, and we should always definitely try to affect them for good. If we set ourselves to be a centre of uttermost peace and love we shall very greatly help all those around us, but while we are centres of desire and emotion and selfish feeling we make development impossible not only for ourselves but for all those near to us, and that is a very serious matter. Every aspirant ought to take to heart the fact that he is preventing the progress of others if he gives way to this personal desire.

The power of self-effacement is impossible of attainment until we have utterly weeded out all personal desire. We talk of our devotion to our work and to the Masters; surely that is not too much to do for Their sake. Even if a very

great effort is necessary we ought to be willing to make it for the sake of these Great Ones who have done so much for us, through whom all the Theosophical teaching has come to us. It is not a question of affording Them gratification by doing these things—though surely They cannot but be pleased to see the progress of those whom They are trying to help—but it is also common sense. If we want to help in evolution, the first and most necessary thing to do is to take ourselves in hand. We must gain that control over the lower self which makes us appear as nothing in the eyes of men. Be it so; many of the great forces are working unseen. We may be among those forces, and as such we can afford to appear insignificant in the sight of the world.

14. Desire peace fervently. The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons.

C.W.L.—This short aphorism is closely connected with the foregoing one. The power which we are told to desire leads to peace; unless we have power over self we can have no peace.

Only when we have gained peace can we give it to others; to be able to do that is surely one of the greatest and most beautiful of powers. Most people's lives are full of worry and anxiety, of jealousy and envy. All the -time they are just a swirl not only of emotions, but also of unsatisfied desires. Many of those who take up the study of occultism, that is, the study of the reality which lies behind, still expect to be able to go on living that kind of life. Even some of those who are supposed to have been students of occultism for years, and are trying to draw nearer to the Masters, apparently cannot yet give up their desires. They make no serious attempt to get rid of all their foolish and disturbing emotions, and then they wonder why they do not make progress and why others seem to pass on in front of them. How can they expect to advance until they have left all these things behind them? Until we are quite free from such disturbances it is absolutely impossible to make any real higher progress. If we want to set up communications with the Master, we must have perfect peace within.

It is said that struggle is a necessity for progress. It is certainly true that there

is a long stage in the evolution of the soul when it is in a constant state of struggle and strife. On looking back into the past we can see that progress was then more rapid in a life of storm and stress than when the conditions were easier. In that rough-hewing of the character all the troubles and difficulties which men encounter and the opposition which comes in their way no doubt teach them something; they learn their lessons from them. But at the higher stage at which the disciple has arrived that state of struggle is no longer of value. For growth of the higher kind, perfect peace is necessary. A Master once wrote: "The law of the survival of the fittest is the law for the evolution of the brute; but the law of sacrifice is the law of the evolution of man." Many people think they will get peace when their mad desires are satisfied, but they find by experience that it is not so. They then begin to think what a sad thing it is that they have yielded to them, and they realize that they ought to have risen above them. There is no peace to be gained by the satisfaction of desire. Peace is to be attained in one way only: by putting aside the lower desires and developing the power which makes us "as nothing in the eyes of men."

It is said here that the holy flower grows upon the still lagoons. It is only in still water that the lotus can unfold itself to its best; it cannot do so if it is buffeted about by wind and storm. It is only in peace that the soul can unfold. Storms of passion and desire are just like storms that beat down the flowers on the physical plane. All developments of the higher kind are like very delicate flowers, and if they are subjected to violent storms of passion they become crushed out, and disappear. People who are always in royal rages, who constantly brood over all kinds of foolish personal matters, who are always thinking about their own feelings and are filled with jealousy and envy of others, cannot develop all the fine and delicate fronds and tendrils that mean progress.

People in general have very little scientific idea of what occult progress, real evolution, means. Their methods of education alone show that they do not understand it. There is a certain amount of the evolution through which we have gone—up to about the level of the savage and a little higher than that—which we may consider as fairly definitely established; that is to say, we could not very well fall back below that point under any circumstances. But the growth that comes beyond that—beyond the almost animal part, or at any rate the lower and

emotional part, of man—is a question of exceedingly delicate development of many sorts. The things which differentiate the highly cultured and artistic person from the quite coarse and undeveloped person are all of a very subtle nature—matters of long and slow and careful growth; they are tender shoots of great promise, which have hardly as yet blossomed forth, and have certainly not yet reached what they shall be in the future. The first blast of unfavourable conditions destroys that finer growth. The rough and tumble of modern education, in which children are frightened and sometimes even ill-treated, has the effect of crushing out all the delicate bloom of culture and refinement which souls that have come into these child bodies may have been acquiring for a very long time past—perhaps for twenty or thirty lives. In consequence the children become very much like primitive savages. They are often full of fear and hatred and a great sense of abiding injustice, and all the finer development which really marks the difference between a later and, an earlier sub-race is swept away.

People do not in the least realize what they are doing when they destroy these things, as they so often do. I constantly see boys and girls who belong perhaps to ordinary parents, but are themselves quite promising; if they were taken in hand and brought along in the right way, they would make distinct progress in this life. But their surroundings are utterly unsuited for such development and all the finer growth is lopped off and beaten back, and they go through life as quite ordinary people. I have seen cases where the same thing happened over and over again in as many as perhaps fifteen or twenty lives; the progress that might have been made in the first case was not made until the twentieth. Probably the accumulated karma of living a little better in a quiet way in each of those lives made it necessary at last that the ego should be given better surroundings, and then he got his opportunity. But so far as we can see that same development could just as well have been made twenty lives before, if only the environment had been a little better.

It is a sad thing for the people who repress those delicate touches. I suppose there is no greater crime than the repression of those who are trying to make progress. That is one of the things which the Christ meant when He spoke of the sin against the Holy Ghost which should not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come. That word “forgiven” is, however, a mistranslation—“to

abandon”, “to put aside”, gives a better idea of the meaning. What is meant is perfectly clear. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the repression of the divine spirit in man; it produces a karmic result which could not be put right in this dispensation—neither in this world-period, nor perhaps in the next, so serious is it.

Many people commit this crime against themselves as well as against their children. They do not give the higher part of themselves an opportunity to grow. Children are often able to see nature-spirits and other beautiful things which older people cannot see. There is no reason why the older people should not see them also, if their sensitiveness had not been destroyed by the sort of life into which they have so often been plunged. Sometimes later on in life with great difficulty they begin to recover the power, not only of clairvoyance, but also the power to appreciate all that is artistic and beautiful, all the subtle shades of feeling and perception that mean culture and real education.

The things which affect the higher progress are all exceedingly delicate—so carefully, so exactly balanced, that the least touch in the wrong direction will throw them back for weeks and months. It is possible to throw back the growth of months in a single day. Therefore very much depends upon surroundings. One cannot always calculate upon obtaining again the same surroundings, so the occultist always strives to make the utmost use of whatever conditions he has at any time, while he is also watchful that none of them shall drag him down. One of the *Puranas* says:

Without a body no one attains the object of the soul; therefore should one take care of his body as a treasure, and perform good deeds. A village or a field or possessions or a house, or good and bad pieces of karma may be obtained again—but this body never again.⁴⁰

People sometimes say: I cannot do much in this life; I shall try what I can do in the next.” It is always well to keep before us the idea of the next life and what we can do in it, but it is not safe to depend too much on that, because the karma behind each person is sure to be more or less mixed and it sometimes asserts itself in waves. We may have karma at a certain time which will give us good surroundings. It does not follow that in the next life we shall have conditions

equally good. On the whole the probabilities are that our karma will flow on in much the same groove, but on the other hand there might be a block of unpleasant karma which the karmic authorities do not think the man strong enough to bear this time, and in the next life they might let that loose upon him, so that he might not get such good opportunities.

It is eminently wise to take all the opportunities available in this life. If we do that, and thus show the Lords of Karma that we are taking advantage of them, that will seriously influence the incidence of karma upon us in the next life. It will constitute a sort of claim for good surroundings. It is not wise because we have many opportunities in this life, to assume that we shall have them again in our next life. We may or we may not. I do not like to hear people say: "I am too old to do anything in this life." If we make good use of what we have, and advance ourselves as far as possible, we create a condition of affairs in which it would be difficult for the karmic deities not to give us opportunities again; we can make such karma along a particular line that we may take the kingdom of heaven by storm—we can force the Lords of Karma to so arrange our karma that the opportunity must come because the causes we have set in motion cannot work themselves out except along a similar line. Most assuredly it is well to make full use of every good opportunity that comes to us, lest by chance by neglecting it we might make a difference of a few thousand years in our evolution.

A few thousand years are as nothing in the long life of the soul, but we do not want to be delayed in that way. In the *Lives of Alcyone* we find, for example, the case of one young man who had remarkably good opportunities in connection with one, of the great Masters in a temple in Egypt.

He foolishly wasted his time, threw away his opportunities and lost them. The Master said then that He would always be ready to take him again when he came back. It is only in this life, six thousand years later, that he has come back. That carelessness lost him a good deal of time. Think of what might have been done in that six thousand years, if he had taken the offer. At that time the Master who made it had not yet attained Adeptship. Certainly if the pupil had accepted, he might have now been very far on the road to Adeptship himself. It cannot be a

matter of indifference whether a man takes such a step as that six thousand years earlier or later. The man who took it so much earlier would have all the work of intervening years on the very highest levels to his credit—it seems impossible that it can be the same thing.

I do not know how far in the counsels of the Eternal what we call time matters. There is a point of view to which one may rise in which past and present and future all seem one eternal now, but even in that eternal now there are some things which are more opened and others which are less opened, and therefore the acceptance or the neglect of an opportunity must make a difference, though there may be some way in which a mistake of that kind may be adjusted in the future, in which somehow the man's regret that he did not succeed may be a force enabling him to work doubly well to try to overtake the past. One can only guess at it, only attempt to imagine how such a thing would work; but there is very distinct reason to suppose that there will be a position in which the past can be rectified.

It envisages itself on higher levels in a way something like this. We say the past was so-and-so and we cannot alter it. That was how it was when we were at it. How do we know what it is now that we have passed away from it? That past still exists; it is the present to someone else somewhere. That idea is difficult to understand. On the physical plane, we know that we see an object; we know of it by the light which comes from it. The light which showed us something yesterday is now many millions of miles away, and it is now showing that same thing far away; our yesterday may be the present for someone else as far as the message of that light is concerned. Whether that analogy holds good I do not know, but something like that seems to be true. The past is somehow progressing.

Looking down from the higher plane on the life down here is something like standing on a mountain and watching a railway train moving in the valley below. The train has passed certain points as far as the people in it are concerned. The points are passed, but they are still there. The trees and animals they saw at those points are still alive. The past is still active, but because they are not in it any more most people imagine that their share in it is done with. I am not sure of

that. I do not think that it is very profitable to try to understand that point, because one cannot make any coherent sense of it down here. But I believe that the past is not irrevocable, and that when we in our turn reach the stage where we can look down upon it all, it will appear very much better than our present memory of it would indicate, because somehow all that past also is moving onward as part of the divine reality of things, and that also will become glorified and will blossom out into what it should have been—I cannot pretend to say how. Still the idea is a stimulating one—the possibility that the things which we have failed to do, the mistakes which we have made, may not be so in the end, though they are so to us now. It is an idea which is difficult to understand down here, but I am sure there is some truth behind it.

15. Desire possessions above all.

But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true Self.

C.W.L.—The possessions which we are to desire are qualities which shall be of use to all humanity. Every victory we gain is to be gained for humanity, not for ourselves. The desire to possess must be one to possess with all others—a desire that all shall share the same inheritance. That is the old story of impersonality in another form. We see that beautifully illustrated in the lives of the Masters. I remember long ago feeling considerable wonder as to how it could be that the Masters appear without karma. They are even spoken of in some of the sacred books of the East as having risen above karma. I could not understand it, because karma is a law just as much as gravitation is. We might rise as far as the sun itself, but we should not get beyond gravitation; on the contrary we should feel it very much more strongly. It seemed to me just as impossible to escape from the law of cause and effect, since under its operation every person receives according to what he does. If the great Masters are all the time doing good on a scale which we cannot in the least hope to equal, and yet They make no karma, what then becomes of the stupendous result of all Their outpourings

of energy?

Presently, after studying the problem, we began to see how it worked. If I describe what karma looks like clairvoyantly, it will perhaps help to make the matter more intelligible. The appearance of the working of the law of karma on higher planes is something as follows. Every man is the centre of an incredibly vast series of concentric spheres—some of them quite near, others reaching to a prodigious distance into the far empyrean. Every thought or word or action, whether good or bad, selfish or unselfish, sends out a stream of force which rushes towards the surfaces of these spheres. This force strikes the interior surface of one or other of the spheres at right angles to it, and is reflected back to the point from which it came. From which sphere it is reflected seems to depend upon the character of the force, and this also regulates the time of its return. The force which is generated by some actions strikes a sphere which is comparatively near at hand and flies back again very quickly, while other forces rush on almost to infinity and return only after many lives—why we cannot tell. All we know is that in any case they inevitably return, and they can return nowhere but to the centre from which they came forth.

All these forces thrown out from the man must recoil upon him so long as he projects them from himself in that way. However, every man has an interior connection with the Deity which is not through any of these concentric spheres, but through the centre itself. By turning within he can reach the Logos himself, and so long as he sends all the force of his thought and desire in that way, it is not reflected back to him at all, but goes to reinforce the great outwelling of divine power which the Deity is always sending through His universe, by which He keeps it alive. His force wells up in the centre; it does not come from without. If we look at a number of physical atoms clairvoyantly we shall see some drawing in force and others pouring it out. They must receive that force from somewhere. It does not go in at one side and out at the other; it wells up in the centre apparently from nowhere but is in reality coming from some higher dimension which we cannot see. Thus the communication with God lies in the very heart of things, and the man who turns his eyes always upon the Deity, and thinks only of Him in the work that he is doing, pours all his force along that line. It disappears so far as he is concerned but, as I said before, goes to reinforce

the divine strength which is always being outpoured everywhere. There is no personal result for the man on lower planes, but with every such effort he draws nearer to the divine Truth within him—becomes a better and fuller expression of it and so it would not be true to say that he obtains no result. In a universe of law nothing could be without result, but there is no outward result such as would bring him back to earth.

That, I think, is what is meant when it is said that the Great Ones escape from the law of karma. They spend the whole of Their mighty spiritual force upon doing good in the name of humanity and as units of humanity, and so They escape from the binding of the law. “Whatever result there is comes to humanity, not to Them. The karma of all the glorious actions of the Master is not held back that He may receive the result; it goes to humanity as a whole.

It is in that spirit of impersonality that we also should perform action. If we do anything, even a good action, thinking: “I am doing this; I want the credit of this,” or even if we do not think of receiving the credit for it, but only think: “am doing this,” like the Pharisees of old, we shall have our reward. The result will come back to the personal self, and it will bind us back to earth just as surely as though it were an evil result. But if we have forgotten the personal self altogether and are acting merely as part of humanity, it is to the humanity of which each is a part that the result of the action will come. The more truly we can act without thought of self the nearer we shall be drawing to the divine heart of things. That is how the Logos Himself looks upon everything. There could be no thought of self for Him; He acts always for the good of the whole and as representing the whole. If we act thinking only of Him, then the result will flow out in His divine force and will not come to us as anything that will bind, but rather as something which will make us a greater and greater expression of Him, and will raise us more and more into the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

CHAPTER 8

RULES 17 TO 19

17. Seek out the way.

C.W.L.—The three short aphorisms to which we have now come are closely intertwined, and both in the comment by the Chohan and the notes by the Master Hilarion they are practically taken together. For this reason it is hardly possible to arrange them in separate groups as has been done hitherto, and so I shall take them in the order in which they appear in the book. It is evident that we have come to a very important part of the teaching, because there is a longer comment from each of these Great Ones than on any of the previous sentences.

The Master Hilarion's note to the seventeenth rule begins as follows:

These four words seem, perhaps, too slight to stand alone. The disciple may say: "Should I study these thoughts at all did I not seek out the way?" Yet do not pass on hastily. Pause and consider awhile. Is it the way you desire, or is it that there is a dim perspective in your visions of great heights to be scaled by yourself, of a great future for you to compass? Be warned. The way is to be sought for its own sake, not with regard to your feet that shall tread it.

The spirit in which we should approach the Path is beautifully expressed in these words. All the way through the personality must be put aside, and one must work from the point of view of the Higher Self. To do that is to seek the way. We have already seen that even when the man has left ordinary ambition behind, he finds it again and again in subtler forms. His ambition now is to reach a higher level; he has made up his mind to desire no longer *anything* for the personal self, to put whatever power he has *entirely* at the service of the Great White Lodge. He thinks only of being a good instrument, of bringing himself into such a position in relation to the Master that His forces may play through him with as little hindrance as possible.

All forces coming down from higher planes naturally meet with great

constriction when they come to work on a lower plane. The force which comes through any disciple can never be more than a very small part of the influence which some Great One may send through him. That must be so by the very nature of the case, but one who makes himself, with all the imperfections that naturally cling to us on the physical plane, as perfect an instrument as possible for the Master's force, can do very useful work. The object of the disciple is to let as much as possible of that force flow through him, and to discolour it as little as he can.

The force is poured through him in order that he may disseminate it, but he is not expected to be a mere machine in its distribution. He does lend to it something of himself, something of his own colouring; that is intended and expected, but it must be in perfect harmony with the Master's attitude and feeling. That is possible because the pupil becomes one with the Master in a very wonderful way, as I have explained in *The Masters and the Path*.⁴¹ (It is not only that all that is in the consciousness of the pupil is also in the consciousness of the Master, but that everything that takes place in the presence of the pupil is also in the Master's consciousness—not necessarily when it is happening, unless He chooses, but quite certainly within His memory. If the Master happens to be busily engaged in some of His higher work for the moment, it does not necessarily follow that He is attending to a conversation which the pupil is carrying on at the time; but we have startling evidence that sometimes He may be, because occasionally He interjects a thought or a remark, and corrects something that is being said.

As I have explained elsewhere, any feeling which the pupil allows himself to have will react upon the Master; if it were such a feeling as annoyance or anger, the Master would shut it out in a moment; naturally the pupil does not want to give Him the trouble of doing that, though, perhaps, if one may say it with all reverence, it is not a very great trouble. Possibly the Master does this very quickly, in a single thought, but yet one does not wish to cause even that trifling interruption of His work.

Naturally also the pupil wants to avoid the shutting off of himself which necessarily happens at the same time: therefore he tries, as far as he may, to

prevent any undesirable thought or feeling from entering his consciousness. He would keep away from a noisy crowd or from any place with exceedingly bad magnetism, unless he had to go there to do the Master's work. In that case he would put a shell round himself and see that no unpleasantness reached the Master. Still, purely physical things in the consciousness of the pupil are also in the consciousness of the Master. If, for example, the pupil is startled by a sudden sound, it gives him a little shock. That little shock is communicated to the Master. He cares nothing for it; He puts it aside, but the fact remains that it is communicated, and that shows how close is the tie. A pupil who is wise tries to avoid any kind of shock; he is generally rather a gentle and quiet sort of person, for that reason.

It is one of the distinguishing marks of the pupil that he never forgets his Master, or the presence of his Master. So he does not allow within himself, if he can help it, except by inadvertence, any thought or feeling that he does not want recorded in the Master's thought or feeling, and he even tries to avoid, as far as may be, exterior disturbances which might also be of a kind that would cause him to be temporarily shut off.

The delight to the pupil of that close union with the Master is intense. The joy of being in touch with so glorious an intelligence, with such splendid emotions, or rather powers—because such things as devotion, love and sympathy, in a Master cannot be called emotions; they are great powers—is wonderful, beautiful beyond words. The more the pupil lays himself open to those higher influences the more do they flow into him, and the more does he become like the Master whom he serves. It is a matter of steady growth, but this growth is much helped by the constant flow of force between the Master and the pupil.

This union is a kind of foretaste on a lower scale of the higher unity that comes when the buddhic consciousness is fully developed; but short of that development I think there is nothing so close as the relation between pupil and Master. Those who want to be in the privileged position of a pupil should already live as far as they can in the way they will feel it incumbent upon them to live when they do become pupils. The more we can bring that general calmness and serenity of action, feeling and thought into our lives, the more

nearly we shall be fit for the closer association when it comes. Unquestionably the way to deserve such a privilege is to live as though we had it even already. I know people often think that the small external things do not matter. They sometimes say: "Oh, perhaps such-and-such a thing keeps one back in evolution, but it cannot matter very much, it is such a small thing." I have heard that said about meat-eating and smoking. But we are not in a position where we can afford to neglect the slightest thing that is of help. The undertaking before us is one of considerable magnitude, and it is no easy task. That being so, it is not the part of the wise man to neglect even the smallest help. And these things are not small in reality. The Master further says, in His note:

There is a correspondence between this rule and the seventeenth of the second series. When after ages of struggle and many victories the final battle is won, the final secret demanded, then you are prepared for a further path.

The seventeenth rule in the second part of the book, to which the Master refers, runs thus: "Enquire of the inmost, the One, of its final secret, which it holds for you through the ages." That means that just as now we must seek out the Higher Self, when we have reached that higher level we must seek out the one, the Monad. The final secret is always how to do more and higher work. Many persons seem to think that rather a dreary prospect. There are large numbers of people whose great desire is rest; there is so much strain and stress and over-work all about us that they look forward to complete rest. That is a point of view which belongs exclusively to the physical body. On higher planes we are never tired.⁴² () I have known people who have remained in the astral world for a number of years waiting for a body which the Master thought suitable. In one case a man had to wait twenty-five years, in another, twenty. Both were devoting themselves absolutely without cessation to the Master's work for the whole of that time. Certainly neither of them had the slightest sense of fatigue, nor was he in any way less eager to work at the end of that time. So if there be such a thing as fatigue on the astral plane, it must be far removed beyond any time with which we have to deal.

When the final secret of this great lesson is told, in it is opened the mystery of the new way—a path which leads out of all human experience, and which is

utterly beyond human perception or imagination. At each of these points it is needful to pause long and consider well. At each of these points it is necessary to be sure that the way is chosen for its own sake. The way and the truth come first, then follows the life.

A.B.—When the liberated soul has completed the stages of progress to Arhatship, and is passing onward to the first of the great Initiations beyond, he makes a choice from a variety of paths open to him. They are of the sacred number of seven—he has seven ways of choice before him.⁴³ () People often say that at that point there can be only one possibility—that a man *must* choose to be a Master—the underlying idea being that if he decides rightly he will choose to return to help the world. Such a decision recommends itself when humanity itself is thought of, but I must remind you that this is a hasty conclusion. A hint is thrown out as to the nature of the choice, where the note says: “At each of these points it is necessary to be sure that the way is chosen for its own sake.” The words “own sake” give the key. The choice is to be made for the sake of the way only. The fact that there are more ways than one, ought to prevent our laying down the law as to our choice; still more should it stop any person from using the words: “If he chooses rightly,” as if any one could choose wrongly when the soul is liberated.

Yet an idea—a very subtle one—runs through us, that we can dictate the choice. We sometimes find ourselves choosing for our own future—for the far-off future—what to be and what to do; and that is really the lower consciousness choosing for the higher. This subtle tendency runs through our life. Part of our consciousness feels itself as the ‘I’, and naturally inclines to choose the path of the future as it looks at it, forgetting that it is thereby choosing for the higher consciousness, in whose hands alone the choice really lies. Making up your minds as to what is to be done at the close of the Arhat stage, would be like a child choosing his profession in life. His selection, not being guided by knowledge, would certainly not be one that his mature judgment would approve. A young child can have no choice as to his career in the future, and it is the same in these matters. The higher ego will choose, without regard to the lower; indeed, the lower will perish before the choice comes. All that is important to put before the lower, then, is the idea of service—of its being made an instrument to serve.

Unless it does this it becomes an obstacle to the higher consciousness. Remember it can throw obstacles in the way of that consciousness; as has often been said, it crucifies the higher ego.

Another thing to remember is that we cannot judge of any stage of consciousness that we have not experienced, and of which we do not know the relative value. When thinking of a higher condition of consciousness that you have not experienced, there is no possibility of your being able to form any judgment about it. When you reach that state the universe alters for you, bringing about a change in your nature, and causing you to know how such consciousness can act. You must experience this change before you can know. So in forming any opinion as to a path in the future, it is a case of judging a state of consciousness of which you have no knowledge, and your judgment is worthless.

Looking at it from a higher standpoint, there is but one thing that decides our choice, and that is the necessity of the world at the time. Where a place is empty, where help is needed—there are the things which decide the choice. Out of the different ways before him, the purified soul will go where help is wanted. Self-determined, he takes that course where help is needed by the Hierarchy, for the expression of the Will of the Logos. I was told by a Great One that it was a blunder to think that choice could be made at all down here; that the choice is always made to give the help which is wanted for the expression of the Will of the Logos.

One group of workers stands for help in the world. Only when re-inforcement is needed amongst Them, only when a channel is wanted, would the choice turn to the world's work. I have emphasized this because it was given as a warning to myself, not to let my thoughts turn from useful activity to other lines of work not yet given us to do. In the *Bhagavad Gita* we are warned that the dharma of another is full of danger—our work lies where our dharma lies.

C.W.L.—The path which leads out of all human experience is the path of the Adept, which opens up before Him with a choice of seven ways, as we have already seen. I have heard many members say: “Oh, of course there is no question at all about what we should choose; we should remain to serve

humanity.” It is wiser not to waste our strength in such decisions, because as a matter of fact we do not know anything about it. It is like a little boy making up his mind what he will do when he is a man. He wants to be a pirate or an engine-driver. We know as little now about the conditions that will determine our choice as the little child does of those which will determine his future. No one of the seven paths can possibly be in itself more desirable than another, though they all lead to work of different kinds.

Quite surely the idea that will be most prominent when the time of choice comes will be: “Where can I be of most use?” What we might perhaps safely prophesy of our action is that we shall say: “Here am I, Lord; send me wherever help is most wanted.” But even so it may well be that as we unfold we shall develop some special aptitude for one or other of these lines, and thus it will be obviously best for the whole system that we should be used in the line where we can do most good.

Whenever a higher level of consciousness is reached, our view of the world is so much widened that it becomes an entirely new thing to us. When we reach Adeptship we shall have an immeasurably wider horizon. We shall understand exactly what we are doing because we shall be able to see the solar system as does its Maker, from above, instead of from below: we shall see the pattern that is being woven, and what it all means. Every additional step, every extension of consciousness brings us nearer to seeing the meaning of everything, so as we go on we become less and less likely to make mistakes and to misunderstand, but the perfect knowledge can only be that of the Adept, whose consciousness has become one with that of the Logos of the system, even though it be only as yet in one of His lower manifestations.

In any case, that choice is in the hands of the Monad, so we certainly need not trouble ourselves about it now. There is always a possibility that the Monad may have decided all that even now, and when such a choice is made the lower representatives or parts of him will imply fall into their place when the time comes, whatever ideas they may previously have been forming. All that is important for us to put before the personality now with regard to such choice is the idea of service. It we can get it to understand that idea of always watching to

serve it will very readily become a perfect channel for the ego and that will influence the individuality in turn to be a perfect channel or instrument for the Monad. Service is the highest ideal in life; did not the Christ Himself say: “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”?⁴⁴

18. Seek the way by retreating within.

19. Seek the way by advancing boldly without.

C.W.L.—To seek the way by retreating within means in the beginning to seek out and follow the guidance of the Higher Self. As has been explained before, the first stage on the wa3’ is the unification of the personality with the ego. Later the ego becomes a perfect expression of the Monad, and the man is then ready for the Asekha Initiation. Beyond that the Adept is striving to raise the consciousness of his Monad into the consciousness of the Logos. It is always himself at higher and higher levels that he seeks.

Whenever a man at any stage tries to pour devotion up into a higher level, such a flood of the divine power descends upon him that it quite overwhelms his effort, and the effect is not so much that he has reached up, as that power has been poured down on him. The same thing happens between the pupil and the Master. The pupil sends out his love towards the Master, but it is surpassed by the response of the Master’s love, so that to him it seems that he has received a vast flood of love, though in the first place it was his action that made the downpouring possible.

Such, at a higher level, is the pouring down upon the Adept of the Holy Ghost, the power of the Third Aspect of the Logos, symbolized in the “cloven tongues, like as of fire” of Pentecost.⁴⁵ Thus in due course the Adept becomes one with the Third Aspect of the Logos manifesting on the nirvanic plane. His next step is to become one with that Aspect which is represented by the Christ in the bosom of the Father. Later on, though I know nothing about it, I am quite sure that he will draw ever nearer and nearer to the Deity of our Solar system. We shall ever approach the Light, but we shall never touch the Flame. Not that we shall not rise one day to the height where He stands, but He does not stand still to receive us. He also is evolving, and therefore we shall not touch the

Flame, though we shall ever draw nearer and nearer to it. The wonderful bliss of that experience cannot be described down here, because it is all of a nature which has no counterpart in the lower world.

In every man there is much to be found by seeking within. The personality, which most people think of as themselves, is only a very small fraction of the man. We are much larger people than we show ourselves to be. The ego can only put down one small part or facet of himself in a particular incarnation and even if that part is manifesting perfectly it is only a small part. A great man is a fine and beautiful thing to see, even down here, but we may be sure that the whole is very much

greater than the part which we can see. No one personality could express all the multiplicity of possibilities which lie within the ego, which has within it the essence of the experience of all the lives it has led. The highest and very best of us down here might be taken as a fair average sample of the qualities we should discover in the ego if we were able to see it.

We get these samples sometimes, and should try to understand them as such; we often find, for example, quite an ordinary person showing great heroism when a sudden emergence arises. A workman will sacrifice his life to save his fellow-man. Now the possibility of doing that shows that the man inside is really at that level. Whatever is the highest a man can touch is in reality the man himself, because he could not touch it, could not think it, if it were not himself. All the lower expression—the storms of passion, the baser feelings—belongs to the personality. They should not be there—that goes without saying—but they are not the real man. If sometimes he touches great heights, that is the level at which he ought always to strive to keep himself.

The high and noble things for which a man yearns must be to some extent developed in the ego, otherwise he could not be longing for them down here. The people who do not wish for such ideals are those in whom those particular qualities do not exist even in germ. If we yearn for higher things they are in us not as a mere possibility but a living fact, and it remains for us to live at our highest level and in that way reach one still higher. The whole object of the ego in putting himself down is that he may become more definite, that all his vaguely

beautiful feelings may crystallize into a definite resolution to act. All his incarnations form a process by means of which he may gain precision and definiteness. Therefore specialization is our way of advancement. We come down into each race or sub-race in order that we may acquire the qualities for the perfection of which that sub-race is working. The fragment of the ego which is put down is highly specialized. It is intended to develop a certain quality, and when that is done the ego absorbs it into himself in due course, and he does that over and over again. The personality scatters something of its special achievement over the whole when it is withdrawn into the ego, so that he thus becomes a little less vague than before.

The ego, with all its mighty powers, is very much less accurate than the lower mind, and the personality, valuing above all the discriminating powers of the lower mind which it is intended to develop, often comes in consequence to despise the far higher but vaguer self, and acquires a habit of thinking of itself as independent of the ego.

Though the ego is vague in the earlier stages of its evolution and is therefore unsatisfactory to that extent, there is in him nothing that is evil—no moral defect. There is no matter in the causal body which could respond to the lower vibrations, but wherever there is a gap in its development there is always a possibility that the lower vehicles will run into some sort of evil action. It sometimes happens in such a case that when an emergency arises the astral elemental takes possession of the man and he madly stabs another man, or, being in great need of money, he finds himself in some position where he can obtain it dishonestly, and succumbs to the temptation. The ego is then not sufficiently awake to step in and prevent the action, or perhaps he does not understand that the passion or greed of the astral body may force the lower self into the commission of a crime. When we find evil turning up unexpectedly in a man's character we must not think that it comes from the Higher Self. Yet it comes from a lack in the Higher Self; because if the ego were more developed he would check the man on the brink of the evil thought, and the crime would not be committed.

To seek the way by retreating within means for us that we must always

endeavour to live up to our highest level, so that we may be able to bring down more and more of the treasures which the ego has garnered during innumerable incarnations. But while seeking thus to realize the Higher Self we must remember that we must also seek the way by advancing *without*. We cannot afford to be ignorant of what is outside us, and we must do our best to study and to become acquainted with the world and what is going on in it.

CHAPTER 9

RULE 20

20. Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder.

A.B.—Rule 20 is the comment by the Chohan on the three short aphorisms 17 to 19, which were considered in the last chapter. It tells us that a man has not to develop only on that line where he finds the least resistance, but must unfold his powers on every line before he reaches the universal goal of usefulness. His aim is to be a perfect instrument of the Good Law, and no man can become that unless he grows along every line. Each type or temperament must therefore supply what is lacking in itself before perfection can be achieved. Humanity reaches the goal not by devotion, nor by religious contemplation, nor by self-sacrificing labour, nor by observation and deep thought alone. Ultimately we shall all need to have all these things, but while on the way people are limited by their temperaments, and for a long time to come the work of each disciple in helping humanity is likely to be limited chiefly to one of these ways.

It is clear why we must master all the ways. As men advance they must draw nearer together, must become welded into an organic whole. So if a man possessed great power of religious contemplation, but very little of the other powers it would be of little use for him to come into contact with a man possessing chiefly the quality of self-sacrificing labour. He could not meet him on that ground, and that would limit his usefulness. So it is desirable that while the disciple is striving to perfect himself on his special line of work, is seeking to learn everything about something, he should at the same time not neglect to learn something about everything, so as to be able to make full contact with people of different temperaments with whom he must work.

The key-note is balance; we must be able to work to some extent on all lines.

Toleration also is wanted, that we may be able to help all. We must see each man's way as right *for him*—as one of the roads leading onwards it has to be recognized as good. We must have respect for all types of people, and until we are able to help them all ourselves we should try to guide those whom we cannot help, to others who can help them, and not disparage the roads on which they are going, and seek to turn them into our own.

C.W.L.—People are almost always lop-sided in their development. Some are strong in devotion, some in intellect, some along the line of work. Each man, according to his temperament, is taken naturally along the line which is easiest for him, yet he must not forget that all-round development is necessary before he can reach Adeptship. The Adept is above all things an all-round man, and if we are putting Him before us as an ideal, we must do what we can to develop ourselves in various directions. It is a fine thing to be full of devotion, but we must have knowledge along with it, because the man who is merely blindly devoted is of little use. The converse is true of those who advance by intellect. They must also take care to acquire devotion, otherwise their intellectual development will lead them astray. It is better to develop along one line than not to develop at all, but while every man should pursue his own line, he should nevertheless remember that there are other lines. Often the tendency is to criticize other paths, and to feel that they may be less useful than our own. They would be less useful to us, perhaps, but are not at all so to those who are following them. Wherever we may be at present in our development we shall certainly have to become balanced, so if now we appreciate only the idea of work we shall nevertheless presently have to realize the position of the man who advances by wisdom, and again that of him who progresses by devotion, and not allow ourselves to think them less immediately useful than we are. I am afraid that the people who advance by devotion are often a little intolerant of those who wish to study and to work. They sometimes say: "All that you are doing belongs to the outer plane or to the purely intellectual side of things, whereas the heart side of everything is always the more important, and if you neglect that you can make no real progress." It is perfectly true that the heart side must be developed, but nevertheless there are those who advance best through definite work, and others who cannot evoke from themselves the best that is within them without careful study and full understanding.

Men sometimes feel drawn to the higher life, and devote themselves to contemplation only. There are occultists who hold that to be the best way, at least in the early stages. A man might say: "I must first develop myself in order that I may be able to serve. When I am an Adept I shall serve perfectly; I shall make no mistakes." But there is work to do at all levels, and the man who has qualified as an Adept has to work at very much higher levels than any we can reach; therefore if we wait until Adeptship is attained before we are willing to work for the world, a great deal of the lower work will in the meantime be left undone. Our Masters are working chiefly on the nirvanic level, on the egos of men by the million. They are doing at that higher level what we could not do, but there is a very great deal to do on the lower planes which we can do.

People have sometimes been disposed to think that the Masters ought to be doing this lower work, that They should, for example, be working with individuals down here. I have explained before that They do not do that, except in the comparatively rare cases of those who They see will very shortly repay Them for their effort. It is so entirely a case of what is best for the work that no sentiment of any sort enters into the matter at all. They will work with a pupil if he can do good work in return, and if the amount of energy spent in teaching and guiding him will produce more result in that way in a given time than would be produced by the same amount of energy expended along higher and wider lines; that is, only if the man is apt to learn, and prepared to do a great deal himself whenever opportunity offers. Up to that point Their interest in him would be what one might call a general concern.

There is much work to be done at these lower levels, and it is a fact that a great amount and variety of it has not been done previously. New ways of service are constantly being opened up as mankind advances in brotherhood. Our Masters had many pupils before the Theosophical Society came into existence, but most of them were Orientals, chiefly Hindus and Buddhists, Sufis and Zoroastrians. The trend of the Oriental mind is not quite the same as ours. I think without offence we may say it is less practical in some directions than ours, and the majority of Indian pupils have occupied themselves chiefly with their own studies, of which they had an immense amount to do, and only when they had

advanced a considerable way on that line did they then turn aside to help others. They had not the incentive that we have for the work of the invisible helpers. Nobody in India—not even a coolie—is quite as ignorant as the average Christian about after-death states, so there is not the same need for rescuing them from the delusions created by the idea of eternal hell. As soon as our students began to see what astral work involved they realized that there was a crying need for help. Here were people by the thousand suffering intensely from a nightmare, a sort of bogey, which they had made for themselves simply on account of foolish teaching. A sight of that kind urges one at once to make some effort to relieve all that distress, consequently the work of the invisible helpers began, and increased like a rolling snowball. Every one who is helped sets to work to help others, so it has happened that in about thirty-five years, since the work was regularly taken in hand, the effect produced has been very great indeed.

A man may reach great heights by attending only to his own development, but along that line he will not reach Adeptship. The man who waits to attain Adeptship before he serves the world will never be an Adept. He may escape into nirvana, or obtain liberation, but because he has not realized what the Logos wants of him, he will presently be overtaken by numbers of less advanced and less talented people who have realized that one important thing. Then he will have to give up his life on higher planes and come back to learn what he has not learnt before—that humanity is one, and that a man who does not realize that fact cannot scale the loftiest heights of progress.

But, as is said here, self-sacrificing labour alone is not sufficient to gain for the man the highest development. He also needs to develop his devotion, and above all to develop his power of response to the inner light, because without that he will not be a perfect instrument. Without that he might be working away most energetically, but would be unable to respond to the touch, the hint from above, sufficiently quickly. He would need, as it were, to be pulled round energetically, instead of requiring just a gentle touch, which is all that should be necessary, and so would cause more trouble to his Master in training him. He must also learn something of the great plan, because, glorious as the work is, the man cannot do it perfectly unless he has knowledge. Therefore he must make a definite effort in the way of study to attain that. Much knowledge comes in

actually doing the work, but there is every reason for us to take advantage of the accumulated experience of our forerunners and learn whatever we can by study, so that our work may be better done.

The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of men are steps indeed, necessary—not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone.

A.B.—Here both vices and virtues are called steps. This broad view cannot harm *students*, and is indeed necessary for the disciple, but it would be right in the world to take the narrow view, for vice must mean vices, and virtue must mean virtues, to undeveloped people. The broad view would confuse their ideas of morality; they cannot apply principles with understanding, and think of the moral bearing of each action, so they must have a list of things that are bad, for their avoidance, a set of religious and social commandments for their guidance., It would be a mistake to upset the popular view of vice and virtue, although it permits many actions the disciple has outgrown.

But esotericists should learn to understand what they both mean, as manifestations of the Divine. The way to regard it is to think of every soul as a divine being, as a centre of outgoing energies pouring into the world. The life of man consists in the expression of the life of atma, and it finds expression outwards. In the earlier stages of its evolution there was nothing to be called vice or virtue, but simply an outrush of energies, very largely along lines which the standards achieved by society to-day would not approve. It is true that from the beginning of our human career most of us, especially those who had individualized at a high point from the animal kingdom, were in a position to use our intelligence to some extent, and so were able to learn many things by observation of others. But it remains a fact that nevertheless all of us in earlier stages must have done many things which would now be accounted evil. Those experiences taught us to do better, so they were steps or means of progress. And they also helped to make it possible for us to understand and help others who are going through such experiences now. All types of experiences are equally necessary; we could not know even partly what they are without every kind of

expression, and should never be able to help other people if we did not understand.

In former times we may have been murderers or drunkards; if these things have been our particular experience, we now know them as wrong because we did them before we knew better, and found that their results brought suffering. At a further stage we learned that such things delay our progress, and are therefore wrong, but without some experience we should never have realized this consciously. No amount of advice could have given us the vivid knowledge we have gained from experience. Having learnt our lesson along one line we never again under any stress of temptation make that particular mistake. You would never be safe if there were any possibility of your falling. You must have conscious knowledge of these things; the typical thing you have to know, the fundamental experience you must have, if you wish to be safe and helpful.

C.W.L.—Here again the Chohan reminds us that the object of occult training is not to produce merely good men, but great spiritual powers who can work intelligently for the Logos. Moral goodness is certainly a prerequisite, but it is useless alone.

When a man begins his evolution in the quite primitive stage he has no ideas of right and wrong, so we could hardly speak of him as having vices and virtues. The salvage is after all nothing more than a centre of outrushing energy—the irresponsible kind of outrush of which we see so much in the lower kingdoms. A creature like a fly has a very tiny body, but it is a mass of energy which is terrible as compared with its size. Imagine an entity of our own size endowed with as much energy in proportion and as little idea of what to do with it—it would be a terrible, wild thing, a source of danger to all around.

The savage has that kind of energy. It bursts out in fighting and in lusts of all kinds, which are certainly vices from our point of view, although we are hardly justified in regarding them as such in him. He does not murder from any sort of unholy, vitiated pleasure in murder, as has happened with people of higher races. He certainly has a kind of pride in being able to dominate and kill other people, and in that way he works off a vast amount of energy which, many thousands of years later, will be directed into useful channels. He has to learn how to handle

that energy; how to let it run through him without doing hurt to himself or others, but that is a matter of long training and development, and of gaining control of the vehicles by the ego.

We see the same thing at a very much higher stage working out in the case of an immensely powerful man, an American millionaire of the old type, for example, who made a great amount of money very often by ruining other people. He was doing a very wicked thing, but he was developing tremendous powers of concentration and generalship. Having learnt in that position how to do all this and how to manage his fellow-men, he might perhaps in another life be a general of an army. Very likely at first he would use his generalship as Napoleon did—for his own advancement and to gratify his ambition. Later on he would learn to use his powers for the service of his fellow-men. In that way it is clear that the very vices of men are steps on the way to something higher and better. The advance from vice to virtue is very largely a matter of learning to control our energies and directing them aright. We begin to transmute our vices into virtues when we realize that the energy which is going so to waste and doing so much harm might be applied for good purposes. Each time an evil quality is finally conquered, it is changed into the opposite virtue, and so becomes a definite step raising us higher in evolution.

The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way.

A.B.—The word “way” here means the real spiritual life. Man is a spiritual being, so in living the spiritual life he is being his true self. If he would tread that way he must use all his faculties and powers, the whole of himself. What man is in his essence, that he becomes in truth—a manifestation of the divine. When the disciple is at a certain stage he is told: “Thou art the Path.” Before this time his Master is to him his Path—he sees the divine manifesting in the Master; but when the divine in him manifests, he himself is the Path. He becomes the Path in proportion as he advances. Therefore the whole nature of the man is to be used wisely. When that is done the divine fragment, with the help of the thing which he has created for his own use, may unfold its latent powers into active and positive life.

The words “divine fragment” are not used merely as a poetic phrase; they contain a truth we cannot afford to forget, which any other words would be inadequate to express. The same idea is found in the Catechism quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*,⁴⁶ where the Guru asks the pupil what he sees. He sees countless sparks, which appear as though detached; the ignorant look upon them as separate, but by the wise they are seen as one Flame. Such a fragment, inasmuch as it is a centre of consciousness, is a point without magnitude; it cannot be separate. All centres are fundamentally one, since there is only one ultimate sphere, one universe. But the mystery of the unity of being cannot be understood below the nirvanic plane; it cannot be expressed in the lower worlds, and all attempts to symbolize it must be imperfect.

The divine fragment is the Monad, which is reproduced in the triple spirit on the nirvanic plane. There atma is threefold, and it puts down one of its powers into the buddhic and another into the mental plane. It contains the possibilities of the Logos, but is at first quite incapable of expressing them. Atma pouring itself forth appears in Manas as the individualizing principle, the “I”-making faculty that gives rise to individuality in time, as the opposite to Eternity. It draws round it matter to express itself on the upper manasic plane, and thus creates as its vehicle the causal body, which lasts throughout the long series of human incarnations. That is the body created with pain, by means of which the man purposes to develop.

Think of Atma as pouring itself forth on to the third plane downwards, the manasic plane. It draws around itself matter of the highest level of that plane, and forms the causal body. That body is then its vehicle for the expression of the manasic aspect of itself on that plane. It is manas working through the causal body. This manas becomes dual in incarnation. It reaches down into the lower levels of the mental plane, and forms there a vehicle—the lower manas—which in turn builds the astral body. In its turn that provides the force which builds the etheric and physical bodies. Each body on its own plane is a means for gathering experience, which when suitable is handed on to that which formed the vehicle; so after the personal incarnation is over the lower manas hands on to the causal body all the experience that it has gained, and the personality perishes. The causal body takes whatever experiences are of a nature to help its growth, and

they remain with it through all its future incarnations.

The causal body also has a relation to what is above it. What happens on the inner or upper side of that vehicle is the passing on into the third aspect of atma of the essence of all experiences which may have entered into it; what is thus poured into the manasic aspect of atma renders it capable of acting without the causal body—that is, without a permanent vehicle which limits it.

The student who thinks this out, will find that it will throw light on the perishing of the individuality. The same idea appears in the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. The causal body is the individuality,, that which persists throughout the cycle of incarnation. It comes into existence at a certain period of- time; it has to perish at another period. It is born and it dies. As the *Gita* says: “Certain is death for the born.”⁴⁷ This is true not only in the outer world, but in the widest sense; as there is birth of the causal body, so must it perish. It is the thing which the divine fragment has built for himself with much pain. It is the “I” to the disciple. In some the “I” is thought of as even lower, in the personality, but this is the “I” which has to be reached at the beginning of the Path. It is finally transcended at the close of the Arhat stage of growth, at the real liberation. Up to that time it is diminishing and changing in character as the Arhat grows. It will ultimately be found to be a defective I”, not the real “I” at all, but at this stage of human evolution any attempt to describe its future condition would be misleading.

The disciple rightly puts before himself, as his aim, the realization and purification of the individuality. It is a thing created for the use of its creator. Sometimes it is technically called a creature; then we hear of the man—the true man—meeting his creature. So also the individual, the creature, meets his own creator. This meeting occurs only in a high stage of evolution. When a man meets his creature he is perfect and transcends individuality.

The creation of the individuality takes place at a lower stage; the man is busy building it up for a very long time. The less evolved members of humanity are for a long period shut up in their lower vehicles—that is necessary for their progress, before the individual is fully built—so the causal body remains an unconscious shell for a long time, while activities are busy in, the personality.

Think of the ages taken in building the physical vehicle; think of the rounds and the stages that the pitris went through on the moon chain before becoming fit to pass into human evolution. There is an immense difference in the time that human beings take in building the individual, though all take long. The building goes on more rapidly in the higher stages under the inspiration of the more evolved ego than in the lower stages; when the intelligence reaches a high stage it is utilizing higher forces and learning not to waste them, and then the building goes on with immense rapidity. This gives us great encouragement; for in looking back to the moon chain and thinking of the time we have taken to advance, it would seem very long if it had to be repeated, but looking forward we see that progress may become almost incredibly swift.

The divine fragment can do nothing by itself; all its development must come by contact with outside forces, and through the vehicles—it cannot grow without them. As H.P.B. said, spirit is senseless on the lower planes. It cannot bring forth any power without a vehicle of expression on the plane in which it has to act. Further it can only have control of the vehicles when they are perfected. The work of bringing the vehicles to perfection develops the powers of the spirit to perfection, so the two developments go on together. And when that work is complete, spirit has in itself the power to disintegrate its individual vehicles the moment it leaves them, and to reintegrate them in a moment when it chooses to do so.

Think of the perfected Spiritual Beings. Only while they were evolving at and below our human stage were vehicles necessary for Their growth, but when such a one, having drawn all the experiences of that evolution into His essence, wishes to manifest, He can at any time create what He wants for manifestation, and after having utilized the forces of the plane, can withdraw the vehicle again. When speaking of the Planetary Spirits, H.P.B. mentions that They have come through humanity. They could not appear as helpers if They had not through the human stages drawn up into their essence the experience necessary. Thus Beings exist who may not be manifest, but who can manifest Themselves, by drawing from Their essence the experience They require and creating a vehicle in which to work.

It is not difficult to understand how the vehicles are for their “own use”. As we advance we rise above the bondage of each vehicle manifesting outwardly, and learn to use it only for the higher work, without any consideration of self. Doing this as far’ as the physical body is concerned should be the disciple’s daily practice. The physical body must be mastered so that it cannot throw its own reflection upon you; it exists only for you to use, and you must learn to control it completely, so that it cannot compel you to attend to any experience that you do not want. It should be only an instrument for use; you are training it to hand on its experience to the ego. There will come a time when you no longer want to hand on any experience at all; then the “I” takes what it wants for its own purpose. This is a high condition to reach, for it is the stage of the Adept.

In *The Secret Doctrine* it is said that a Master’s body is illusory. That means only that the physical body cannot affect or disturb Him. The forces playing around cannot influence Him through it, except in so far as He allows them; they cannot throw Him off His centre. H.P.B. has also said that a Master’s physical body is a mere vehicle. It hands nothing on, but is simply a point of contact with the physical plane, a body kept as an instrument needed for the work He does, and dropped when done with. The same thing is true of the astral and mental bodies. When the causal body becomes an instrument only, the individuality perishes, atma having acquired the power of manifesting its third aspect on the mental plane at will, and no longer needing a permanent vehicle thereon.

C.W.L.—This statement seems at first sight to contradict some of the earlier ones. For example, we were told to kill out desire—to kill out various parts of ourselves. It is said in *The Voice of the Silence* that the pupil must learn to slay the lunar form⁴⁸ () at will—to get rid of his astral body. The words “at will” give us the key to the expression. We must not destroy the astral body, because if we did so we should become monsters, with great mental development but without any sympathy. Many people find emotion a great trouble to them because it overwhelms them, but they must try not to destroy it, but to purify and control it. It must be a force which we can use and not something which overwhelms us. We must not kill it out, because without it we could never understand emotion in others, and we could therefore never help people who are along that line; but it must be refined and all self must be weeded out from it.

In the same way the intellectual people must not destroy intellect, but must bridle it and guide it. It is quite true that intellect like devotion may run away with people. They do not always realize that; they say that the intellect in itself is a guarantee against anything extreme, but I am afraid it is not. Many people make a kind of god of intellect; they say: "Our reason is the only thing we have to guide us and we must always follow that out to its logical conclusion." That would be quite true if all their premises were always right to begin with, but usually they are remarkably deficient. They are generally considering the physical side of the problem only and leaving out of account the far more important hidden side, and therefore their conclusions are inevitably wrong. As I said before, we must be balanced; we must learn to see all sides of a question, and we must endeavour to avoid developing any one quality, however good, to such excess that it is altogether out of proportion to all the other qualities, because often the most admirable quality may become dangerous if it is taken in that way apart from the whole. The man who possesses keen intellect is much to be congratulated because of that intellectual development, but all the more if he has that should he be careful that the other side, that of love and sympathy, is not neglected nor forgotten.

In exactly the same way those who possess the power of love and sympathy must see to it that they develop the intellectual side of their natures, so that they will not be led away by their sympathy into foolish action which will not help, but hinder. A person with the keenest sympathy but no knowledge is often perfectly helpless, just as many a man would be in the presence of some sad accident, lacking the knowledge which a doctor would have. Many people, though full of sympathy and anxious to help, do not know what to do, and the efforts which they make, if ignorant, may be just as likely to do harm as good. Very clearly, there is the need of knowledge as well as emotion.

Emotion is the driving force in our natures. It is said in the old Indian books that the emotions are the horses, but the mind is the guide; the mind takes the reins; therefore we need to develop both. We must have our horses, because they are the means of progress, our storage of force; but we must also have reasonable guidance, or else they will run away with us. All that is perpetually inculcated in all occult study, yet it cannot be said too often, because people

forget. There are always those who develop one side only and are sadly lacking in the other, and that is one of the ways in which even an advanced person may come to grief.

Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful complex, separated life exists, then, indeed, and then only, he is upon the way.

C.W.L.—The way—meaning the true spiritual life—can only be found after the experience of building up the individuality. The expression used here by the Venetian Master—that complex thing which man has built with much trouble and pain for his own use—is true of the individuality, and again, of each personality. The individuality itself is so built by the Monad; it builds in turn its various personalities, but all for the use of the higher, and for that alone; the mistake all men make is that of identifying themselves with the lower nature, and allowing it to delude them into supposing that it is the “I”, instead of which the “I” is in reality the Monad far behind, which is using all these vehicles.

The whole evolution of man can be stated as a withdrawing into himself, but always bringing his sheaves with him, never returning empty-handed. This process of handing up the result of experience by the lower to the higher is going on at all levels all the time. There are many ways in which we are doing that in every-day life, only we do not think of it in that light. For example, we know how to read; we gained that power in this incarnation by passing very slowly through a long process of learning. Now we can take up a book and understand its meaning at once, without having to think of being able to read. We have forgotten the details of that experience, and it would be of no value to us to remember them. Some of us have learnt to read music, and can play it off at sight, but at first when we were learning we had to look carefully at each note and then look down at the piano to find it. Now the fact that we had to pass through all that labour is forgotten. We do not need to remember all the separate

music lessons in order to be able to play, which was the object of the whole process.

It is just the same with the memory of past lives. People who believe in reincarnation often have a sense of resentment at the back of their minds, because they do not remember that for which they are now suffering, even while they are ready to admit that it is the result of wrong doing in the past. That feeling is perhaps quite natural, but it really does not matter in the least; the soul does know, and has made a note of that which has brought the evil result, and will do all it can to influence the personality so as to prevent the same mistake from occurring again.

People think it would simplify their lives if the personality could remember all those past incarnations. In some ways it might, but I think that if in the personality we had the full remembrance of all our past lives before we had reached Adeptship, it would do more harm than good. In the first place, we have not the power to weigh all these things calmly. We should find it distinctly depressing to look back at the ghastly crimes we had committed in the past lives. I have long ago learnt how to look back at my own past lives, but it is by no means a pleasure to do so. There are certain beautiful actions, some fine incidents in the past lives of everyone, and one is able to look back with a certain degree of pleasure on those, but we have found that in looking back upon a past life the thing that immediately strikes one most forcibly is the number of opportunities which one did not see. Here, there, everywhere, we were surrounded by opportunities, and we cannot help feeling amazed that we took advantage of so few of them. It was not, usually, that we failed to take them because we did not want to do so; our intentions were good, though rather feebly good, perhaps, and if we had seen the opportunities we should have taken them. Now we look back and wonder at our own blindness. We say: "If only I had taken this or that course of action certain results would have followed, and by this time I might have reached Adeptship." But we did not. When we rise to that level the power to look back will be useful to us, but with the amount of intellect and free-will we have now it would certainly not be an unmixed pleasure.

Let us consider the general principles involved. The whole of this scheme of

which we are a part is intended to further the evolution of man, therefore there can be no doubt whatever that if it were best for him that a personality should remember all his past lives, most certainly that would have been so arranged. As that has not been done, we should at least have faith enough to see that it is best as it is. When a man has the power to look back he also gains with it a wider insight and a more balanced view of things, and by that time he is so imbued with the certainty of justice in the scheme that if he cannot see exactly how a result followed from its cause he will say: "Well, I do not see the reason for this, but I am sure I shall do so presently." It would not occur to him to think that he had been unjustly treated. The person who is always talking of being unjustly treated and is perpetually accusing high heaven of neglecting him, does not understand the rudiments of the case. We know that the law is absolutely just—as just as the law of gravitation—but it does not follow that we can always tell exactly how it will work itself out.

As I have said, the ego makes a note of that which produces evil results. Warned by past experience, he tries to influence the personality before it becomes so strong, so definite and decided that it will not be guided by the vaguer touch from the ego behind. It distinctly thinks that it knows best along its own line. Very often it declines to be helped from above, and so the ego cannot influence it to the full extent that he would like. But he tries to gain control, and as we go on we shall feel this higher self more and more endeavouring to take the reins. If we will identify ourselves with him, we shall find that then he can do very much more for us. His chief difficulty is the fact that the average personality identifies itself with the lower vehicles and rather resents his interference, but if it can be persuaded to identify itself with him, then at once the whole difficulty is very much lessened.

When in addition to this there is complete control of the astral and mental bodies, progress may be swift indeed. Normally, when the ego wants to deal with one thing through his lower vehicles they persist in bringing in a hundred others, in sending in reports which are not asked for and not desired by the ego. Control of the mind has to be gained so that it will report to the ego only what he wants to know. Then, when the ego turns some problem over to his mind, and says: "Think that out and give me the information I want," the controlled mind obeys

perfectly, whereas under similar circumstances the average mind reports a hundred things which are useless to the ego, because all sorts of wandering thoughts break in and assert themselves.

The system of yielding up the results of the lower work, but not the detailed experience, is going on all the time until we attain Adeptship. As the ego develops, the first decided change that the man makes is to draw up the intellect, the manas, to the buddhic level; he still remains triple, but instead, of being on the three planes he is now on two, with atma developed on its own plane, buddhi on its own plane, and manas level with buddhi, drawn up into the intuition. Then he discards the causal body because he has no further need of it. When he wishes to come down and manifest on the mental plane again he has to make a new causal body, but otherwise he does not need one.

Much in the same way those two manifestations on the buddhic plane—the buddhi and the glorified intellect which is intuition—will be drawn up presently into the nirvanic or atmic plane, and the triple spirit on that plane will be fully vivified. Then the three manifestations will converge into one. That is a power within the reach of the Adept, because He unifies the Monad and the ego, just as the disciple is trying to unite the ego with the personality.

This drawing up of the higher manas from the causal body, so that it is on the buddhic plane side by side with the buddhi, is the aspect or condition of the ego which Madame Blavatsky called the spiritual ego. It is difficult to work out the comparisons in detail with the state through which the Christian mystics described themselves as having passed, because they approach it from so different a point of view, but that condition seems to correspond with what they used to call ‘spiritual illumination’—that is, the state of the Arhat. It is the unfolding of the Christ principle. We speak of the birth of the Christ principle when there is the first stirring of the buddhic consciousness in the man, but when it is said the Christ is fully unfolded within him, I think it must mean this state.

When people once reach some of these higher levels the rate of their progress is very greatly increased. I remember once being asked in India whether a man’s progress on the Path might be measured by arithmetical progression. I replied: “I think when once progress is definitely started it is very much more like

geometrical progression.” That was rather doubted. The Indians seemed to feel that that was an extreme statement, so I asked the Master Kuthumi whether geometrical progression would be a fair statement of the progress of one who had entered upon the Path. “No,” He said, “that would not be a fair statement. When once a person enters upon the Path, if he converges all his energies upon it, his progress will be neither by arithmetical nor geometrical progression, but by powers.” So it would not be in the ratio 2, 4, 8, 16, etc., but as 2, 4, 16, 256, etc. That throws a very different light on the matter, and we begin to see that what is before us is not so impossible and not so wearisome as it sometimes seems. We have taken all these thousands of years to reach our present stage, and it does not seem a great achievement when we consider the time spent upon it. If our future evolution were to be equally slow the mind would fall back appalled before the contemplation of the aeons needed for us to reach the goal. It is encouraging to think that when we definitely begin to tread the Path we make progress with very great rapidity indeed.

I suppose that the average good person is devoting a hundredth part of his mind to making himself a little better. Many people are not doing even that. We who are studying and trying to live by the principles of occultism have gone further, and are beginning to devote a reasonable part of our time to it. When once the stage is reached where all our force and thought is concentrated upon this great task we shall go ahead by leaps and bounds; however backward we are now, when we can devote all our powers to the work to be done we shall be able to do it much more perfectly than now seems at all possible.

Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong. Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural; and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light.

A.B.—In this comment we again consider the triple method of seeking the way.

A division may be made for purposes of classification, by taking the laws of nature as covering the world of phenomena, the world of observation, the laws of super-nature as those of the higher manas and buddhi, and the laws of being as those of the real existence of nirvana. By the laws of nature we then mean the laws which work on the physical and astral planes and the rupa sub-planes of manas.

The laws that are above these, but below those of “being”, may be called the laws of supernature. This includes both the arupa planes of manas and the buddhic plane. That is the region where life expresses itself more than form, where matter is subordinated to life, altering at every moment. There is nothing there to represent a definitely outlined entity. The entity changes form with every change of thought; matter is an instrument of his life and is no expression of himself; the form is made momentarily—it changes with every change of his life. This is true on the arupa plane of manas, and also in a subtle way on the buddhic plane. It is true also of the spiritual ego, which is buddhi plus the manasic aspect of the One, which was drawn up into buddhi when the causal vehicle was cast aside. That state is called by Christian mystics that of spiritual illumination; it is the stage of the Arhat, of the Christ in man.

The word supernatural is commonly used to cover anything that cannot be explained by the common experience of the- world. Anything that appears irregular or out of accord with the laws of nature has been so ticketed, much to the confusion of thoughtful people. There is a wide-spread revolt in the world against all that is called supernatural; people feel that there cannot be anything supernatural, because there is no irregularity or disorder in nature, no region where law does not exist. The law is working everywhere and it is one. “As above, so below” is the universal truth. One nature is expressing itself in different ways, but is itself the same always. But when we come to what is here called supernatural, we arrive at a state beyond all that can be touched by the senses—even using the term in its fullest meaning. We pass altogether beyond everything which is phenomenal, into the spiritual worlds themselves.

The plane of atma, beyond that, is nirvana, the region of being, where all is reality, where true consciousness resides. We are to seek this way by study of our inmost being. Not until we can reach the nirvanic plane in higher meditation can we get a touch of true atmic consciousness; but it may be sought for. We begin to search for it by trying to realize its existence. Think of it as in a region where all is reality, where all limitations have vanished, where unity is recognized. In meditation try to imagine it, try to figure it to yourself. You can only do so by a series of negatives. You think: "Is it phenomenal? It is not so. Is it intellectual? It is not so." You seek it by eliminating what it is not. You then say: "It is not a thing that the senses can perceive; it is not what the intelligence can imagine; it is not found even by the illuminated intelligence, with its vast extent," and so on.

It may be asked: "Why seek it by what it is not, if you can have a touch of atmic consciousness?" Frankly speaking, it is not atmic consciousness you get in the brain, but a little vibration from the manasic aspect of atma differing from any other vibration in the manasic consciousness. Vibrations started on higher planes are different from those that begin on the manasic plane. When a person attains to the highest stage of the Path proper—the fourth or Arhat Path—then, in meditation out of the body, he can pass into samadhi and reach the atmic consciousness in nirvana.

C.W.L.—This twofold triple division, of the methods by which we are to seek the way and the laws which correspond with those methods, is illuminating and without a doubt intentional. Plunging into the depths of one's inmost being leads to the study of the laws of being—the laws of that plane which lies beyond all that is manifestation for us, that is to say, nirvana. The higher planes are, of course, still planes of manifestation, and even what lies beyond them is not really unmanifested, but it is so to us, at our present stage. Only by study of the laws of being shall we be able to fulfil the real purpose of plunging into the depths of our inmost being, which is to "make obeisance to the dim star which burns within". Clearly that is a very high stage in development—when we look for the atma and follow only that.

The testing of all experience corresponds with the study of the laws of nature, that is to say, the laws of the phenomenal world, those which work on the

physical, astral and mental planes into which the personality plunges. Then we are to learn to understand the individuality by the study of the laws of the supernatural, by which evidently are meant the laws of those worlds in which the ego, as such, moves, that is to say, the laws of the buddhic plane and the higher part of the mental plane. Of course there is nothing supernatural, but that word is used here evidently in a somewhat technical sense. Through all the planes it is the one Life which expresses itself in different ways, and there is no break of natural law and order in the whole scheme; only when we come to a region beyond anything that any of our physical, astral or mental senses can touch, are we reaching up into something beyond the nature which most of us know, where other and wider laws operate. I think it is in that sense that the Chohan uses this word “supernatural”. Beyond the sphere of these senses we pass into a region above the phenomenal, to what the Greeks called the noumenal world, which is the source and cause of the phenomenal worlds. So the meaning of this passage appears to be that when we thoroughly understand the personality we shall have grasped “the laws of nature”; when we are seeking to understand the individuality, we shall be dealing with the “laws of the supernatural”, and when, beyond that, we try to realize the atma, we shall be studying the “laws of being”.

The differences at these levels are sufficiently great to warrant such a classification. On the physical plane everything depends very much upon its form, and that is also true in the astral and lower mental worlds. At the level of the causal body, though it is not quite true that we are without form, at least the forms are different and more direct. The thought of the causal body is like a flash of lightning darting directly to its object; instead of making a definite separated form, it is simply an out-rush, straight ‘to the object, of the impulse which the thought has given.

When we rise above that to the buddhic we reach a condition which, as I have explained before, can hardly be described in words. There the thought of each person is a pulsation of the whole plane, so that every person at that level enfolds within himself the thought of all the others and can learn from it and can experience through it, as it were. One cannot hope to make it very clear; one can only suggest.

It is well for us to try to understand those higher states. Almost the only way in which we can do this is by the method adopted in the Hindu books, which is always a negation. They do not describe a state of consciousness; they gradually eliminate all the things that it is not. After doing that, if we can manage to retain a sort of sublimated essence of the thought of the thing, we are coming a little nearer to what it really is. The followers of the Buddha often asked: "What is nirvana?", or sometimes they would say: "Is nirvana, or is it not?"—that is to say, has it an existence, or has it not? The Buddha on one occasion answered: "Nirvana is; beyond a doubt it exists, and yet if you ask me if it is, I can only say that it is neither a state of being nor of not-being in the sense in which you understand those words." Perhaps even He could not make it clear to us at our level. In our own far smaller way we have the same kind of experience. I can bear witness that when one develops the buddhic consciousness and uses it, much which we now cannot make clear becomes absolutely plain; but the moment one drops back from that condition of consciousness one can no longer express that which one has understood. That it is not readily to be expressed is shown by the fact that the Buddha Himself, so very much greater, was yet unable to put it into words to be understood down here, except by negatives.

CHAPTER 10

THE NOTE ON RULE 20

A.B.—The Master Hilarion adds the following note to Rule 20.

Seek it by testing all experiences; and remember that when I say this I do not say: “Yield to the seductions of sense in order to know it.” Before you have become an Occultist you may do this; but not afterwards. When you have chosen and entered the Path you cannot yield to these seductions without shame. Yet you can experience them without horror: can weigh, observe, and test them, and wait with the patience of confidence for the hour when they shall affect you no longer.

In the earlier stages of human evolution the *ego* is not sufficiently developed to know right from wrong. But the moment he has learned to distinguish between them, to know them as different, morality begins. When, for example, he begins to understand the difference between destroying life and guarding it, there is for him the birth of morality on that line. The kind of experience which taught him that knowledge is then not wanted any longer. But though the man no longer needs to test that experience, there is still sometimes a rush of the senses, compelling him to some wrong action, and that afterwards causes him to suffer, because he recognizes that it was wrong to yield to it. The saying of the pseudo-occultist, that a man may do wrong in order to gain experience, is never justified. When an act is done while a man is unconscious of its being wrong he is gaining necessary experience; but when there is knowledge that it is wrong, then each yielding means a fall, and keen suffering must follow.

The condition of yielding under stress of circumstances lasts for many lives; even after a man has entered on the Path the conflict with the desires of the senses often continues. Before one can make rapid progress there are long stages of conflict between the wish that works through the astral and mental bodies, and the knowledge that its gratification is a hindrance to the higher life. The conflict on the lower stages is long, and when it passes on into a higher stage, and arises when mental images are mixed up with the desires of the senses, temptations

become more subtle, for the mind idealizes the sense-objects, refines the grosser impulses, and presents desires in their most alluring aspect. Another stage comes when the aspirant is on the Path proper, for even there the keen force of old temptations is sufficiently strong to assail him. It is in this connection that we have the statement in the Master's note, which shows the disciple how he may utilize them; he can weigh, observe, and test these seductions, waiting patiently for the time when they shall affect him no longer.

When the centre of consciousness has separated itself from the body of desire and moved to the manasic plane, a considerable advance has been made. The man no longer looks on the body of desire as himself, but as merely a vehicle. Yet its vibrations can still affect him, for it has a life of its own, and sometimes it is as if the horses had run away with him. That is the stage spoken of in the *Kathopanishat*, when the driver has reined in the horses and they are going quietly, but are still liable to rush away now and then. The disciple knows when they have run away by the excitement of the senses. It is a stage of great trial. The whole nature of the man is shamed and pained by the degradation; he cannot yield without suffering. In his normal condition of consciousness the senses do not attract him, he does not feel the temptations of the body, which are really astral. Yet times come when he *does* feel them. This happens because the old mould of desire is not broken up, and it has been vivified from outside. The channel has not disappeared, though it is wearing out, and the danger exists that it may suddenly be filled from the outside, and then the desire-form is revived. Astral influences cause vibrations in it strong enough to affect the man's consciousness again; left to itself it would not affect him; but he comes to a place, time or person on account of which strong influences from outside vibrate through him and revive this old form.

They are to be recognized as coming from outside, not from himself, so the disciple ought to understand what they are. With shame, degradation and horror he feels this thing, and wonders how he can feel it. The answer is that there is a stage in growth when seductions coming from the senses may be experienced but need not be yielded to. The man then passes them by. He says: "I feel you; I recognize you; I weigh you; but I refuse to be moved." That is the meaning of the passage in the *Kathopanishat*, where it says the man has come to the point

where he can hold the horses in. He can hold the senses under control. It is the last lesson with regard to the temptation of the senses. When it is learned, their power over the man has passed for ever. Never again will they have the power to affect him; it is the last struggle with them, and when it is over the soul has escaped.

When that time of struggle comes, and it will come to every one, after the centre of consciousness is moved on to the manasic plane, it is an immense help to realize its nature and to know how to deal with it, to be able to say: "It is not I; it is simply a vibration from the lower nature sent out to me; I reject it; that is my answer." The moment you repudiate it, the sense of horror goes; you refuse to feel its influence. When you have done that, you can test yourself, and see what part of your nature it is working upon. Then you will wait with patience for the time when you will feel it no more. You trust in the law; you sit down and patiently wait, and presently it will be unable to set up any vibrations; the senses cannot make you respond to them. You say: "I can wait patiently for the time when I shall not feel this thing. It is a dead form revived that I feel, and it will soon be broken up and will fade away." There is nothing left but to wait so—perhaps for months or for years. The victory is won when you are able to do that—the mould is broken. Recognition of your patience gives the last blow to shatter it, and never again can it affect you, unless you turn your back upon the goal, which seems an impossibility.

There is one other thing for which this experience is valuable; until you have passed through it you cannot help the person who yields. You cannot help any human being unless you are above him, and yet you cannot lift anyone unless you understand what he is feeling. There is a stage where you yourself are in the grip of desire; you cannot then help others who are in the same difficulty. Later, you escape. You repel desire, and reach a point where you cannot understand why another man should fall into temptation; not understanding his feelings, you cannot help him; you can point out the evil to him, but you cannot give spiritual help. You cannot pour strength into him because you are outside him, and as you are not feeling with him you feel a shock of horror. When you get that horror you are useless. You can never help anyone from whom you are repelled; it is better to leave him alone when you feel like that. You must be able to feel *with* a

person in order to help him.

Even though you can feel with a person you cannot help him if he makes a wall about himself; in such a case, it is better to drop him for a time, for help given from the outside is of no use. You may have to give up trying to help a person on the physical plane, but you need not stop doing so from the inside. To help from the inside requires more courage than to do so from without. It is far more gratifying to give outside counsel and advice; it is much more satisfying to the lower nature than giving inside and unseen help.

Another thing—if you can help a person, do not be turned away by the opinion of someone else that he does not deserve help, nor by his own idea that you are not helping him. H.P.B. was sometimes condemned by her own pupils. They said harsh things of her, but she was good and strong, and did not repel them, but went on helping them from the inside, leaving them to think what they would. By helping from the inside we wear away antagonism. When you have felt antagonism, antipathy of mind, to others, possibly even to your own teacher, as you do sometimes, you perhaps blame them. Where you have felt a wall you have thought it was *their* wall, but later on you realize that the wall was an illusion—a thing you had yourself created on, the mental plane. When going through this stage we have built wall after wall, and have suffered by the existence of the walls, until we threw them down.

There is a still higher stage, which is difficult to explain. There are men who make a link between the Great Ones and the mass of humanity. As was said of Jesus, they feel the sufferings of men and their temptations and yet they are without sin. It is the stage where the person is in an absolutely pure desire-body; all dead matter has been cleared away from it, and only the power of reflecting images is retained. The man is incapable of sin.

Suppose such persons did not exist; there would be no link between humanity and the Great Ones. They preserve a link, and in Their perfect purity They feel in Themselves the sufferings of others. This stage comes immediately before that of the Master; it is the last stage of the Arhat. A Master cannot suffer pain, His consciousness is so perfect; He can image past experiences without suffering. The experience is to Him a perfect image, without pain. But in the advanced

condition of the stage before that, though the man cannot sin, and the personality is pure, it yet transmits a sense of suffering.

In exoteric books this stage is sometimes confused with that of the Masters, and a feeling of suffering is attributed to Them. It is in the stage before that that there is suffering, where those in the stage of Arhatship are sharing the work of the Master, without having lost the susceptibility of feeling pain. The Master transcends all suffering. The Arhats take part in building the “guardian wall”, but they build it with pain. People are apt to apply to the Master what is true of higher disciples only, who are still in a stage where sin is transcended, though the power to suffer is left.

At the lower level we may sympathize with friends until we lose all sense of difference, and we must suffer if we sympathize thus deeply. Until ahamkara is transcended sympathy and suffering must go hand in hand. If we go out of this stage too soon we lose our power of sympathy; that is one of the temptations on the Path. Great Ones fall back even when they have reached the last stage, because if they lose suffering altogether, they lose sympathy, and if sympathy is not perfect, the wall of separateness is not thrown down.

But do not condemn the man that yields; stretch out your hand to him as a brother pilgrim whose feet have become heavy with mire. Remember, O disciple, that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of divinity. Therefore be wary lest too soon you fancy yourself a thing apart from the mass.

A.B.—Here we are told that we must not condemn the man who yields to temptation. When you have passed through the stage of trial, there is no fear of your condemning anyone. When temptations are transcended, and you think of the time when you still felt them, you will not condemn the man who yields.

The difference between the virtuous and the vicious man is comparatively little; both are struggling in the early stages, and when looked at from either side the difference is small. But when a man has attained knowledge and has seen the

meaning of virtue and vice, he has made an enormous step. When he sees virtue and vice only as the pair of opposites, he has transcended knowledge; he stands on the threshold of divinity, and the difference is immeasurable. We have the warning here that if we too soon think ourselves apart from the mass there will come the temptation to despise those below us, and then we shall fall. A person who has reached divinity looks down on no one; he can feel with all, and is one with the lowest.

When you have found the beginning of the way the star of your soul will show its light; and by that light you will perceive how great is the darkness in which it burns. Mind, heart, brain, all are obscure and dark until the first great battle has been won. Be not appalled and terrified by the sight; keep your eyes fixed on the small light and it will grow. But let the darkness within help you to understand the helplessness of those who have seen no light, whose souls are in profound gloom.

A.B.—When we look up to the region of atma and worship the light within, we shall see the light as it grows stronger. When you first see that light you get a touch of consciousness by which you see the darkness in which it burns; the contrast shows it to you. It is then that darkness within that will help you to understand the helplessness of those who have seen no light. It is for them that real compassion is necessary. There is no need to feel suffering for people after they know that there is light. Compassion is needed for those who do not know that they are in darkness, but are immersed in trivial things, and yet think themselves wise. Their darkness is so great that they really do not know what causes them so much suffering. They are the people to whom the Great Ones send compassion.

Those who have seen even a little light are making progress in things of which men in the world have not caught a glimpse. When once the light is seen this kind of compassion is not wanted. If such a man is seen to be suffering, it is recognized that he is breaking down the wall quickly, and that it is good for him that he is able to do it.

C.W.L.—When we begin to have knowledge of the existence of the soul, we realize a great fact of which the vast majority of mankind knows nothing. Most

people—even so-called religious people—have no certainty of the existence of the soul. Most of them are living entirely with a view to this world. They may hold a theoretical belief in the immortality of the soul, but the things of the world are more important to them and their lives are only in comparatively few cases guided by this belief.

That the “star of the soul” may show itself we must first be sure of the existence of the soul, we must know it as within ourselves. When we have set our affections on things above, when we know certain truths within ourselves and nothing can shake their reality for us, the star is beginning to show its light—there is a faint reflection of it. By that tiny gleam we see how densely ignorant we have been and still are; that is the first feeling we get when we gain a little more knowledge.

“The first great battle” is the battle with the senses. In his steady fight against them the man has arrayed himself against his lower nature, and has won through. When the gleam of light comes we see how dark the way has been, how all our actions, and even our affections, have been without that direction which makes them real. The little light makes all seem hopelessly wrong; it makes us feel helpless, but we must not be appalled by the sight.

Blame them not. Shrink not from them, but try to lift a little of the heavy karma of the world; give your aid to the few strong hands that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory.

C.W.L.—We must be careful not to misunderstand this passage. The few strong hands are the Great White Brotherhood. The struggle is not against the devil as the Christian puts it, nor must we think of the black magicians as holding the powers of evil. It is the overpowering strength of matter which is meant here by the powers of darkness. Our help in the effort to overcome them is needed and is calculated upon—it is part of the scheme.

There are only a few strong hands helping at present because our humanity has as yet evolved very few Adepts. The Logos has based His plan on the idea that as soon as there are those who understand it they will co-operate with it. That is shown by the fact that up to the middle of the fourth root-race, indeed,

even a little past that time, all the great offices in connection with the evolution of the world were held by people who did not belong to our humanity. Some came to us from Venus, others from the Moon. These were great Adepts who were really free, who might have gone off altogether into higher realms. But after the middle point of evolution we ourselves were expected to develop our own Teachers, and the Lord Gautama Buddha was the first of These. It is clearly intended that we not only furnish the very great officials, such as the Buddhas and Christs, but also that all of us at our very much lower level should be intelligently co-operating, and trying to push on evolution as much as we can.

Then do you enter into a partnership of joy, which brings indeed terrible toil and profound sadness, but also a great and ever-increasing delight.

A.B.—This means that we have come into relation with Those whose life is bliss, but side by side with that experience there is still sadness because we feel the darkness people are in. You have sadness for people, because you are not yet at the point to say, when you see suffering: “Yes, it is well.” At this stage there comes a subtle feeling about pleasure and pain that does not exist in the lower world; you feel the more keenly until the light has become perfectly clear, because the light shows up the darkness. Yet an increasing delight will come, by recognition of the law. More than that, no being is unhappy in the fundamental depths of his consciousness, because all are parts of the divine life, which is happiness itself. More and more as he progresses does the disciple contact those depths, until at last he realizes, to use the words of the *Gita*, that he was grieving for those who should not be grieved for, that the wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. Why should one grieve for a being who is fundamentally happy?

The disciple enters into a partnership of joy, but this very partnership brings toil and profound sadness, because he oscillates from one condition to the other. He must learn to feel the inner joy, and yet not lose touch with the lower principles of others, in which their sorrow is felt. He must feel that too, but must not be overwhelmed by it. The Path is as narrow as the edge of a razor, but we are to maintain perfect equilibrium upon it, while the pairs of opposites play upon us. One great function of the Master is to preserve our balance. The pupil

will be swaying from one side to the other. When the gloom comes the Guru will send to him remembrance of the partnership of joy: when he tends to lose complete touch with the sorrows of the world the reminder of sorrow will come.

For a long time the disciple is subject to these oscillations. We should not attain perfection unless we experienced the different things separately, before we reached equilibrium. It is the experience of mankind that we have to learn one lesson at a time, that we may give it full attention. The disciple who is treading the path is thrown from one side to the other, until he learns to keep the balance. Sometimes an entirely causeless gloom comes down, and he finds himself deep in the shadow. He finds no reason for it; he only knows that it is there—a gloom that he cannot shake off. If he has learned the lesson rightly he will accept that quietly and patiently, and will not try to escape from it. He will then learn sympathy and patience, and other lessons which can be learned in the gloom, not in the light. Accepted in this spirit the period of gloom is not such an unwelcome thing, for all the worry and trouble have gone out of it. We should take the lessons, and learn without suffering. People do not suffer so much from gloom as from images. Like a child afraid of the dark, we fill the darkness of the soul with shapes of horror. The darkness is simple darkness and nothing else; it contains nothing more than the lessons which it has to teach us, and all the phantoms will, in time, disappear. The darkness can never crush us; at first it paralyzes us with fear, but at last we learn its lesson.

At the last Initiation, that of the Master, the atma is seen as a clear light, a star, and when it spreads out, at the last breaking down of the wall, it becomes the infinite light. Before that the Arhat can feel the underlying peace of atma when in meditative mood, but constantly he returns to the sorrow. But when a man rises to the atmic plane in full consciousness, and the buddhic consciousness merges into that, there is but one light seen. This is beautifully put in *The Voice of the Silence*: “The Three that dwell in glory and in bliss ineffable, now in the world of Maya have lost their names. They have become one star, the fire that burns but scorches not, that fire which is the Upadhi of the flame.”

While the man was in the causal body, he saw the Sacred Three as separate, but now he sees Them as the three aspects of the triple atma. Buddhi and manas,

which were “twins upon a line” in the buddhic consciousness of the previous stage, are now one with atma, the star which burns overhead, the fire which is the vehicle of the monadic flame. Then says the Teacher: Where is thy individuality, Lanoo, where the Lanoo himself? It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever present ray become the All and the eternal Radiance.” He who was disciple is now a Master. He stands in the centre, and the triple atma radiates from him.

C.W.L.—You enter into a partnership of joy, but it brings also terrible toil and profound sadness, says the Master’s note. All of that is true, but it is also true that the ever-increasing joy counterbalances the sadness.

Every student who has developed his faculties fully is, by the hypothesis, a sympathetic man; he must pass through a period of sadness and almost of despair, because of all the sorrow and suffering which he sees. Because people are backward in evolution and are not yet reasonable, there is in evidence much more of suffering and sorrow, of anger, hatred, jealousy, envy and the like than of high virtues, so that there is a preponderance of unpleasant vibrations from humanity. This shows itself in the astral world, so that any man who becomes fully developed astrally becomes at the same time aware of the sorrow and trouble of the world—aware of it only in a vague way, but it is ever present with him as a weight resting upon him. Constantly individual instances of the astral sorrow and suffering which happen to occur in his neighbourhood also press strongly upon him. In addition any catastrophe involving a great deal of sorrow to a large number of people distinctly influences the astral atmosphere of the world.

The student has to learn how to receive that without being weighed down by it, and that takes a considerable time. He gradually learns to look more deeply, and as time goes on he begins to see that all this trouble is necessary under the circumstances which men themselves have created. The suffering that comes is a necessity because of their great carelessness and laxity. If men had been a little more careful a very great part of it could easily have been avoided. I have mentioned before that the real suffering brought to us by karma from past lives is perhaps a tenth of that which comes to us, and the other nine-tenths is the result

of our own wrong attitude here and now, in this life. In that sense there is a vast amount of entirely unnecessary suffering. But the other side of the shield is that while people persist in taking the wrong attitude, in thinking and acting foolishly, under the eternal law suffering must come upon them; in an indirect way that is distinctly good, because it is bringing them to a sense of their own folly. The pity is that they need so very much reminding, that they cannot at once take the hint and alter their attitude—so much suffering might be saved if that could be.

This seems to all of us who have studied the matter very easy to see. I cherish a hope, therefore, and I think a well-founded hope, that the suffering of the world will diminish very rapidly as soon as the common-sense view of things is accepted by a fairly large minority of people. They will come to see that they are making their own trouble for themselves, and in process of time they will refrain from all that is undesirable, purely from the common-sense point of view. Members of the Theosophical Society ought to be displaying before the world an example of the Theosophical attitude towards life, but there are many of them who, although they know these truths, find it hard to put them into practice. That is only natural, but at the same time one does feel that many of them might take up the new ideas a little more quickly, and it is certain that things of this sort do spread in a definite sort of ratio. One man can state a view and make a little impression; ten men can make more than ten times the impression; a hundred men can make vastly more than a hundred times the impression that one man could, unless he happened to be a rare genius. We have some thirty thousand members in our Society; I think if all of them were really taking this higher philosophical view of life, and were thereby obviously avoiding a great amount of suffering, they would form a powerful and striking example. In that way we could help a vast number who as yet do not know anything about the higher side of things.

When we begin to see that what is being done is always the best—the best under the circumstances for everybody—our sorrow is no longer of the same kind as before. We are just as sympathetic towards others, but we are no longer overwhelmed by their suffering; we sympathize with them but do not share their feelings. The Masters are profoundly sympathetic with people who are suffering,

and yet we could not say that They Themselves share in that suffering, because of Their insight. As I have said before, a Master is never sad, never depressed. It has seemed to me sometimes, however, as though even They could be disappointed with people. I do not know that I ought to say even as much as that, but I know this, that They make very strong efforts sometimes to bring about certain results, and yet those results, through the failure of Their instruments, are not brought about. I do not know whether They foresee from the beginning that those efforts will fail. I cannot but feel that in many cases They do, but yet They make them precisely as though They expected them to succeed. For example, much work was done before the great war in an attempt to avoid it. That effort failed, but whether the Adepts who inaugurated it knew from the beginning that such would be the result I do not know: They worked at it as though They expected it to be successful.

Madame Blavatsky in many cases offered people opportunities in a similar way. Sometimes she made every endeavour to persuade them to take them, when she knew from the beginning that they would not do so. I well remember one occasion on which some people came to her to make enquiries. They seemed to me obviously unsuited for any Theosophic knowledge or -work, since they were not at all in the frame of mind in which it would be of use to them. She spoke to these mere casual strangers, and told them about quite intimate things which she hoped to do in the Society. They were rather sneering people, who did not seem in the least worthy of such confidence, and when they went away the Countess Wachtmeister said: "Madame, why did you tell those people these things? It seems certain they are not the sort of people to whom it would do any good. They will only go away and sneer, and perhaps do us harm." Madame Blavatsky replied: "Well, my dear, some karma has brought them to me, and I must give them their chance, and do all I can for them." She thought that to take them to some extent into her confidence in that way was giving them a chance. I cannot tell, and she could, how near they may have been inwardly to taking it, but on the surface their attitude was the conventional sneering attitude. We never heard any more of them, but they had had their chance. Some past karma had evidently given them the right to the opportunity, and though it meant nothing to them then, it may possibly help them a little towards taking it when another such chance comes to them.

On this occasion Madame Blavatsky carried out very fully the idea of not blaming people who are in darkness. She knew that the more self-satisfied they were the more they were to be pitied. It is useless to blame anybody for being what he habitually is, because that is his level in evolution; that is as far as he has got. If he falls below his average level we may reasonably say: "You know, that is wrong; you ought not to have done that," and it may possibly help him not to do it again. But the level where a man habitually is shows where he is in evolution, and however far back he is there is nothing to be gained by blaming him. It would be as foolish as to blame a child of five years old because he is not yet ten.

Then again, those very people who frequently exhibit the least pleasant characteristics have in them the potentiality of the high and noble things as well, and sometimes these come out in a great burst when an emergency arises. As I explained before, there are men whose ordinary lives are certainly at a very low level, yet in some great emergency they may show an unselfishness which enables them to throw away their lives for the sake of a comrade. Man always has the god within, and it shows out sometimes when we least expect it. Because it is there, it is always possible to appeal to it. We cannot always reach it, because it is so deeply buried, yet in most cases we are able to catch a glimpse of it in some way.

The sight of the suffering of the world also brings, it is said here, terrible toil; once having seen this vast mass of backwardness and misery we cannot help working all the time to alter it. There is nothing else to be done. We can never go back into the world and be careless of the existence of the suffering and sorrow when once we have really felt it. Yet behind the toil is a great and ever-increasing delight. This comes from the recognition of the law; we see the meaning of suffering and the good that is to come out of it. Note the words: "You enter into a partnership of joy." That is the real beauty of this higher life. We come into partnership with the greater people. We feel ourselves to be working for and with Them, and that is of itself so great a joy that it supports us through work which otherwise we might feel it impossible to carry out.

CHAPTER 11

RULE 21

21. Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm: not till them.

It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted—not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience—not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its Higher Self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain, when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak—it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for, and desired, even amid the raging of the storm.

C.W.L.—The blooming of the flower is the development, the unfoldment of the soul. The worst feature of sorrow and suffering down here is the feeling that one is helpless. People engage in all sorts of struggles, and in many cases think they are predestined to fail. They will say: “I have heard of certain people making rapid progress, but there is no chance for me.” They are hopeless about it because they do not know. We can never again have that feeling when once the soul has unfolded itself, because we know. We shall still have struggles and troubles and difficulties, but we know for certain that as souls we are invincible.

As is said here, it is in the silence and the calm that the soul grows. People tell us, and I think that they often emphasize it quite unduly, that the soul grows through suffering. Put that way the statement is not quite correct. It is by making mistakes and correcting them that the soul learns how to grow, and suffering

invariably comes as the result of the mistakes; but as I have explained before, the growth does not take place during the suffering, but afterwards. A person may be very much better after a surgical operation, but the improvement does not take place while the operation is being performed⁴⁹..) In like manner while people are in the throes of all sorts of terrible difficulties they are not growing, but by the way in which they meet those difficulties they may be learning to grow after they have surmounted them. It is in the silence which follows the storm that the flower grows. It is possible that plants may develop strength within themselves by enduring a storm, but growth can come only when the buffeting of the storm is over. We must have gone through the turmoil of battle before we gain that great reward of victory, the real unfoldment of the soul, which brings with it a calm certainty which nothing again can ever shake.

The whole world is crying out, as it were, for that certainty about the higher things. So eager are the people that any charlatan who professes to have direct knowledge is at once assured of a following. Any teacher who is in earnest always draws people round him, because the religions of the world have failed sadly to give any real satisfaction. The weak point of most religious teaching in regard to all the subjects is that it does not explain; it simply lays down the law—perfectly good law—such as “Thou shalt not kill,” but it does not explain in detail why all these things are wrong. For example, as regards anger and evil thought, nothing is taught as to the wrong done in that way so long as it does not show itself either in speech or in action. Yet Christ spoke plainly enough on matters of that sort. He declared emphatically with regard to the seventh commandment that a man who looked in the wrong way upon a woman had already committed the sin in his heart, but there is no record of His having given any explanation as to the way in which the thought-form acts, which would have made His teaching on that point far more comprehensible.

The first step towards gaining direct certainty about spiritual or superphysical truth is that which is in effect—the first step in all occult progress—the dominating of the personality. When we have achieved that, peace comes at once, and we then find we have been living in the midst of an atmosphere of peace and did not know it; because we ourselves made a little storm around us for us the peace was not, even though some of our neighbours may have been

living in it all the time. When this soul faculty, this certainty, is attained, nothing ever seems the same again, because then we can no longer have any sense of hopelessness. That which we merely believe may fail us at a critical time, because the basis of belief which satisfies a man at one time does not always satisfy him at another, when perhaps he is under tremendous strain. But this certainty always satisfies. When once we have seen and known for ourselves, even though that sight and knowledge may fall away from us and we may no longer be able to cling to them, we can always say: "I have seen; I have known; just now I am not able to see or to know but I have seen, I have known," and that certainty carries us through.

Indeed, when we have had this direct experience we find it very difficult to think ourselves back into the condition in which we were before. It changes our whole attitude towards everything in the world. Happenings which seemed of great importance before are seen to be of much less significance; now that we know the great inner truth of the life which really matters, the outer life which does not matter takes its proper place. Yet we have to remember that most people whom we meet are still where we were before we had that expansion of consciousness, and it is sometimes a little difficult not to lack sympathy with them, because they are pursuing will-o'-the-wisps. We forget that until yesterday we were doing the same thing.

The silence may last a moment of time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that nature can be still.

The actual moment of complete unfoldment may take place at any point of a man's career; that is to say, when the time comes for the soul to unfold it can do so whether it has a physical body or not at the time; the silence would last only a moment, or only a very short time, here on the physical plane, but it might well last a thousand years if the man were in the heaven-world. It will come at some time to all, and once attained it can never be lost. Yet it is only for a moment that nature can be still, because evolution is steadily going on, and to stand still is not to evolve. It has been said that in occultism no man stands still, that he is always either retrograding or advancing. I do not know whether that is actually

so, but it is quite certain that if he is not advancing he should examine himself, and try to find out why. There ought to be steady and continuous progress.

We come now to the Master Hilarion's note on Rule 21.

The opening of the bloom is the glorious moment when perception awakes; with it comes confidence, knowledge, certainty. The pause of the soul is the moment of wonder, and the next moment of satisfaction—that is the silence.

The opening of the bloom is a gradual process. Even while the bud is still tightly shut it is slowly swelling under the influence of the sun and rain and the manifold influences that play upon it. The actual bursting of the bud is comparatively sudden, but the growth is continuous. The growth has been progressing before that; it will go on after. To take another analogy: the growth of the chicken has been taking place inside the egg before, and it continues after, the breaking of the shell; there is a particular point when the shell is broken that is for us the dramatic moment, though it is really only part of a steady growth. It is the same with the growth of the soul.

This passage refers also to a particular stage in the disciple's life. It describes the feelings of the man when the first great truth of Initiation is put before him. People are apt to think that the things that will be taught at Initiation are many and various. I violate no pledge in saying that the great truths are not all given at the same time. At each stage one single fact is communicated—a fact that changes the face of the earth for the man, in the same way that the knowledge of reincarnation and karma has changed our lives. One would expect that, having a new fact put before him, it would be necessary for the Initiate to grow into it and prove it. It is not so. The moment the man has the truth he recognizes it at once as true: he needs no proof. Then comes the moment of wonder; he marvels at the beauty and perfection of it. Only later does he see that this is not everything. Later vision brings more into view, but for the moment it is perfection. He wonders also that what is so obvious has escaped his notice before. Then comes the moment of satisfaction that is the silence.

Know, O disciple, that those who have passed through the silence, and felt its peace and retained its strength, they long that you shall pass through it

also.

Certainly they do, because those who have unfolded the faculties of the soul know the whole system, and see it all in action before them, and because they see it, they yearn that every one shall see it. They realize that part of that plan is that we should all help. Therefore they desire that every one as soon as possible should be brought to see that his duty is to assist, that that is the real work of the world. We all have subsidiary work to do; we have our part to play on the stage of the physical world, and we must play that part as well, as nobly, as we can; it does not matter what it is, it matters only that we should play it well. But we must remember that behind that is the real soul-life, and that is the thing of greatest importance.

We live in an atmosphere where the means is taken for the end. Most of our education is built on that plan. For example, people are taught geometry and mathematics, but are never shown that these lead to a comprehension of how the great Architect has constructed His universe. So long as we take them as ends in themselves they lead nowhere in particular; but if we follow them up as did the ancients who invented them, we shall find they are of great use. Pythagoras taught the value of numbers and of geometry, but he taught it to the *physikoi*, that is, to those who were learning the secrets of life. They learnt them in order to comprehend life better, and it is from that point of view that we should study all things, not merely to make material and commercial calculations.

Therefore, in the Hall of Learning, when he is capable of entering there, the disciple will always find his Master.

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding about those words, “the Hall of Learning”. They are used also in *The Voice of the Silence*. The three halls mentioned there may be taken in more than one way, as I have already explained.⁵⁰

Mabel Collins, who wrote down *Light on the Path*, took the hall of learning in a very literal sense as an actual building. She speaks of having astrally entered this building and seen some of these precepts written there in golden letters on the wall. She may be perfectly right in making this statement. This experience

may belong to the particular method by which she was taught, and those who taught her may have had such a temple. I do not know whether that is so; I can only say that I have never seen it. But it is quite obvious that much of what is said here about the hall of learning clearly refers to the astral plane, where the aspirant at first learns most of his lessons. Few men have yet developed the astral body fully; most are still learning how to use it; therefore a great deal of work is being done at that level. Men are also gradually developing the mental body, but are not yet able to use that as a vehicle even after death. Anyone who has developed the faculties of the mental body and can look at dead people, finds them each shut up in a shell of his own thought, with certain avenues open from that shell—but only a very few, and only to a very limited degree. The dead man lives in that shell, and not in the mental world at all. That is why he is perfectly happy with his very limited ideas. Undoubtedly his capacity for bliss would be far greater if he had the whole mental plane at his disposal and had developed the faculties which would enable him to function fully on it. As it is, he is in the midst of it all, but because of his limitations he can touch only a small amount of what might otherwise be attained.

Few people have developed the mental body to a point at which it can be used as a vehicle. Pupils of the Masters are in due course taught to travel in their mental bodies, and to form what is called the *mayavi rupa* when they wish to work on the astral plane. One who has learnt to do this leaves his astral and physical bodies lying on the bed, and when he wishes to work on the astral plane he materializes a temporary astral body for that purpose and lets it dissolve again as soon as the necessity for it has passed. The Master first teaches the pupil how it is done, and after that he can do it for himself, as I have explained in *The Masters and the Path*?⁵¹

The assurance that the disciple will find his Master in the hall of learning seems to be a direct contradiction to the direction given in *The Voice of the Silence*—“Look not for thy Guru in those mayavic regions “⁵² The two passages are perfectly reconcilable if one understands what each means. The meaning here is that in the astral world the man will always find someone representing the Master. The Master Himself will deal with him probably only on special occasions, and he will work on the astral plane generally under the direction of

one of the older pupils of the Master.

The statement in *The Voice of the Silence* is merely a warning to us not to accept any casual astral entity as a guide, without knowing exactly who he is, for there are numbers of astral beings of various kinds who are ready in the most praiseworthy way to appoint themselves as teachers, and they are not in the least deterred by the fact that they often know very much less than the people whom they propose to teach.

Those that ask shall have. But though the ordinary man asks perpetually, his voice is not heard. For he asks with his mind only; and the voice of the mind is only heard on that plane on which the mind acts. Therefore, not until the first twenty-one rules are passed do I say that those that ask shall have.

The first sentence in the above passage recalls a very similar one in the Gospels, in which the Christ says; “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”⁵³ People generally take this to mean that their prayers will be answered and that if they knock at the door of heaven it will be opened to them. They vaguely think that if they try to obtain salvation it will be vouchsafed to them. This passage takes a higher standpoint, and refers quite clearly to truth and occult development. It does not apply to the ordinary man, but to the pupil who, when the first twenty-one rules are passed, has reached the first Initiation.

The man who asks with his mind only is endeavouring to gain occult knowledge, trying to peer into the mysteries of life and nature, merely by his mental powers, and the Master says quite clearly that that is not enough. That man will get his reply, but only at the level on which the mind acts. That is, he will acquire only an intellectual conception of certain matters. Still, that is a very fine thing to have, and is not at all to be despised. The man who in studying Theosophy obtains a firm intellectual grasp of its teaching has done exceedingly well. He then accepts it as true, because it satisfies the demands of his intellect. That is already a valuable result, but it is not actual knowledge; it is not at all the same thing as the absolute certainty which comes from knowledge gained on the intuitional plane, and the occultist thinks only of that knowledge as marking a really important advance.

One cannot have too keen an intellect; we may take that quite definitely for granted. It is well that we should endeavour to add to our knowledge, to develop our intellects by doing something definite, because, as I have explained before, no great progress can be made before there is mental as well as astral development. In some cases the man who gains an intellectual grasp of the Theosophical system may run a considerable risk of exalting his intellect unduly. He may be tempted to criticize, to feel that he could have planned the universe much better than it is at present arranged. The man who does that is making an entirely wrong use of his intellect and will do himself harm. It would be much better for him if he were able to acquire some development along the line of feeling more deeply and keenly. But if along with his intellectual development the man can retain humility, if, while he grasps as much as he can of the system, he can yet, within himself and without, refrain from sitting in judgment upon it, then only good will result from his development.

We are always told that we must follow our own conscience. The dictates of conscience come from above and represent usually the knowledge of the ego on the subject. But the ego himself is only partially developed as yet. His knowledge on any given subject may be quite small, or even inaccurate, and he can reason only from the information before him. Because of this a man's conscience often misleads him. It sometimes happens that an ego who is young and knows but little may nevertheless be able to impress his will upon the personality. As a general rule, the undeveloped ego is also undeveloped in his power of impressing himself upon his lower vehicles, and perhaps that is just as well. Sometimes, however, an ego who lacks development in tolerance and wide knowledge may yet have a will sufficiently strong to impress upon his physical brain orders which would show that he was a very young ego and did not understand.⁵⁴

We cannot but obey our conscience, yet surely we might try to check and verify it by certain broad facts which no one can dispute. It may be that the Inquisitors were acting under the dictates of their conscience sometimes, but if they had compared the great broad rules that they should love one another which their supposed leader, Christ, had given them, with the conscience which dictated murders and tortures and burnings, they would have waited and said:

“Manifestly something is wrong. Let us at least take counsel before we follow our instincts in this particular matter.” They would have been quite right to take such counsel, to test that conscience, by the general rules coming from One whom they themselves acknowledged as infinitely greater than themselves. They did not think of it; so came much evil into the world. Very few people will pause and consider in a case of that sort, yet one can easily see that it is the only safe thing to do.

So we must use our intellect in such a way that it will be an instrument of the ego, and will not be an obstacle in the path of his development. Therefore, when conscience seems to dictate to us something which is clearly against the great laws of mercy and truth and justice, we shall do well to think carefully whether the universal rule is not a greater thing than this particular application which seems to conflict with it.

Even before we have any definite consciousness on the intuitional plane we often receive reflections from it. Intuitions occasionally come through into our daily life, and although most of those impressions from the higher self which are genuine come rather from the causal world than from the buddhic, still now and then we receive a flash of the real knowledge of the spirit which cannot express itself on any level lower than the buddhic plane. These priceless flashes bring us a knowledge which we feel to be absolutely certain, though in many cases we cannot give any intellectual reason for it.

We are right in feeling confident about it, if the thing is a real intuition. The difficulty for most of us at the earlier stages is that we cannot always distinguish between intuition and impulse. Dr. Besant has given one or two rules for that distinction. She says: “If you have time to wait and see, let the matter remain for a while—sleep on it, as people sometimes say. If it be merely an impulse, the probability is that it will die away; if it is a real intuition it will remain as strong as ever. Then, again, the intuition is always connected with something unselfish. If there is any touch of selfishness shown in some impulse coming from a higher plane you may be sure that it is only an astral impulse and not a true buddhic intuition.”

Both the astral impulses and the intuitions from above enter the etheric part

of the physical brain from the astral plane, but the intuition would come originally either from the causal or from the buddhic body, as the case may be. Since both descend from above it is often difficult to distinguish between them. We shall be able to distinguish infallibly at a later stage, because then we shall have our consciousness opened above the astral level and will know certainly whether these promptings arise in the astral body or come from a higher plane. At present most people have not that advantage, and consequently they have to exercise their best judgment with such mind as they have succeeded in developing.

When the twenty-one rules are passed and the disciple at Initiation receives a touch of buddhic consciousness, the knowledge of unity appears to him as a great spiritual fact. After that experience there is a difference between him and the ordinary man who asks with his mind. It has often been said that unity is the characteristic of the buddhic plane. That, perhaps, requires a little more explanation. One may know something fairly completely in one's causal body—know the essence of the thing, because the ego, working through the causal body, thinks abstract thoughts. He does not need to descend to examples, for his thoughts pierce through to the heart of the matter. But all that, however wonderful it is, is still done from the outside.

The great characteristic of the buddhic plane is that its work is done from the inside. If we want to sympathize with a man, to understand him fully in order to help him, and are working in the causal body, we, metaphorically speaking, turn the limelight upon his causal body, and study all his peculiarities; they are quite well marked and plainly to be seen, but they are always seen from without. If we want the same knowledge, possessing the faculty of the buddhic plane, we raise our consciousness to the buddhic plane, and there we find the consciousness of this other man as part of ourselves. We find a point of consciousness there which represents him—we might call it a hole rather than a point. We can pour ourselves down that hole and enter into his consciousness at any lower level that we wish, and therefore we can see everything precisely as he sees it—from inside him, as it were, instead of looking at him from outside. It will be easily understood how much more that lends itself to perfect understanding and sympathy.

When we have the wider view which such knowledge gives, and, having become one with all these different entities and all their different problems, we are studying them from within instead of from without, we can see the direction in which we ought to bring our force to bear. That is another and very great advantage—that we know how to approach problems down here. I do not mean that a man who has had a glimpse of that unity would not make mistakes on a lower plane; but he would not make such mistakes if he were able to raise his consciousness to that plane, look at the thing from that point of view, and then bring the remembrance clearly down into his physical brain and act upon it. He might not always have time to go through that proceeding, or he might not think of doing it at the moment; therefore, at times he would make errors like other men, but certainly he would have very great advantage in the possession of that power, not only because of the greater knowledge it gave him at the moment, but also because of the wider view which would enable him to see in what direction his forces could best be used to produce the desired results.

To read, in the occult sense, is to read with the eyes of the spirit. To ask is to feel the hunger within—the yearning of spiritual aspiration. To be able to read means having obtained the power in a small degree of gratifying that hunger.

The yearning of spiritual aspiration is not the mere desire to know and understand, which we might have in connection with the causal body. It belongs rather to the higher manifestation of the buddhic level, and it is only there that it can be fully satisfied. As I have explained, what happens in the buddhic vehicle, if brought down to the personality, is reflected in the astral body. People consequently often mistake an emotional outburst which belongs to the astral plane for real spiritual aspiration.

Those who have studied occultism ought not to make that mistake, but beginners frequently do so. We very often see examples of that during religious revivalist meetings, when quite uneducated and undeveloped people are worked up into a high condition of ecstasy for the time by the preaching of some person who is full of strong emotion himself, and therefore is able to awaken it in his hearers. Some of the great emotional preachers of the past had that power very strongly indeed. I do not for a moment say that they did not accomplish a great

deal of good; no doubt they did, but most of their work was confessedly what we should call astral—it was aimed at the feelings of the people.

Undoubtedly there are people in whom the higher aspiration can be evoked by working from below, but they are very few and they would be little likely to be found among the less cultured classes. This is not a narrow or illiberal view to take, because conditions of birth result from karma; if a person is born in a class of life in which he is uncultured and uneducated, it is because he has deserved that birth, and therefore the strong probabilities are that he is a younger soul than one who is born with greater advantages. That is not invariably so, because there are many exceptions and special cases, but broadly speaking it is true. So when evangelists of the Moody and Sankey type address themselves chiefly to the less educated people it is on the whole to be expected that they will arouse their emotions only, and it is uncertain whether the results will or will not be permanent. If the impression made is strong enough, the memory of it will survive even when the emotion dies down, and the person who has been what they call “saved” may remain in his new and more exalted frame of mind.

These great emotional upheavals are sometimes beneficial, but in many instances they are harmful. Against the cases of people who have thereby permanently abandoned their evil life we have to set those ethers in which serious harm is done, in which people, for example, are altogether driven off their mental balance, and become weak-minded or even violently insane. Cases in which lasting benefit results are not very common; the great majority are affected only temporarily: the excitement passes and no very definite good remains. Nevertheless it is a good thing in those cases in which people are raised even temporarily to a higher level.

Such emotionalism is not permissible, however, to students of occultism, because they are beyond the stage at which such excitement could advance their progress. There must be no confusion between emotion of that sort and the exaltation of the higher planes. People at such revivals often pass into an ecstatic condition in which they certainly lose control for the time. I have myself seen cases in which people stamped about, shouted loudly, and were so carried out of themselves that they did not know what they were doing. They say it is all joy; I

suppose that they certainly do feel that, but it is an uncontrolled emotion, and therefore is to be avoided by the student of occultism.

The man who experiences buddhic consciousness is also carried out of himself, with a bliss so intense that words altogether fail to express it: but he never loses the knowledge that he is himself. He is on a higher level: he is more himself than he ever was before; he does not lose his self-control. The ecstasy which he feels may indeed produce by reflection a certain emotion in the personality—a feeling of most intense joy on all levels, but never an uncontrolled emotion. It would never lead him into rash or ill-considered actions, to forget himself or lose his dignity. With the intense exaltation, with the indescribable bliss of the higher experience, there comes an utter peace which seems to fill the earth, whereas the lower emotions disturb the equilibrium to a most extraordinary extent.

A clairvoyant watching a revivalist meeting will generally see that non-human entities are gathered round it in order to take advantage of the vast waves of uncontrolled emotion. Emotion is a tremendous force and these waves are, if we consider actual measurement, things of enormous size and power. They dash and rush about through the astral world in the neighbourhood, and produce all the effect there that a great tempest would show on the physical plane. There are many astral creatures who revel in that. They plunge in and feel the greatest delight and excitement because of it. They neither know nor care whether the emotion is religious feeling or hatred or love; they want only the tremendous vibration, the swirl and sway of the storm. These beings take the greatest delight in sweeping round in its vortices, and being carried away by it, very much in the same way that surf-bathers do in the sea. For that purpose these entities will stir up emotion among human beings as much as they can; they simply know that here is something which they enjoy tremendously, so they go to work to intensify it as much as possible. Very largely they are responsible for the great outbursts of force on such occasions, and these creatures make it greater just as a school of whales rushing about in rough water would make it rougher. They have just about the same amount of intelligence as those animals, so there is nothing very spiritual about it. It is not, as many people think, a divine afflatus, nor is it exactly dignified to allow oneself to be the sport of creatures at that level.

Only if with intense exaltation and bliss there comes at the same time a sense of uttermost calm and peace is one touching higher levels; when there is excitement and disturbance, and a loss of self-control, one is certainly down on a lower level.

When the disciple is ready to learn, then he is accepted, acknowledged, recognized. It must be so, for he has lit his lamp, and it cannot be hidden.

This is a comforting saying. Disciples are always watched, though many people find difficulty in realizing this. The Great Ones Themselves have explained that when They look over the world the man who has lit his lamp shows out like a great flame in the general darkness. They could not miss seeing it. Carefully They are watching wherever the light is beginning to glow and are trying to help each little glow to kindle into flame, so that these also may become bearers of light, to the world.

People are apt sometimes to criticize unwisely in this matter. Perhaps it is natural; but it would be better for *them* if they did not. I have myself known cases in which members—generally keenly intellectual people, who were very sharp in discriminating faults and failings in others—have said: “So-and-so is a pupil of the Master; I do not see that he is in any way more fit for such a position than I am myself. I have been so many years in the Society; I have done such-and-such work, and if such-and-such a man with certain obvious failings may be accepted, why should not I?”

People who make remarks like those forget the general principle which lies at the back of all occult progress. Their objection is exactly the same in nature as that which is so often brought against the law of karma. People say they cannot see the justice of certain things that have happened to them, and therefore there is no law of justice. “Justice is not to be had—it is a delusion.” That is precisely what it would be to say, “I have made a machine to go by hydraulic power, and it does not work; therefore there is no such thing as hydraulic pressure.” No sane man would say that; he would begin to look for the fault in his machine, knowing that the laws of nature are invariable, and mistakes are not made along that line. No one would take that attitude with regard to a law of physical science, yet people will do it in connection with the law of karma. If they would

begin with the hypothesis that the law of karma exists, and that it invariably works, then, when they cannot see how it operates in a particular case, they would attribute the fault to themselves and their limited vision, and not make so foolish a mistake as to say that there is no such thing as the law of karma.

In exactly the same way, if people think themselves better in various ways than others who are selected by the Masters as pupils, they should remember that the Master makes His selections with unerring judgment. There are no doubt many things on higher planes which even a Master does not yet know, but quite certainly with regard to all these lower planes with which we have anything to do, His knowledge may be accepted as infallible. There are higher Adepts who stand above the Masters, such as the Manu and the Bodhisattva, the Buddha and the great Lord of the World, who must know certain things which even our Masters do not know: that is clear. The Logos of the solar system must know still more, and beyond that there must be higher Logoi who have yet wider knowledge. But we may be quite sure of the Master's judgment and accuracy with regard to these planes which He has fully and finally mastered. Therefore, if He chooses a man He is not making a mistake.

Even in the rare case when a man afterwards falls away and acts unworthily it does not follow that the Master made a mistake in selecting such a man. The man must have had the right to that splendid opportunity, and because he had earned that right the opportunity had to be given him. A vast amount of trouble may have been taken in the training of such a pupil, and it looks as though it were wasted; but that is not so. It will all count somewhere, somehow, in the course of his evolution; that is certain. The Master sometimes offers an opportunity to a man because he has earned it, although there may be in that man along with certain good qualities others less desirable, which would make him unsuitable if they happened to get the upper hand. Nevertheless the offer is made because it is just that it should be made.

Sometimes there are special links between egos which many lives later culminate in the close relationship of Master and pupil. There is the well-known case of our late Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett. Long ago he was a powerful nobleman in Egypt. His father had built and endowed a great temple; therefore

he had a vast amount of influence, and was practically the controlling power of that temple. One of those who are now our Masters was a prisoner of war in Egypt at the time, and Mr. Sinnett and I were soliders in the army which captured Him. He was a person of distinction in His own country, and consequently He was assigned to our care, because captives of high rank were very well treated in Egypt, and were entertained by people of rank corresponding with their own, so long as they did not try to escape. So He lived in the house of Mr. Sinnett for two years, and in the course of that time became keenly interested in the occult work of the Temple, and wished to take part in it. Mr. Sinnett was able to give Him the desired introduction to occult study. He made the most astonishing progress in it, and in every life thereafter He continued the studies begun in ancient Khem. In a later life He became an Adept, while His benefactor of Egypt had by no means reached that level. When in this incarnation He found that He wanted to spread Theosophical truths in the world, because the time was come when the world was ripe to receive them, He looked round for someone to do it, and saw His old friend and benefactor as the editor of a great daily newspaper, and well qualified to do this very piece of work. He discharged this old debt by giving him that opportunity. We know how well and nobly he took it. That shows that one may have made a link far away in the past with one who has since become an Adept, and that His discharge of the debt naturally takes the form of giving help and information, and of drawing the man close to Him.

So in various ways links may be made, and it may well be that the person who is chosen as a disciple is by no means perfect, but he could not be chosen in that particular way if he were not worthy. That he has still certain faults and failings does not debar him if he has other and greater recommendations, if the advantages overbalance the disadvantages. There are many circumstances which may operate in the taking of a particular pupil by a Master. We may be quite sure that he cannot be taken unless he deserves it, but we may not be able to see how he has deserved it. The converse of that proposition is equally certain—that no one who deserves it can fail to be observed and be taken. It is not wise to use this lower mind, which we have developed with so much pain and trouble, in criticizing the actions of the Masters, who know far more than we. We may not always be able to understand why They do this or that, but those who follow

Them should at least so far trust Them as to say: “I know the Master must be right. I do not see plainly why. As far as I am concerned I know that I shall be taken when I am ready. My business is to make myself fit for it. In the meantime, I have no concern with what the Master does with regard to other people.”

That is much the wisest. It is the same with the work we are given to do. If it seems outwardly to be a failure, we should not allow that to discourage us. We may not have achieved the result that we expected, but we may have achieved exactly the result which the Master intended. He does not always tell us all that is in His mind. He will set us a piece of work to do, and we think that what is to us the obvious result of that work is necessarily what He is aiming to get from it. It may be that He has in His mind quite another idea. He may even wish to train the worker in a particular way—not to be disappointed by failure, for example; or it might have reference to something else of which the worker knew nothing at all. I have had several instances of that in the course of my experience of occultism. We were told to do certain things, and supposed them to be aimed at a certain result, which did not come. We wondered; but in after years it has been seen that something quite different would not have been attained when it was, if that work had not been done. I have no doubt at all that in that case the Master gave us the work, not with the object we supposed, but with the other object of which we knew nothing.

So I would say to those who grumble at what they consider faults in disciples, and say they ought not to be chosen: “You must be taking a partial view; you are using your intellect in a line where it is not useful. If you know of the existence of the Masters, and understand anything of Their powers, you may be very sure that They know exactly what They are doing; and if you do not see what it is, after all it is not essential that you should. *They* know; that is the important thing.” The recognition is not always made known at once to the disciple. The ordinary course is that a man who has shown himself worthy of the high honour of discipleship is brought somehow into close touch with one who is already a disciple of his future Master, and the Master through that disciple usually gives some instructions to him. ⁵⁵ Probably the Master will say to the older disciple: “Bring so-and-so to me astrally one night.” The man is brought, and then the Master says to him: I have been watching your work, and I think

that you can perhaps make a further advancement. I offer you the position of a probationary pupil if you will undertake to devote all your energies, or as much as you can, to the service of humanity, in a direction which I shall indicate.” That is the most usual procedure, but sometimes such a recognition as that comes only after a very long period. And even then there may be reasons why the man should know nothing of it in his waking consciousness.

I remember a peculiar case in India. There was an old man, an orthodox Hindu, who had been living an exceedingly good, useful, and busy life. He was a man who had shown no selfishness, and had devoted himself as far as he could to the welfare of humanity. He had first dealt very admirably with all his family duties, and had then used all his time and money in doing good from his point of view. He had always held, before the Theosophical Society came to his notice, that the great Rishis not only must have existed in the past, but must also exist in the present, and he hoped some day to come near Them, but was quite humble about it. He would say: “I know it is for Them to make the advance, not me. I have sought Them, and tried to carry out what must be Their will all these years.” At last, one day, one of our Masters spoke to this man, and said: “For forty years I have watched your work, and in many cases have guided you, although you knew nothing of it. Now the time has come when it is best for you that you should know it.”

That is a very striking example, and it does seem to show that there may be many altruistic people doing work under the direction of our Masters, although they know nothing of such direction. There may be reasons which in this life make it undesirable that they should know. We may be very sure that the Master knows best, and, if he does not choose to declare Himself, we need not therefore suppose that He is not watching.

In these relations the Master always does exactly what is best for the man as well as what is best for the work, because He has the enormous advantage of dealing with these things at higher levels, where one has not to balance good against evil, as in the lower planes, where very often one can do good in one direction only when one does some harm in another way. This recondite matter was alluded to by the Manu, when He said that there was no fire without smoke.

But there is fire without smoke, pure good without any adverse consequences or associations, on the higher levels, because all is working together for the good of the whole, and the advancement of the whole includes the advancement of the unit also. Even though it may seem in some cases that harm is done, that a person is checked, it is because it is best for his progress that such a check should then come—like the pruning of a tree, which might easily be thought by the tree to be a cruel act, and yet is emphatically intended for its benefit.

But to learn is impossible until the first great battle has been won. The mind may recognize truth, but the spirit cannot receive it.

The ego sends impressions through to the lower planes as soon as he begins to become awakened, but there are many things that stand in his way. He can do nothing until the astral body is controlled; because if it is a mass of surging emotions, how; can the ego send down through that body any coherent or rational instruction? The first great battle is with the passions, with the senses, and he must conquer them; but when that is done he has still the mind to meet, and it may be that the mind will prove a more formidable adversary even than the astral body.

Then the Master goes on to speak about the knowledge which is attained by this intuition. I have already explained that at each Initiation the candidate receives a key of knowledge which puts a different complexion upon life for him, shows him a deeper depth, a fuller unfolding, as it were, of the meaning of the occult teaching. ⁵⁶ Each time, as he receives it, it seems to the man to be final. He says: “Now I have all knowledge; this is so satisfying, so complete, it is impossible that there could be more.” There is an infinity yet to be learnt; he is only on the road of learning. As he goes on, more and more will be unfolded before him. The Master knows precisely at what stage it is most useful to give certain information. People often think they ought to have it all at once. That is just as foolish as it would be to expect a teacher to explain the differential calculus to a child who was only just learning the multiplication table. He must go through many intervening stages before he can know even remotely what it means.

It is exactly so with us. We are a little apt often—again comes that

intellectual conceit—to think that we know at least enough to be trusted with all possible knowledge. I can only say that They know better than we what is best for us, and whatever is best for each one is also that which is best for the whole.

While many people recognize that that must be so, and that of course the whole must take precedence over any part, they do sometimes feel a little that the parts are being ignored, that while everything is working for the good of the whole, yet individual parts often suffer by the way. The world is better managed than that; actually, that which is best for the whole is also best for each one of the parts, and not only is justice done to humanity as a whole, but it is so done as to involve no injustice to any of the units of humanity. Let us be sure of that, and realize it with absolute certainty; then we shall have no feeling of doubt or dismay, and whatever happens we shall be able serenely to trust that it is being done for the best.

Once having passed through the storm and attained the peace, it is then always possible to learn, even though the disciple waver, hesitate, and turn aside. The Voice of the Silence, remains within him, and though he leave the Path utterly, yet one day it will resound, and rend him asunder and separate his passions from his divine possibilities. Then, with pain and desperate cries from the deserted lower self, he will return.

In such a case there would be indeed a terrible struggle. Let us not submit ourselves to that; it is better, while yet we may, to keep ourselves well in hand and not make ourselves the subjects of such a surgical operation as that of the tearing apart of the higher and lower self. The struggle with the lower self goes on all the time. If the disciple allows it to fasten its fangs into the higher and to draw him away from his greater possibilities, he must inevitably suffer terribly when the time of separation comes, as it must come, for those who have entered the stream can leave it only by reaching the further shore.

Therefore I say, Peace be with you, “My peace I give unto you,” can only be said by the Master to the beloved disciples who are as Himself.

There is a very interesting point in regard to the distinction the Master makes here. “Peace be with you” is only an ordinary Eastern salutation, though a

beautiful one. When we say “Good-bye,” which means “God be with you,” it is the same thing, for God is Peace. The “salaam” of the Muhammadans is again the same as “salem” in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem means the abode of peace. The Hindus have the word “shanti” which means peace, and their “namaste,” which means “greetings—or reverence—to Thee” is generally answered by the word “shanti”.

It is customary to write “Peace be with you” at the end of books in the East as a kind of final greeting or leave-taking from the author to the reader. But, as the Master says here, “My Peace I give unto you” can only be said under special circumstances. When Christ said: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you,⁵⁷ He was speaking to His own special disciples only. It is said here that the disciple who can receive the peace of the Master is only that one who is as the Master Himself, that is, an accepted pupil—perhaps even more, he who is the “son” of the Master. He receives not merely a good wish for peace and blessing, which would most certainly be an effective thing when pronounced by one who had the power to pronounce it, but more than that. The Master gives His own peace, the peace which nothing can disturb, to those who are as Himself, who are His own sons, part of His own nature, sharing with Him all that He is in so far as they are able to receive it. This does not mean, of course, that the pupil is able to share all that the Master is and has—to do that would mean that the pupil was himself an Adept—but at least he shares as much as possible.

There are some even among those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, to whom this can be said, and to whom it can daily be said with more completeness.

This is a very interesting and remarkable message, which may well seem strange to us, because there are a great many of us who do know something of the Eastern Wisdom, who pay reverence to the great Masters, who have for many years belonged to an organization specially devoted to Them and Their service, and yet to most of us the Master cannot say, “My Peace I give unto you,” but only to those very few whom He has taken into a much closer relation to Himself. That being so, we yet read that to some who do not know the Eastern

Wisdom at all this inner blessing can be given.

How is that, and who would they be to whom such a privilege is given? They would be few only, at the present stage of evolution, but still a few there undoubtedly are. In order to understand that, let us think what it is that enables a Master to take a pupil as close to Him as that. It is that the pupil has come into the Master's world, has learnt to look at things as the Master looks at them, and to put himself into the Master's attitude towards the world and all that belongs to it. A man may do that without knowing anything about the Eastern Wisdom or about the Master at all; he may yet without that knowledge be such a man as would take that high view. The special characteristic of the Master's attitude is that it is utterly unselfish, that the lower self does not come into it at all. He looks at everything from the standpoint of the plan of the Deity, and He never for one moment brings His own personality into the matter; if anything is helpful for human evolution it is good; if it is a hindrance to human evolution it is an evil thing. Although the Eastern Wisdom must bring us perfectly into that attitude if we understand it quite fully, yet we can see that others ignorant of it might also reach such an attitude. To be near enough to the Master to receive His peace, utter unselfishness is the first and greatest prerequisite. One may be near the Master, one may receive His peace even, and yet of two who stand beside Him and receive it, one may receive it far more fully than the other. The ignorant though utterly saintly and unselfish person will receive from the peace of the Master all he can receive, but the man who, equal to him in this respect, possesses in addition the higher wisdom, will receive from that peace infinitely more.

△ Regard the three truths. They are equal.

This line is preceded by a triangle which is used as a kind of signature of Him who wrote it, just as the cross is prefixed by Catholic Bishops to their letters and documents. It is done here to attract special attention.

The three truths to which the Master Hilarion refers are those which He Himself enunciated in another book which He dictated—*The Idyll of the White Lotus*—which has not received quite the attention which it deserves. It is an account of a previous life of His own, which He spent in Egypt when the great

Egyptian religion was in its decadence and was no longer understood. Its splendid and impersonal worship had degenerated into the following of a goddess who demanded not so much perfect purity as perfect passion from her people, and so there was much corruption.

The Master, whose name at that time was Sensa, was a clairvoyant pupil in an Egyptian temple. The priests of the temple recognized his value as a clairvoyant and as a medium, but did not wish him to teach true religion to the people, because that would have interfered with the existent ecclesiastical system, and eventually they killed him. In the course of the story, after going through many trials he found himself surrounded by a group of Adepts, among whom was his own Master, who then told him what to teach to the people—to those who had been misled by wrong teaching. They told him to preach broad truths only. We have the form in which the three great truths were then given. They are prefaced by the words: “There are three truths which are absolute and cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.” That means they can never be lost because they are held by the Great Brotherhood, although they may not at a given time be known in the world because there is no one to speak them.

The first great truth is: “The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.” This great truth at once does away with all fear of hell and of the necessity of salvation, because there is absolute certainty of final attainment for every human soul, no matter how far he may seem to have strayed from the path of evolution.

The second great truth is: “The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard, or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.” That means that the world is an expression of God, that man is part of Him and can know it for himself when he is able to raise Himself to the level at which it can be revealed to him, and that all things are definitely and intelligently moving together for good.

The third great truth is: “Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.” Here we have a clear statement of the law of karma, the law of re-adjustment, of balance.

Then follow the words: “These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.”

Here we have a scheme of religion that can be taught to every one. It consists of three main points of belief, simply formulated, yet very carefully expressed to guard against misunderstanding. They might briefly be stated thus: “Man is immortal”, “God is good” and “As a man sows so shall he reap”. In this simpler form they are suitable for those who are at the stage where they must have simple dogma laid down for them. A more developed soul will want to understand it all. To him can be given the details, and there is enough in those details to occupy the minds of the wisest of men.

These three truths can be seen; they could be deduced from experience even if it were possible that they should be lost. Many egos know them. Some know them for themselves at first-hand, but there are many others who at present, so far at least as their personalities are concerned, are only in the position of believing. They accept them because they are told they are true by those whom they trust, and because they seem to be self-evident—because they cannot otherwise in any reasonable way account for life as they see it. That is a stage, and a very useful stage, on the way to actual knowing, but of course it is not direct knowledge. I can say to you, for example, “I know those truths are really so, because on many planes and through many years I have made investigations and have carried out experiments which could not have resulted as they did unless these basic laws were true.” So far only a few can say “I have seen,” but all should work on towards that point, because actual knowledge gives one a far greater power than even the most definite intellectual conviction.

When a man is speaking of these facts, it is always evident whether he is speaking of that which he himself knows or only of that which he has heard. It makes a difference in the magnetic effect. Therefore, for the sake of others it is of importance that we should know something for ourselves as soon as possible. It may be but a very small part of the great truth, but if we know it by our own experience that at once makes it more than probable that all the rest is also true, and gives us additional confidence. Those who have the perfect confidence born of knowledge can give help to others which cannot be given until one knows. It

is that which makes our fragments of personal experience so useful.

There are many people who have at one time or other in vision, in sleep, or in meditation seen the Master. That is, perhaps, something which could not be proved to anyone else. People might say to a man who has had this experience: "Perhaps it was only an hallucination, or imagination"; but he knows perfectly well that it was not anything of the kind. He knows that he did see, and that he also felt something which made him certain that this was one of our Great Masters. That is a piece of experience, small, yet far-reaching in its effects. Those who have been so fortunate as to have had such an experience as that may be deeply thankful. They know that much at least, and to know one fact belonging to the higher world at once makes all the rest of the teaching more luminous, and clearer to follow. So such experiences are not at all to be despised.

There is no harm in the fact that we do not know perfectly. It must be so; it is in the nature of things. It is when we suppose our knowledge to be complete, when it is pitifully incomplete, when we think that we know everything and condemn other men who think differently, not realizing that they may be seeing another side of a many-sided truth, that we go wrong. Let us by all means cling to our imperfect knowledge, but, while trying to increase it whenever we get an opportunity, let us never forget that it is imperfect, lest we should be led into the mistake of condemning someone who perhaps knows more than we do. Truth is deep; truth is often mysterious. It cannot be grasped in its entirety by any one man nor by any one body or sect of men. We must gradually learn to appreciate truth, before we can know it in any of its aspects. The truth about anything is the way in which that thing presents itself to the Logos, to the Maker, of the whole system. He who made it alone understands all, knows all things as they are. His view is the only perfect view. For us truth is relative. We cannot see the whole as He sees it; but although our knowledge must be imperfect at least it need not be wrong as far as it goes. We may have so much of the truth about a certain thing that when we come to know all about it, when we reach Adeptship, we shall not have to correct what we have previously known, but only to add to it.

It is a very difficult thing to know what one may teach people outside. It is good, therefore, to have this authoritative statement from a Master, of certain

things which may be taught generally. We often have to speak about Theosophy to people who do not in the least take our point of view. In lecturing to the public one feels at times that it would help to make things clear if one revealed something of their inner meaning, and yet one hesitates lest one should do harm.

It is quite obvious that if we attempted to teach them all we know about Theosophy, many people who heard would not understand a great deal of it. There are people to whom one feels at once that one could not speak of the Masters, because the idea would be quite foreign to them. They would be likely to make some flippant or jeering remark with regard to it, and that would pain us and would bring exceedingly bad karma to them. The man who speaks evil of the Great Ones takes upon himself a very serious responsibility, and the fact that he does not believe in Them has simply nothing to do with the result. We may not believe that a certain piece of metal is hot, but if we take hold of it we shall be burnt. People who speak evil of Those who are devoting all Their lives and strength to the helping of the world, are guilty of the great sin of ingratitude, as well as of that of making a mock of holy things, which is blasphemy; and the fact that they do not know that the things are holy does not come into the question at all. So we have to balance rather carefully what we say, because the only object in speaking at all is to do good to the person addressed. We may do him harm instead of good if we put before him something at which he will jeer or mock.

Remember the saying of the Christ, which is often not well understood, about casting pearls before swine. This is often taken quite wrongly as a comparison of the people to swine. That was surely not in the mind of the great Master. He simply meant that to give the inner truths to people who have not yet the knowledge to enable them to appreciate them would be as foolish as to cast pearls before swine. They would probably rush forward expecting to receive something to eat, and finding that the pearls were not edible, they would trample them in the mire, and then turn and rend the giver of the pearls because they had been disappointed in their expectation of food. The pearls would be of no use to them, however valuable they might be to us. That is generally the attitude of ordinary people, when we put before them truths which are not comprehensible to them. They do not see their value; they cast them aside, and are usually angry

with us for giving them something which they regard as useless.

It has always been recognized that only simple truths can be given to the great mass of men, who are as yet not highly evolved. All great religions have had some special truth which they strongly inculcated, and if any of these truths be taken in its entirety it will be found that it covers most of the ground. It is very necessary that certain ideas should be implanted in the minds of the evolving human egos, so they pass through religion after religion, race after race, learning something from each.

In Hinduism, for example, the great idea of duty was specially emphasized. It is obvious that when the thought of duty fills a man's mind it must lead to a good and carefully ordered life. The Greek religion was one which laid stress on beauty. The great cardinal fact that was impressed upon the Greek all through his life was that beauty was an expression of God, and that in so far as a man could make himself and his surroundings beautiful he brought them nearer to what the Deity wished them to be, and thus allowed the divine power to manifest itself more fully through him. So even the smallest object in every-day life was always beautiful—not necessarily expensive, not difficult to get, but beautiful in shape and colour. That was the fact which Greece impressed upon the world—the power of beauty.

In Christianity the central idea is devotion. The Christian Church has for centuries set before itself the idea of producing saints, holy men, good people, and it felicitates itself and rests its claim to attention upon the saints already produced. It celebrates their days, and in every way places them on the highest possible pinnacle.

Our examination of the history of these saints shows that among them were included individuals of many different types. Some of them were unquestionably great, learned and capable men. Others were not that at all, but were quite ordinary and ignorant, their great virtue being that they were good. Only when we come to study it deeply do we realize that the Christian religion is intended not only to feed the fire of devotion, but also to assist its people at all levels and along all lines.

When we examine other great religions, such as Buddhism or Hinduism, we find them also prepared to meet their people everywhere. Each of these religions has certain precepts for the uneducated, by virtue of which they will be helped, if they follow them truly, to lead a good life. It has also much metaphysical and philosophical teaching for those who need it. Christianity in its present form does not really give that. True, there are the writings of the Fathers, and if we go back to Origen and Clement of Alexandria we find hints of those higher teachings; we find, for example, the statement that Christianity has its Mysteries. But the Christianity put before people by any of the great Churches, such as the Greek, the Roman or the Anglican, is certainly a maimed representation of what it originally was.

Every true religion must be capable of adapting itself to people at all levels, of meeting the wise and learned, as well as the ignorant devotee. It certainly must not exalt the ignorant but devoted man above the wiser, who wants to understand. Unfortunately there has been a distinct tendency on the part of Christianity to condemn the people who have wanted to know, to disparage their wisdom as merely the wisdom of this world, and to regard those who take the attitude of a little child as likely to make more rapid progress. The child soul must behave as such, and every religion must be prepared to meet and to feed the child soul, but that is no reason why it should have no stronger food for those who are more advanced. The souls who have passed through the earlier stages of growth long ago in other lives now wish to understand the great Plan—to know something about the world in which they live and the scheme by which it was made and is kept going. Many of our Christian brothers have found, with great relief and a certain amount of surprise, that Theosophy was capable of supplying them with that knowledge, without destroying their Christianity in any way. There is nothing in the original Christian teaching which in any way contradicts any science, although there has been an anti-scientific tendency coupled with ecclesiastical teaching ever since the Middle Ages. Originally Christianity answered its purpose quite as well as any of the other faiths; it is only because it happens to have been especially unfortunate in the loss of the higher teaching that it distinctly needs supplementing at the present day.

The Chohan then concludes Part I with the words:

These written above are the first of the rules which are written on the walls of the Hall of Learning. Those that ask shall have. Those that desire to read shall read. Those who desire to learn shall learn.

PEACE BE WITH YOU

PART II

LIGHT ON THE PATH

CHAPTER 1

THE PRELIMINARY COMMENT

C.W.L.—The second part of *Light on the Path* assumes that the student has passed the First Initiation; it carries the man on through the steps of the Path leading up to the Adept level. But a second and higher interpretation of it begins beyond that, and helps to guide the man who has already become an Adept on to His next stage. Swam T. Subba Row, who knew a great deal about these matters, told me once that there were really seven meanings for this book—seven ways in which it could be interpreted—all apparently at different levels, and he said that the highest interpretations carried a man up to the Initiation of the Mahachohan. That, of course, is dealing with matters which are absolutely beyond our ken. We could not possibly understand to what it refers at such a high level, so it is useless for us even to seek for such an interpretation. It is possible that we may be able to form some idea of a double meaning, but anything beyond that will certainly be quite out of our reach.

In what we have already studied we have been told to cast off the lower self—the personality. In the higher interpretation, that would mean casting off the individuality. Just as the first part in its lowest interpretation was thus intended to produce the union of the higher and lower self, so in its second interpretation it aims at the unity of the ego with the Monad; that which is the second interpretation of the first part must be the first interpretation of the second part, since it follows from the first. It would be well for us to bear that in mind; then here and there we may be able to catch a glimpse of what must be the meaning of the next interpretation higher still.

Out of the silence that is peace a resonant voice shall arise. And this voice will say: It is not well; thou has reaped, now thou must sow. And knowing this voice to be the silence itself thou wilt obey.

Thou who art now a disciple, able to stand, able to hear, able to see, able to speak, who hast conquered desire and attained to self-knowledge, who hast seen thy soul in its bloom and recognized it, and heard the Voice of the Silence

—go thou to the Hall of Learning and read what is written there for thee.

That is the introduction to this second part, written by the Venetian Master. First of all, perhaps, one ought to refer to those opening words: “Out of the silence that is peace a resonant voice shall arise. And knowing this voice to be the silence itself thou wilt obey.” There has been much speculation among Theosophists as to the exact meaning of the voice of the silence, but it is now generally understood that the expression does not always mean the same thing. The silence is always that which lies just above the point which the man has reached, and the voice of the silence is the voice coming down to him from above, the voice of the inner self, as we have already seen.⁵⁸

In all cases this voice which speaks from above is that which when heard must be obeyed, and to the newly initiated man (if we take the lower interpretation), or to him who has attained Adeptship (if we consider the higher interpretation), this voice says that while he is resting in the enjoyment of this wonderful peace, it is not well to rest too long. In the silence the man has remained in wonder at the glory of all he has received by Initiation; he will rest in contemplation awhile; he will spend some little time in studying everything in the new light that has come to him. He is now recalled by the voice, which tells him that he has reaped, and now he must sow again. Since the man has reached this level and gained all that it means in knowledge and certainty and peace, he must try to communicate these gifts to others. He must not rest satisfied with having attained them himself.

The Chohan goes on to remind the student of his qualifications: “Thou art now a disciple, able to stand, able to hear, able to see, able to speak.” And the explanation of the Master is that to be able to stand is to have confidence. Now, the man has that confidence because he knows. At the First Initiation the disciple has received a definite touch with the buddhic plane. He has had experience in connection with that, not necessarily of very long duration, but it has been definite, so that he knows for himself that there is such a reality, and that life is one.

Then comes a long note by the Master Hilarion, and we can see at once from looking at that note that He is dealing with the whole matter very differently in

this second part. Before, He gave us what we might call a general comment upon what was said; here He explains practically every word of the text, so that evidently He regards this as something much more difficult to understand, requiring explanation rather than mere comment.

He says to begin with:

To be able to stand is to have confidence; to be able to hear is to have opened the doors of the soul.

The expression “doors of the soul” reminds one of the Pali name given to the first qualification on the probationary path, which is discrimination between the real and the unreal. In Pali it is called manodwaravaj-jana, which means “the opening the doors of the mind”.⁵⁹ The man’s mind becomes open to the difference between the things which are worth following and the things which are not, and so they say his mind has opened its doors to receive the truth. At Initiation he has to open more doors, those of the soul; in other words, he has to acquire buddhic consciousness. Then for the first time the man is really a soul, and is looking at things from the point of view of a soul. Below that level there is separation, due to matter, so even in the causal body he is still a long way from the real meaning of existence as the soul looks at it. But with the realization of buddhic consciousness the man is drawn into a condition which differs in kind, not only in degree, from what has gone before. Therefore so much importance is attached to it. Therefore it is made part of the First Initiation, though it is quite open to us to attain that consciousness apart from and before we reach Initiation.

To be able to see is to have attained perception.

Although it is true that the initiate directly sees considerably more than the ordinary man of the physical world does, it is also true that from what he sees he can infer very much more than can be easily told or accurately understood. Thoughtful men have long been wondering and discussing and arguing as to whether or not God exists. No trained clairvoyant ever argues that question, because he knows. I do not mean to say that he sees God. “No man hath seen God at any time,” you will read in the Christian Scriptures.⁶⁰ That is not quite true if you speak of the Solar Logos; but even so it is true for the vast majority of

students. But though most men have never seen electricity they have plenty of proof that there is such a thing; that we have light, and that our tram-cars are driven by its agency, proves to us that there is such a force, though we have never seen it. Just in the same way the clairvoyant who has never seen the solar Deity has yet seen sufficient evidence of His work to prove that He must exist. That is our position with regard to many Theosophical doctrines referring to higher matters. We do not always know directly, but we see results.

No one below the rank of the Adept can see the Monad, but the Arhat may know of its existence. On the nirvanic plane, which is that next below the habitat of the Monad, we see a triple manifestation, which we call the triple spirit.⁶¹ The rays which make that threefold manifestation are obviously converging as they rise to the highest point. We can see that they must become one, though the actual unity is out of our sight. The phenomena which we see with regard to them indicate that they can be only three facets of one great body, or great light. So although we do not actually know by our own sight that the Monad exists, we accept it on the evidence which we can utterly trust—the testimony of our Masters—and the phenomena which we can see on the highest plane we can reach demand that there shall be such a reality as that.

We have been told by these Great Ones of certain things which as yet are out of our reach, but in every case when we have taken an additional step we have been able to realize more of those things which have been told. This has happened to us over and over again. So although when one attains the level to which this text refers I do not say that he will see the Logos, I do say he will see such evidence of His existence as will make it quite impossible to doubt it. Seeing that/and also the working of the evolutionary law, one gains absolute certainty that all is well.

A little of the higher sight does bring the certainty that all is well, and that is a very great thing indeed. I suppose that until one reaches it he hardly knows what it is—the absolute certainty that nothing can finally go wrong, that however dark things, may seem it is only seeming, and presently the clouds will break and the everlasting sunshine which has been there all the time will show through once more.

It is perhaps not so hard with a little practice to think that all is going well for oneself. As we go through life we meet with all sorts of troubles and difficulties, and even apart from occultism the theosophically minded man soon comes to recognize that it is not so much what happens to him that matters as his own attitude towards the happening—that he can make himself very happy under circumstances which would make many other people miserable. The reverse is also true; a man may contrive to make himself unhappy amid circumstances which would make most other people happy. So it may not be so difficult to come to believe that all is working for good so far as oneself is concerned; but it is much harder to believe it for those we love, if we see them getting into trouble, making mistakes and suffering in various ways. It is much harder to believe that all is being properly managed as regards them, because one naturally feels a protective interest; one wants to shield them from these blows of karma.

They say that love is blind. It may perhaps blind one a little in that way. My own personal experience, however, is the other way—that strong affection makes a person particularly keen-eyed with regard to a fault, in order that one may help to get it out of the way. The proverb is taken to mean that one does not see the faults of the person loved; however that may be, when something of the sense of reality is attained one of the great benefits that one gains from it is that he is then quite sure, both for himself and for those whom he loves, that all things are working together for good, and that the eventual result will in every case be the best that could be gained. It is a great source of peace to have that certainty.

To be able to speak is to have attained the power of helping others.

It is significant that He chooses speaking as the way in which we can most easily help others. It is true for most of us. We can do various things on the physical plane in the way of helping others, but perhaps the greatest help which we as Theosophists can give to others is by speech, or writing, which is only another form of speech. We can put before them what we know. Very few of us have direct knowledge of these matters, but we have a certain interior conviction for which we could not, if pressed back to the ultimate, give an actual reason. What gives such tremendous power to what Dr. Besant says is that people feel

when she speaks that she is speaking of that which she knows. She has in addition the most marvellous eloquence. One cannot hope to attain to that in a short time, for eloquence is not a gift. It has been earned, by very hard work continued through many lives. She has turned a great deal of her intellectual power through many lives in the direction of speech. The result of such practice is that she can do it well. I remember someone complimenting her on her wonderful eloquence. She replied: "Well, I have been speaking in public for twelve thousand years; I suppose I ought to know something about it by this time." It is exactly that practice that has given her such remarkable power, and it is only by a commensurate amount of work that we can hope to gain it. However, any of us, without that marvellous eloquence, can speak about the things which we know, and our conviction will carry confidence to others.

Just in so far as we feel sure ourselves can we impart our conviction to others and be a real help to them; therefore if it were for that reason alone it is worth while to seek to attain that conviction. We should study more and more fully, and not be satisfied with merely superficial views of Theosophical ideas; we need to live into them. I know there are members of the Theosophical Society who have belonged to it for twenty years and do not know any more now than the day they joined. But I also know that a great many of the older members have gradually lived into the teachings until these have become, as it were, part of themselves and they are able to speak with certainty and indeed, to feel a certainty which the newer students, however enthusiastic, do not readily acquire. It remains true now, as it was in the days of old: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.⁶²" The only way to attain certainty before one can see at all for oneself is to live as though it were true. In doing that, evidences will gradually accumulate round one that this is so, and though each one of those may perhaps seem small in itself, taken together they will constitute a testimony which one cannot doubt or deny.

To have conquered desire is to have learned how to use and control the self; to have attained to self-knowledge is to have retreated to the inner fortress whence the personal man can be viewed with impartiality.

The inner fortress is, of course, the ego in this case. There is a further stage

where the inner fortress is the Monad, with which the ego must be unified. I have already explained how the ego puts himself down into the personality. Let us have it clearly in mind. The Monad puts down a ray of himself—that is about as near a simile as we can find for it—into the nirvanic plane, the next below his own. That breaks into three rays and becomes the triple atma, or triple spirit, and the three aspects of that descend¹ and manifest on lower planes until it appears as atma-buddhi-manas, which taken together make the ego. Now that ego is only a partial manifestation of the Monad, a small fragment of him, as it were, but nevertheless it behaves as though it were an entirely separate entity,, just as the ordinary person thinks of himself as the separate entity, and is inclined to think of the soul as something which floats vaguely over him, like a captive balloon.

I believe that all Theosophists who have not already done so, would do well to read *Human Personality* by Prof. Myers, because it is a most remarkable exposition of the relation between the higher and the lower, and it is especially interesting to our members, because he began as a sceptic and ended by having to admit apparitions, and in point of fact all that necessarily follows. I have seen him often. He used to be with Madame Blavatsky a great deal. He was much impressed by what she told him, but never got entire satisfaction. He was always seeking something definite from his intellectual point of view, and that is what practically cannot be given; it is at any rate overwhelmingly difficult to give in regard to anything on higher planes. One cannot express the functions or powers or conditions of the higher planes in terms of the lower at all. This is as impossible as to give the contents of a cube in square measure. The difference is precisely that kind of difference.

Prof. Myers was seeking the expression of the higher world in terms of the lower. We can approximate; we can aim at it, and try to stimulate the intuition in our readers and hearers, but we cannot tell it in so many words—not because we are told we must not, but because it cannot be done. People must develop the higher faculties in order to see on the higher planes. We may tell them all we can about the astral world; when they reach that astral world in full consciousness, they will say: “The half has not been told me.” That is true, because it cannot be told. These higher things cannot really be known down here, but at least partially to know them is already a very great comfort and advantage. We may not fully

understand, but we know enough to be sure there is no need for fear and doubt, and that at least is a great and glorious benefit which Theosophical study gives us.

To have seen thy soul in its bloom is to have obtained a momentary glimpse in thyself of the transfiguration which shall eventually make thee more than man.

When a man reaches the buddhic consciousness he gains that wider insight which is more than insight because it is also feeling. And it is so wonderful, something so entirely new in the man's experience, that the Master here refers to it again and again in different ways, approaching it from different points of view. To have the first glimpse of that which shall make thee more than man is to have this first touch of the unity with the Logos, that is, with the God of the solar system. But it must be remembered that at Initiation a man does not attain the full buddhic consciousness, nor does he in any way develop a buddhic vehicle.

The pupil has already practised himself in the development of the buddhic consciousness so that he has usually had experiences at that level. But if he has not, his first experience now takes place, and that is directly related to the fetters which he is beginning to cast off. The first three which have to go are the delusion of self, doubt and superstition. These are all dispelled by that glimpse. He can have no delusion of separateness when he has recognized the unity. He can no longer doubt the facts. He is told he must not doubt evolution, the great law of karma, and the fact that the highest advance is to be attained by holiness. It is assuredly true—the man cannot doubt those things. He can see them in operation, and because he is standing there where many ways meet he knows that there are many roads and that they all lead to the one Bliss; he can no longer hold to the superstition that any one form of belief is necessary to one who has attained that level. He stands upon the mountain peak and sees all the roads which lead up to it, and sees that all are good. So great stress is laid upon this buddhic experience; from any points of view it is the attainment of “a glimpse of that which shall make thee more than man”.

For one who has attained Adeptship it means still very much more than that, because He has definitely become One with a certain manifestation of the Deity.

As He shows Himself in that set of planes which all taken together make the prakritic plane, the lowest of the great cosmic planes, He shows Himself as Three and yet One, the Ever Blessed Trinity which is yet a glorious Unity.

Again and again we are told that we must keep these two ideas always in our minds when we think of Him, that we must “neither confound the Persons nor divide the Substance”, but must try as well as we may to grasp the idea of this great Mystery of the Three who yet are One, which cannot be perfectly understood or explained. So much importance has at all times and in almost all religions been attached to a comprehension of that Mystery that it is clearly of great practical importance. Many thousands of people have said that all such doctrines as these are merely of theoretical value, that they make no difference in practical life. That is not quite true. It is unquestionably a necessity that one should understand a little of this at least. All of it we cannot grasp, but at least we should know that there are these three lines of force, and yet that all the force is one and the same; without knowing that we cannot grasp the method by which our world came into existence nor can we understand man, because “God made man in His own image” and man therefore has this same characteristic—that he is three and yet one. Now the Three and the One in our cosmic prakritic plane show themselves by an arrangement very similar to the atma-buddhi-manas in man—or, it would be more correct to say that ours resembles That.

We have the highest Spirit on the highest of our planes, and then the second Aspect of that Spirit which descends one plane—and so has within itself two qualities, that on the higher plane and that on the lower. People speak of it as dual; in Christianity we hear of Christ as God and man “, and in *The Secret Doctrine* we read that “Father-Mother spin a web”.⁶³ That aspect is always two-sided: it is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, yet when it descends one plane it is inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Yet these two are not separate, but they make one Christ, and this Christ is one with the Father.

Then there is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. Descending to the second plane and standing there level with the Son, and then descending one stage further and manifesting in the higher part of what we sometimes call the nirvanic or atmic plane, still beyond anything we can reach, He abides there.

Then it will be seen that there are three lines making all together a triangle. We have the horizontal line which connects the three Aspects or Persons at their own level, then there is the perpendicular of the triangle—but coming down in this case from what we may call the base instead of going up to it—which links together the three different states or aspects of the Three Persons; then there is the hypotenuse of the triangle. Now that line, the hypotenuse of the triangle, the square of which is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides, represents the Deity. To us down below it represents the Three Persons as Persons, and yet links them together into one.

A man attains Adeptship when he raises His ordinary consciousness to the nirvanic level, and the very fact which differentiates Him and an Adept is that He has unified the Monad with the ego. Since, then, He has become one with the Monad, He has already reached the level of the third or lowest manifestation of the Deity. Therefore that showers itself upon Him in the manner which is typified by the description of Pentecost. After He has passed through the crucifixion and the resurrection which typify the Arhat level, he has before him the ascension, and after the ascension comes the descent of the Holy Ghost. In the symbol as it is given to us the Christ ascended; and the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles, according to the story in which it is put before us, independently of the Christ, and after He had left. But in the great Gnostic doctrine in the *Pistis Sophia* it is said that Christ stayed eleven years after His ascension, teaching His people, whence it will be seen that the descent of the Holy Ghost took place not after but very decidedly during His presence with His church. It must represent the attainment of Adeptship of all those who are typified as the apostles (whoever they really may have been), because “tongues of fire sat upon them”; a statement which points very closely to certain phenomena well known in the East.

Those who have seen statues of the Lord Buddha or any of the great saints or deities of India will have noticed that there is often a curious little double dome at the top of the head. Very few have any conception of what it really means. There is at the top of the head a certain chakra spoken of sometimes as “the thousand-petalled lotus”. In the ordinary man it is a vortex or depression in the etheric body, but when a man attains to a certain high level he is able to turn that

outward instead of inward, and make of it a mound instead of a depression. That is what they are trying to represent when they depict the Lord Buddha with that curious little double dome rising on the top of the head. That would glow and would give much the impression of a flame of fire. So “tongues of fire” is by no means a bad poetical description.

The other strange phenomenon which is described in connection with that descent, the fact that they who spoke were heard by every man in his own tongue, is not, so far as we know now, a necessary concomitant of Adeptship, but it does belong to a higher stage. I myself have known one instance of this phenomenon. It would appear that it descended upon those apostles at that time, if we are to take the record as representing an historical fact.

Clairvoyantly we have not seen the apostles arranged in that way. It is not that there was no such person as Peter, but there were many Peters. That was the title given to the head of each church—*petros*, a rock upon which the church was built—because the leader of the church was the rock upon which it arose. It is not an inapt symbol; for we know how very often Theosophical Lodges and other organizations depend upon one person in just that way. It would seem that in the old days the same thing held good. There were those who could lead, and where there is a leader there will always be followers. So his knowledge is the rock on which that particular church is built. For the rest, we have not investigated sufficiently closely to speak with precision, but one cannot but doubt very much of this story, especially as Origen especially warned us not to take it as history, and compared it with the story of Hagar and Ishmael, of which it is written in the Bible: “Which things are an allegory”.⁶⁴ We obtain a much wider and more useful view of all these things if we apply that idea to them, because, as Origen puts it, “Whether these things happened in Judea or not, it is at least certain that through all eternity they are happening in the lives of Christian men,” and that is the important side of the occurrence, not the material event.

Thus the Adept becomes one in consciousness with the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. That must be something like the way in which, a whole plane lower, we find ourselves attaining to unity of consciousness; we find that others

seem part of ourselves when we reach the full consciousness of that nirvanic level; all alike are then seen as facets of the One.

To recognize is to achieve the great task of gazing upon the blazing light without dropping the eyes, and not falling back in terror, as though before some ghastly phantom. This happens to some, and so when the victory is all but won it is lost.

It sounds very strange that any at such a height should fall, and yet some do. Before that level is reached all possibility of fear ought to have been entirely transcended, but there are those who shrink from these magnificent developments because they fear to lose their individuality. The same thing at a much lower level confronts a man after death. There are many who cling intensely to physical life, feeling certain of no other life than that. When the etheric double, which is composed of physical matter, is drawn out from the dense body, such a man, in his astral body, clings to the etheric counterpart, which still surrounds him, instead of letting it dissipate as it should, and so he lays up much trouble for himself. He lives in the “grey world”, as it is sometimes called.

We find the same phenomenon at this higher level. The man through all his incarnations has had a causal body; he identifies that causal body with his individuality, and shrinks from losing it. The bliss and the infinite light of the buddhic plane loom before him, but he can reach it only by dropping his causal body, and that terrifies him sometimes. He is afraid that in losing that he will lose all, and will be merged into that infinite light, so he falls back at the very threshold. He fears the entire novelty of merging in union. He does not know that when he has so merged he will still feel himself just as much as before, and will feel not that the drop has been merged into the ocean but that the ocean has been poured into the drop.

Occasionally we have other examples of that at lower levels. The man functioning in his mind body is sometimes afraid to let it go and to sink back into the causal body, which is no longer concrete, but abstract; so at that stage he halts and hesitates, and fears to pass. The progress of the person in any of these cases depends upon the power behind, the tremendous enthusiasm and devotion

which is carrying him through; since that is the propelling force, for the man to hesitate means that that enthusiasm fails, since fear and enthusiasm of that kind cannot exist together. The moment he allows himself to fear, by that very thought he shrinks back and falls away, and has no longer the place which he had attained.

There is a certain justification for the shrinking back in some cases, and I think that the ground for it is that if a man goes beyond the level at which he can be conscious he falls into a trance and loses himself. In India men talk of going into samadhi. We wondered what stage this could be, and identified it with various levels, one after another, and then found that it was not constant. It took a long time to discover that samadhi is a different thing for different people. It means the condition just beyond the level where the man is capable of retaining consciousness. For a savage whose consciousness is clear only on the physical plane, the astral plane would be samadhi. For most of those of our race who have not studied these matters, to enter into the causal body would be samadhi, because they would not be sufficiently conscious for the experience to be of any use to them. Many of us, if we could succeed in forcing ourselves into the buddhic plane, would be unconscious at that level. That would mean that when we presently drifted back into our lower vehicles, we should come back without any definite additional knowledge. We should arrive with the sense of great bliss, a sensation of having bathed in all sorts of intangible glories, but with no definite knowledge and no new power of doing anything of use.

This kind of samadhi—a condition just beyond your consciousness—is not encouraged by our Masters. Those Great Ones would say: “By all means attain the very highest level you can reach, but do it consciously; work your way up gradually, do not leap into it. Be careful; push steadily up, keeping your consciousness all the time you do it.” There are possibilities which might be said to be dangerous; nothing is actually dangerous, because at those higher levels one has not a separate life to lose in the same way that one has down here, but it is quite possible to be swept out of the line of evolution if one makes rash experiments. Yet this is not probable for the ordinary student, because he is working steadily away at levels which he knows, and aims at attaining.

The fact of the possibility of falling back—fearing to face the higher developments—was put strongly before us in the initiations of the ancient Egyptian Mysteries. The candidates were taught that in the pursuit of knowledge they must be neither rash nor fearful; when the candidate was brought to the door of the crypt or underground hall in which these great ceremonies were held he received a practical lesson in that way, for, as he entered, a sword was held in front of him touching his breast, to typify that he must not rush rashly forward in search of those mysteries, and at the same time his conductor led him by means of a rope thrown round his neck, so that if he had been frightened and rushed backward he would have injured himself. Afterwards this was explained to him. He was told that a man must have quiet confidence; he must never rush rashly into something which he did not understand, nor on the other hand must he draw back in fear when he encountered something which seemed terrible to him.

Our great founder, Madame Blavatsky herself, whom none could accuse of lack of courage, who dressed as a man and fought under Garibaldi in 1864, told me that when she was first taken into the presence of the Lord of the World, the One Initiator, the great Spiritual King of the World, she fell upon her face and could not look at Him, because of the tremendous power and majesty in His face. It does not affect all candidates in at all the same way, but yet, if that were the result on a person so entirely dauntless as Madame Blavatsky, one may understand that it is no slight test to be brought face to face with the representative of the Solar Logos on this planet; it is a tremendous experience.

Those who become pupils of the Master will one day in due course be led by the Master up the path which leads to Initiation, and then they must face the One Initiator, not indeed at the first step, nor even at the second, but at the third and fourth. But before that comes they will have had so many experiences on the way to it that probably they will be to a great extent prepared; so had Madame Blavatsky, yet what I have said is what she told me. Although I entirely agree with her that that face is full of majesty and might—quite incredible power, beyond anything that you can imagine of power—yet it is also so full of love that it seems to me that one could not feel fear in His presence, nor I think did Madame Blavatsky, but simply awe so great that she felt as though the light were dazzling and not to be faced—she felt it too great for her.

But what is spoken of here is not the meeting with the One Initiator, but the meeting with one's own higher self—the entrance into that wider spiritual realm. Men do shrink back from that, as I have said, because they fear that when they plunge into that shining sea they may never come back again, that the individuality may be lost. A man who thinks would know that many others have plunged into it and have not been lost, but one does not always think at such moments, but acts perhaps rather by instinct. One must endeavour so to arrange one's instinctive action that it will be reasonable and right action. We must not shrink back before the divine, whether it shows itself in ourselves or in any other. It says here that some have done that; and so, when the victory was almost won, it was lost. That would be sad. But we should not let ourselves be deceived by the manner in which it is put.

Often we are warned that the higher a man rises the further he may fall. There are several reasons for that. One is that he may misuse the divine force which has come to him; the other is that he may fall into such a condition as to cause a leak in the channel which is composed of a number of disciples, including himself. The Great Ones send out a huge wave of force through such a channel, and cannot recall it. If the channel becomes defective a great portion of the force may be lost. It is not always a vast outpouring in one direction—sometimes some of it goes in one way and some in another, to do different things—and only if all the various people who form the channel stand firm in their special lines is success assured. It would be a sad thing if one should fail, and so cause a leakage, which would be very serious on account of the great pressure of the force behind, and would result in a fall for that man. Again, for one to shrink back from good work within one's power through fear of the responsibility also involves a fall.

The further a man climbs the further he may fall, if he falls to the bottom; it would be a very sad thing that a man should fall back at this high point, but it is very unlikely that one who had climbed so high would fall to the bottom. We must not get the impression that a fall even such as is described in our text is fatal. "Who mounts may fall, who falls will mount; the wheel goes round, unceasingly." There is no fatal fall, because it is God's will that every man shall progress; therefore every man will do so, and it is only a question of the rate at

which he moves⁶⁵.

For such a man to lose his position would be a great waste of high opportunity, but it would not throw him back to the beginning. It would mean that he must work deliberately to develop within himself the consciousness of his own divinity, and learn to trust it.

That would not be at all easy, of course, because a man who had lost control of himself at a critical moment, who had lost his nerve, would find it difficult to regain it. In climbing, if a man looks down and sees a great gulf below him, he will probably become frightened and fall, but the man who has never been frightened would be very likely to go on to the end and not have any fear whatever. The man who has once lost his nerve through looking down will take a long time to go safely on his way, but I do not want anyone to think that the man who falls will not recover. It is a sad pity; he ought to have known better; one cannot help seeing and saying that; but he will recover himself and go on again sooner or later.

It is very easy to say that one should have perfect confidence in one's divinity, but it is a more difficult matter when one comes face to face with some of these great trials; if there is a fall at least one may be sure that the work done still counts, so there is no possibility of a fatal final fall. It is something like failing for an examination on the physical plane. It means a good deal of trouble, but the man still has all the knowledge he gained in working for the examination. When he is able to try again he is tolerably certain to succeed.

It sometimes seems very sad when a man who is making good occult progress suddenly dies; one is apt to say: "What a pity; if he had continued at that rate he would probably have reached Initiation in this life." But what happens is karma and is for the best, and he will not lose what he has gained. The Self retains all it has achieved. What it will have to do is to bring a fresh physical vehicle into subjection, but it will be very easy for it to do so up to the point it has reached, and only after that the difficulties will commence again.

To hear the Voice of the Silence is to understand that from within comes the only true guidance: to go to the Hall of Learning is to enter the state in which

learning becomes possible. Then will many words be written there for thee, and written in fiery letters for thee easily to read. For when the disciple is ready, the Master is ready also.

We have already seen that the ball of learning begins on the astral plane, the lowest plane upon which you can learn anything practically with regard to the higher states. That does not mean that there is nothing to be learnt on the higher levels, in the heaven-world, for example; there is very much to be learnt, but for the ordinary man the astral plane is his hall of learning, and when out of his physical body in that astral world he will receive much of the teaching that must be given to him. There are very many students who do not quite understand what it means to be taken as a pupil by a Master. Some seem to expect that if that great privilege came to them they would be constantly in receipt of teaching from the Master, that He would especially instruct them with regard to minute details of their progress. When the Master takes pupils on probation, it means much more that He watches them in ordinary life than that He specially teaches them anything. One main object, then, is to have the whole detail of the pupil's life and thoughts and feelings before Him, so that He may know whether He can usefully take that pupil into the closer relationship. He must know that before He takes a further step, otherwise it might cause Him a great deal of trouble, and it would not be worth His while from the point of view of the work. While he is on probation the pupil may be used as a channel for force—that often happens—but it is only when the closer link is made that he is in constant communication with the Master, and even then he will not necessarily know of the communication. He may feel sometimes that the force is flowing through him, and a wonderful experience it is, a great privilege and delight to be used for the dissemination of the Master's force, but he will not be instructed by the Master except on very rare occasions.

In most cases an elder pupil is appointed to look after the neophyte and to give him such instruction as is necessary. In my own case, Madame Blavatsky taught me very much on behalf of the Master, but I was separated from her for some five years and sent out to India when she was in Europe. Consequently, it was impossible for her, except by occasional letters and on the astral plane sometimes, to give me any help. Therefore I was put into the care of Swami T.

Subba Row. He was an exceptionally patient teacher as to all the detail, and so I was greatly helped by him⁶⁶.

In those days I saw my own Master only occasionally, and even when I did see Him it was not usually anything in the way of teaching that He gave me, but rather instructions as to something He wanted me to do. But in process of doing the work one gained a vast amount of knowledge and training. The attempt to do some service, even without knowing how at first, shows one in what directions one is lacking. One then sets to work to fill those gaps, so as to be able to do the next piece of work better; and I think I may say for myself that it was in that way that I learnt most of what came to me. I would invent a way somehow or other to do the thing, and then see where the method might be improved, until I came to know how to put into practice the higher methods such as Swami T. Subba Row could give me. But it meant a great deal of hard work, of strain, and often very slow development. Still, it had to be done and it was done, and I think that is the way all pupils are trained. They will be given a piece of work to do and in the doing of the work they will learn how to do greater work. But on this great subject of the relation between Master and pupil I have written at length in *The Masters and the Path*.

Various possibilities of learning open before the pupil. Many of them are equally open to any of us on the astral plane if we choose to take advantage of them. We sometimes go to lectures on the physical plane in order to learn something about Theosophy, because some people learn more easily by having facts told to them in that way, whereas other people learn more easily by taking a book and reading on the subject. For those who like the spoken word there are always lecturers in occultism.

Some of those who are workers and helpers in the astral world devote most of their time to that branch of work. Our former Vice-President, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, used to take that as his share of the astral plane duties. He did not as a rule plunge into the ordinary work of the invisible helpers, but instead of that he had a department of his own, and was always to be found giving instruction upon Theosophy to anyone who in that vast astral world would care to listen. In that way he brought many, people, both dead and living, into touch with these great

truths, for he happened to have a certain dogmatic method of stating his points which many people found very useful and easy to follow.

CHAPTER 2

RULES 1 TO 4

C.W.L.—In the last chapter we considered what is really a preface to the second part of the book, but now we come to the rules. Up to Rule 12 these are numbered in the same manner as in Part I: Rules 1 to 3, 5 to 7, and 9 to 11 belong in sets of three to the ancient palm-leaf manuscript, and Rules 4, 8 and 12 are comments by the Chohan. Further on the numbering follows a different plan.

In this chapter we will take Rules 1 to 3, and I will divide up the comment of the Chohan, which is Rule 4, into its three portions, and deal with them along with the rules to which they apply.

Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.

He is thyself. Yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth. When once He has entered thee and become thy Warrior, He will never utterly desert thee; and at the day of the great peace He will become one with thee.

The disciple must fight. He must throw himself into the evolution that is going on around him. He must struggle on the side of the spirit. Spirit is gradually learning to use matter; having mastered it at a certain level it rises out of that to conquer a higher plane of matter, and to learn to use that. It is in process of dominating matter at all levels. This is going on all around as well as within us; so we enlist ourselves in this struggle, to smooth the way of the evolutionary forces.

We must make the personality stand aside in this strife for the progress of evolution; he must not come into the fight at all. The personality must be used, because it is only through that as an instrument that we can reach other people in the world, but we must not let the personal self obtrude itself. On each of the planes of personality one must get rid of the entanglement, while retaining the

power. So we withdraw ourselves gradually from the physical, astral and mental bodies and yet retain the ability to function in them.

The higher interpretation of this aphorism applies when the personality has been set aside, and the man is at one with the ego. Then he learns that the individuality must be put aside, and looks for the consciousness of the Monad. The Monad must be allowed to work through the ego.

That the warrior is eternal and sure may be taken as relatively true of the ego in relation to the lower self. We may take it as absolutely true with regard to the Monad in relation to the ego. The ego, as has been said, may often make mistakes at an earlier stage, but he is far less likely to do so than is the personality. The Monad makes no mistakes; but on the other hand, if one may venture to speak of the Monad as though one understood him when really one does not, one might say that the Monad's knowledge of conditions down here would probably be somewhat vague. His instinct cannot but be on the side of right, for he is divine. He is eternal and is sure, as is said here, but it may be that the views taken both by the Monad and the ego are often general, and in our efforts to apply them on this plane we may make errors, because the whole purpose of descent into matter is to gain the precision and accuracy which result from perfect acquaintance with lower conditions. Since their evolution is not complete both the Monad and ego have not yet this accurate knowledge. They are for us the guides; one must not do other than obey them; but even these guides are themselves unfolding.

On the higher level the day of the great peace will be the attainment of nirvana. At the lower level it means the unification of the lower and the higher self.

2. Look for the Warrior, and let him fight in thee.

Look for him, else in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him; and he will not know thee unless thou knowest him. If thy cry reach his listening ear, then will he fight in thee, and fill the dull void within. And if this is so, then canst thou go through the fight cool and unwearied, standing aside and letting him battle for thee. Then it will be impossible for thee to strike one

blow amiss.

That seems a curious thing to say about the higher self, but it is true; he is raying out splendidly, but indefinitely. Until one can see the ego in men one has no conception of how great a being an ego really is, how infinitely wiser and stronger than the incarnate entity. Still, there is no need for anyone to be proud or conceited about the fact that he is a very fine person, a magnificent person, at a much higher level, for so is every other soul of man. Every one is in reality very much better than he ever seems to be. The greatest saint can never fully express his ego; he is always on that higher plane a still greater saint than he can ever be down here. Therefore we must try to let this higher part of ourselves play through us. This ego is far finer, far better than the personality, but he puts forth the personality in order that he may evolve, to become himself more nearly perfect. He requires that evolution, so we must not make the mistake of regarding the ego as perfect; he is not. What he needs mainly for his evolution is definiteness, accuracy. He is magnificent but, if we may venture to say so, vague in his magnificence.

He desires to develop through that fragment of himself which is incarnated down here. He knows how to descend, but until he is himself to some extent developed he does not know how to guide the lower self. It is through the experiences of the lower self down here that he will learn how to do the things which he desires. His desire is evolution; he puts some of himself down, a tip of a finger, as it were into lower planes; that finger tip learns definiteness, but when it returns into him at the end of one short cycle of physical, astral, and mental life, what it takes back is only, if one might put it materially, a small amount of definiteness. Remember how the group soul has been gradually tinged by the experience of the different animals. ⁶⁷ A lion, a cat or a dog may go through certain experiences and acquire certain qualities which may be very well marked in it as an individual. There may be enough of courage to make a remarkably courageous animal of that one cat, dog or lion, but when you put that amount into a group soul for a hundred there is only a hundredth part for each, so it needs a great many lives directed along similar lines in order that the quality may be strongly developed in the group soul as a whole.

Though the ego is an individual and is quite different from the group soul, yet in a way the same thing is true of him. He develops accuracy in a personality, but when that goes back into the ego the same amount has to be spread over the whole causal body. The amount which was quite sufficient to make one personality very accurate, when it goes into the ego is only a fractional part of his requirements. He may need many lives to develop enough of the quality to make it prominent in the next life, since the ego does not keep a particular piece of himself which is to be the personality, but out of the whole mass of himself he puts down something, yet not the same piece twice.

A highly developed ego, who has already acquired a great deal of accuracy, will understand the personality, and will work through it intelligently and try to make it an efficient instrument. But for the ordinary man of the world that is not in the least so. Therefore the personality must call out to him and then look for this influence. If the man down here, wanting to help in the Plan, does this, the ego instantly responds, and immediately pours himself out through the personality, who should then stand aside and let the warrior fight in him.

The ego has many splendid possibilities, which only need awakening. That is one reason for the great advance which is often made by a rough man who goes to war and perhaps loses his life for his convictions, or in any case stands a very definite risk of doing so. To do a big thing like that—to set an ideal above his personal comfort, above the possibility, of frightful pain, above the possibility, nay, even the probability, of death, wakens in the ego a very large response.

I have heard people argue somewhat against that. People have written to me saying: “You say that a soldier gains spirituality, but how can that be, because the soldier goes out inspired rather by hatred than by any noble feeling?” Even if it be true that he has such a feeling against the enemy, if he has volunteered to fight for what he considers the right, he does a big, noble and unselfish thing, and that reacts on the ego and awakens it more than almost any other single action would be likely to do. Sometimes in private life a man has an opportunity for sacrifice which is greater than the risk of his life; he may, for example, devote the whole of his time to the uncomplaining and unselfish service of another, foregoing amusements and change, and watching by a sick bed, in a

case of chronic illness. Such sacrifices are greater even than the dramatic heroism of the soldier. But they are only few, while in time of war many thousands go forth and take the large opportunity. The man makes a wonderful effort of self-sacrifice; then the ego is aroused, and he pours down in response a splendid flood of devotion, capable of causing still more consistent sacrifice in another life. An effort of courage is perhaps required; that evokes from the ego a steady stream of courage, and so the man who loses his life shall find it, as Christ said long ago. He who has lost his life in such a way as this has certainly gained a much fuller life for his next incarnation, which will unquestionably be a bigger personality. The ego will be able to put down more of his power, and will also be much more able to direct the personality.

Another way in which “in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him” becomes possible when men are devoting themselves to good works[^] and they permit the personality to come up in them. It ought never to happen with students of occultism, but it does. There is a vast amount of good work being done in the Theosophical Society, and quite assuredly those who do it ought to be entirely above any sort of personal feeling in regard to it; but often they are not. A person feels: “This little bit of work is mine, and therefore it must take precedence of other work. It is not that I am doing, it for j my own satisfaction and therefore do not want to see anybody else doing it; but I want to do it because I am quite sure they could not do it as well.” Such an attitude is full of personal aggrandizement. To have any connection with work like ours develops a person, makes his feelings keener, and ought to make his intellect brighter: the very fact that it has this stimulating influence tends to accentuate the personality, but that is no excuse for the folly of permitting it so to do.

The same thing occurs in other organizations. In my younger days as a priest I had a great deal to do with church work of all sorts, including the training of choirs. The people concerned in that work are all labouring directly for the church of God, supposed [to be](#) devoting themselves to something higher than the average man outside, yet I think there is no other set of people among whom there is so much squabbling as there is among church workers and choirs. No one who has had to train them but will recognize that it is a fact. It is sad but true, and it ought not to be so. Yet it occurs precisely because they have been

working in connection with something a little above the ordinary level, and in doing that the life in them has been roused more than is usual.

The disciple has to take care that his personality does not come up in these good works, because if it does he will lose sight of the higher guide. The ego can fight in him and work through him only when he is devoted to the work, not to his personal share or part in it. He may forget the higher self in a rush of personality, and then he will not be in a condition to receive his help, to listen to a hint from him; thus he may for the time shut himself off from the ego and lose the great benefit of his help. The vagueness of the higher self, unless he is a developed ego, would perhaps preclude him from indicating a particular line of work, but when the personality, being more definite, has found the work, the ego can and does pour himself down into it, and does enable him to do it in a much better manner and in an altogether grander frame of mind than the personality could attain unaided.

But if thou look not for him, if thou pass him by, then there is no safeguard for thee. Thy brain will reel, thy heart grow uncertain, and in the dust of the battle-field thy sight and senses will fail, and thou wilt not know thy friends from thy enemies.

All that is described here does occur when the personality does not look for the higher guidance. He does not know his friends from his enemies; he is carried away by the swirl of passion, and under its influence will believe what is said by someone who is not in the least a real friend. One sees that often in daily life; if a person is excited or angry or jealous, he will listen to the ridiculous gossip of those who call themselves friends but in reality are not friends at all.

A gossip, a mischief-maker, is no one's friend; he is the worst enemy to those to whom he speaks. It is a very sad thing indeed for one who contacts a person of that sort, and believes what is said by him. As soon as we hear a person beginning to speak censoriously about someone else it is best to avoid him as soon as possible, because we may be quite sure that we shall learn nothing of any good, and also that the person who speaks wrongly about another to us will speak in the same way about us to the next person whom he or she happens to meet. Therefore it is better to have nothing whatever to do with these gossiping

people, and not to be in the least influenced by anything that they say. Often when a person hears what they say he replies, "I do not believe it; I will not pay attention to it," but all the same he is somewhat affected by it; he lets it recur to his mind again and again, and wonders whether what was said could have had any foundation in fact, instead of at once treating it with contempt, which is the only reasonable attitude to take.

When once one knows a person well, one ought to be prepared to follow one's own knowledge of him, and not be swept away by what is said by others who may know him less. There are among us different dispositions of all kinds, but broadly speaking one cannot go wrong if one keeps to one's own knowledge of what a person is and thinks and does, until one sees quite clearly for oneself that that person has in some way changed, and even then one must not take a single example. One must wait and see, because often for the moment a person is changed by a little ill-health, or sleeplessness, and then he says and does things that he would not say or do under other circumstances. So one must not judge one's friend hastily by a single word or action, but must wait and see how things really are with him.⁶⁸ To suppose him to be changed because somebody says he is, is absolutely unfair. When you have a friend, stand by him and wait until he himself says something or does something which supports this idea of what he is supposed to be thinking or doing or saying; do not accept the evidence of other people who may be speaking under some mistake, made by carelessness or because they do not like him.

Just as a person who allows himself to be swayed in that way comes not to know his friends from his enemies and not to understand the facts at all, so also the very same happens to the man who lets his personality dominate him. If jealousy seizes upon him he becomes absolutely blinded. His normal senses are of no use to him; he does not listen to them at all; he makes up his mind beforehand on every subject and it is quite useless to try to turn him. It is very odd, and it is sad to see how ready people are to believe evil of others. The evil may be refuted; it may be clearly shown that there is no foundation for it; but still a certain suspicion remains.

All this should not be so, but it comes partly from an excess of the

development of the particular part of ourselves in the evolution of which humanity is at present engaged. The lower mind learns by discrimination, by distinguishing differences between this thing and that, and therefore it always pounces first of all upon differences. Therefore when a man comes into contact with a person whom he does not know, with any idea which is unfamiliar to him, or with a book which he has not seen before, the general tendency is to seize first upon the things he does, not like, those which are different from the things to which he is accustomed, and then magnify them out of all proportion. The reason for this is that we have developed this discriminating faculty a little too much, or rather we have not yet developed the counterbalancing buddhic faculty sufficiently. It is very well to be able to discriminate. It is a necessity; but we ought to have as well the spirit of synthesis, which sees likenesses as well as differences.

The teaching given in this passage also appears very emphatically in *The Bhagavad-Gita*:

*Man, musing on the objects of sense, conceiveth an attachment to these; from attachment ariseth desire; from desire anger cometh forth; from anger proceedeth delusion; from delusion confused memory; from confused memory the destruction of buddhi; from destruction of buddhi he perishes.*⁶⁹

It is difficult, I know, for us to realize how the Monad can be divine and yet at the same time undeveloped, how he can be different at the end of his incarnation in the individuality from what he was at the beginning. Let us take an analogy, imperfect as it is. The human body is composed of millions upon millions of cells. Those are human cells because they are part of the man, and yet if there be any kind of evolution—and perhaps there is—by which the soul of the cell can one day become the soul of a human being, surely one would not say that in the end there had been no evolution, because the cell was human to begin with. That simile may suggest how the Monad is part of the Logos, yet not unfolded. It is not safe, I know, to make analogies of that kind from the lower to the higher, and then press them to fit into every detail, because usually they will not. There is a great occult saying: “As above, so below,” but the converse of that: “As below, so above,” is true only with narrow and restricting limitations. I

think we may safely reason *down*, as the Hindus do, from what they are told exists above, to what therefore they must find somewhere below, in a general way. But it is not quite safe to reverse the process, because the arrangements on the higher planes are obviously greater and wider, though we do not know the ways in which they are so. We may often mislead ourselves if we say that because a certain thing happens down here it must also happen up above. Something which is an expression of the same law must happen up above, but it may take some form which we should not recognize.

The analogy of the cells within the body is not quite a safe one to follow far, but there are various points across which we come in our study which indicate that something of that kind is taking place. We know that the ensouling life of all the lower kingdoms becomes in its turn only a vehicle for a still higher life when man is individualized. The causal body that we are using now was the soul of some animal from which we individualized, so what is at one stage the ensouling life may later on become a vehicle. Stated in that way, however, this truth needs reservations, because although what is in man the causal body was all of the soul that could be seen with regard to the animal and the plant, yet it is matter on a definite level, and there must have been life from above, ensouling and vivifying that matter, unseen. We must remember always that the energy, the spirit, we can never really see, but only its manifestation in some form of matter. Let us take this physical body as an example. What is it that is ensouling that? It is the man in his astral body. That astral body we cannot see; therefore at this stage it is to us the soul. If astral sight is developed we find that it in turn is energized by something higher. That proves to be the mental body; and that in turn is energized by the ego—and so it goes on, all the way up. What to us appears the ensouling life is never the real spirit, but some manifestation of it. When we get to the highest that we can, the bubbles of koilon—in the true aether of space—to our present sight appear to be empty. Of course they are not so, because there is in them something which has power to hold the incredible force of the aether apart. Therefore very decidedly there is something in that apparently empty space. At present we cannot see it, but perhaps later developments may enable us to do so. Then what we see will not be the ensouling spirit, but some higher form of matter through which that ensouling spirit is manifesting. The higher force is never seen at all.

3. Take his orders for battle, and obey them.

Obey him, not as though he were a general, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires; for he is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself.

We must learn that whenever there is a conflict between the higher and the lower, we are the higher. At first we do not feel definitely that it is ourself. Believing that it is so from our teaching, we must act as though we felt it to be so, and then very soon we shall find that it is true. Our danger is that we may identify ourselves with the lower and forsake the higher.

CHAPTER 3

RULES 5 TO 8

C.W.L.—Rules 5, 6, 7 and 8 fall into one of our familiar groups. I will divide Rule 8, which consists of the comments by the Chohan, into the three portions appropriate to each of the shorter rules, and deal with them along with those rules, as in the last chapter. We have thus:

5. Listen to the song of life.

Life itself has speech and is never silent. And its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song. Learn from it that you are part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of harmony.

On Aphorism 5 there is also a long note by the Master Hilarion, which begins:

Look for it, and listen to it, first in your own heart. At first you may say, “It is not there; when I search I find only discord.” Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced—but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love.

What is meant is that underneath all life, and exhibited more or less according to the state of development of each life, is the great force that moves all things. In Christianity we have been taught to call it the will of God, or the love of God, but people very often use these religious terms in a vague way, so that they lose much of their reality and power. In popular religion there are several of these expressions which have a certain historical or traditional connotation, but really do not actually mean much to the people who use them. People talk, for example, about the grace of God, but I think very often they have but little idea of what they really mean. Again, when in church the Litany is recited, people say: “Spare us, good Lord.” That is a most amazing and utterly

illogical and impossible sentence, but nobody ever seems to think of it. They say spare us “and call Him “good Lord” at the same time—a contradiction in terms. A good Lord would never need to be asked to spare anybody. To ask that is worse than wrong, because it suggests evil in God. It is blasphemy even worse than that of using His name in casual swearing, as people sometimes do in the streets, though that is bad enough. They are attributing to Him human passions, and malignity at that, and are asking Him not to exercise His malignity upon them.

In the same way people speak of the mercy of God. That again contains very much the same idea, that He might do something quite dreadful to you, but instead He elects to show mercy. Certainly all such phrases imply an utter misunderstanding of what the word God means; it is the grandest, the finest word that exists; it means the Good, and He who is good needs no entreaty to show mercy in a certain case, for He is always so full of love that the idea of anything else but mercy would be utterly unthinkable. God will certainly show love to all, irrespective of what they do. I do not know how people think a loving father would be likely to feel, if he found his children crawling to his feet and begging him to have mercy upon them.

We have that difficulty to fight against when in Theosophy we try to talk about these higher forces. Those of us who have come through the various churches and chapels unfortunately have been accustomed to speak about such things freely, but to think of them as being utterly vague and meaning nothing in particular. People go to church and perhaps ask for the divine blessing, with a general idea that God will look after them, or something of that kind. I am afraid it is a very unscientific conception. What one ought to understand is that a church service is a means intended to convey a perfectly definite force. This thing—the blessing of God—is a force absolutely as definite as electricity, as real as the steam that moves our trains, and it flows through the channels appointed for it, through the priest or the Bishop. When he extends his hand a definite force flows from it over the people. There is a very definite raying out of force, which floods the whole church, and is received and appropriated by such people as have made themselves ready to receive it. It is true that some may sit there and not be influenced, but that is only because they have not in any way

previously prepared themselves.

So when people talk about the love and the grace of God they are usually thinking vaguely about things which are in reality very definite forces. It is sometimes hard for us to rid ourselves of this loose method of thought. It is not only those who have come along the line of the churches who suffer from it, but also those who have not, have lost something. Those who have *come* through this line have acquired in the process certain attitudes and powers of comprehension which those who have been free-thinkers have not so easily to hand. The orthodox church training is on the whole a good training, except for its bigotry and narrowness, and for the conception of God which it so often puts before its people. For the rest, the ideas of serving God by worship and by praise, and of gathering together so to worship Him, and to employ in that worship all such beauty as can be provided, are fine and beautiful, and I think that it is quite possible for them to co-exist with the widest and most liberal doctrine. They have not so co-existed for many centuries now, unfortunately, except in the case of a very few people, here and there. I have long believed that a church would sooner or later spring up which would combine these things, and now we have it in the Liberal Catholic Church. Those people who love the old church and her methods, her ritual and music, and all the beauty and gentleness of holiness, are now able to have all that, and yet at the same time to have with it a doctrine which is to all intents and purposes Theosophy.

So when in Theosophy we use terms corresponding to those which are commonly used in this vague way, we should understand that they are not cloudy or indefinite in any sense. If I speak of giving to anyone the blessing of the Master I mean a definite pouring out of a spiritual influence. It uses as its vehicle matter at a higher level than the physical plane, in most cases, but nevertheless it employs matter through which it influences the matter of the causal or mental or astral body, as the case may be; so let us altogether divest our minds of the least fragment of thought that this is a vague good influence which does not mean anything much.

This great force that moves all things has another side to it, which is the law of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a grand word, but people generally use it wrongly. They

talk about making a sacrifice when they give up something and it tears the heart to do so. If men want to know what sacrifice really means in religion, they will have to wipe that idea out of their minds. They must take an entirely new interpretation of a word they have known all their lives. They may sometimes think that they now hold the true interpretation and have set aside the other, when the shadow of the old idea is still upon them, and it comes up and clouds the mind without their being aware of it; only gradually will it fade away completely.

The word “sacrifice” comes from the Latin *sacrificio*—“I make holy”. To sacrifice a thing is to offer it to God, thereby making it holy. The idea that when you offer it to Him you take it away from yourself is a secondary meaning introduced into it; if you want, as it is so often expressed in the Scriptures, to make yourself a perfect sacrifice unto God, there must in that be no idea of giving up anything at all. The truth is, though it sounds paradoxical, that as long as you feel anything to be a sacrifice it is not really so; it is not made holy at all. You are giving it but with a grudging hand. When you feel that you cannot do other than pour yourself out, as it were,^ at the feet of God or of Christ in perfect devotion; when you have no thought at all of giving up anything, because in the very nature of things you could not, do otherwise from the way in which you feel; when what you have within you makes it so that there is nothing else in the whole world that you could do but yield utterly to Him; perhaps then you are a perfect sacrifice. It is only when we have altogether forgotten the ideas that are ordinarily connected with the word that we can make a true sacrifice. It is a glorious word, but it does not mean to give up; it means to make holy.

The Logos Himself makes the greatest sacrifice of all, for He pours Himself down into matter. He limits His power and sheds His glory; truly, “For us men and for our salvation He came down from Heaven”. Those are beautiful words, but the meaning that is attached to them in modern days is often far from that; it is often altogether a degradation of the real idea. When understood, these ideas are seen to be beautiful and glorious and entirely to be commended and admired—but we must understand first. So the Christ makes of all sacrifices the greatest, and we, in so far as we dedicate ourselves to His service, take part in that sacrifice and make ourselves one with it. If one has once seen the reality behind,

one can do no other than this; but then the world would no longer think of it as a sacrifice, because it would seem to be following one's own will. Then the man goes on working with the evolutionary force, but he has forgotten what he gave. It is no longer a matter of giving up anything, but of having reached the true realization of oneself, and of knowing what one is here for. The thought of the Logos is such as that, and we must be like Him if we would truly sacrifice.

Dr. Besant has said that the fact that there is no religion in the world which is not full of ideas of sacrifice shows that there is some great esoteric truth underlying it. The Law of sacrifice has not been fully studied as yet, although a Master once said that it is as important as those of reincarnation and karma.

To see that reality behind things is to listen to the song of life. The song of life is the force which is all the time running under life. All the different movements in nature have sound and colour as their expressions and accompaniments—there are others of which we know nothing, but at least sound and colour are within our experience. It is possible to learn to hear something of the harmony of nature and to see something of its beauty and glory and order, and it is in that way more than in any other that one may come to be quite certain that all things are working together for good, and that the order which underlies this apparent disorder is out of all proportion and in every way greater, more important, more effective. The disorder is nothing but a slight disturbance, foam on the surface; the real depth of the sea lies beneath, and that obeys the divine law perfectly, even though on the surface that law may seem to be set at naught.

It is important for us to try, if we can, to sense the reality which lies behind, to feel that which is incapable of being turned aside or disturbed in any way. It is a great comfort, a great consolation, a great security, when once we can get into touch with this, and feel absolutely sure that everything is marching steadily on its way, and that therefore it does not matter what happens on the surface, because it is at worst a small temporary annoyance, a little flutter. All the while we are moving onwards towards unity with the One. We are all the time part of it; we are moving towards the realization of that, and the One through us is developing His manifestation of Himself.

There is a song, a great chord of harmony, as it were, always sounding

beyond the worlds. In classic days they spoke about the music of the spheres, the idea being that the sun, the planets and the stars, moving in their courses, produce a mighty harmony. In the Old Testament, too, we read that “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”⁷⁰ Many people think of that as a beautiful expression, but merely poetic symbolism. A common proverb speaks of things as “too good to be true”; but everything good and beautiful must be true, because it is good and beautiful. Wherever there is a fine idea, there is a basis for it; one could not think it unless there were something corresponding to it on the higher levels. All the highest and noblest and greatest things are the divine thoughts; our thoughts are high and pure and true and noble just in proportion as they reach up towards that. We must try to acquire this idea—not as a poetical conception to play with, but as a real basic fact—that above all and in all and at the heart of all there is always the beautiful and the true. The ideas commonly put before us are man’s thoughts about things; the realities behind things are God’s thoughts about them; as God is greater than man so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts. Higher does not mean more austere, or more unpractical, or more distant from ordinary life, but greater, more beautiful, more glorious.

We are listening to the song of life whenever we try to find in everything that which is best and most beautiful. All students of occultism must necessarily be optimists, because they know that the facts far more than justify the most optimistic view that we can possibly take. The truth behind is always grand. We misunderstand it and fall short of it; that is not the fault of the truth, but of our lack of comprehension. So in many ways—some of them small ways—in daily life we may listen to this song of life, and when once we do come to hear it we shall not entirely lose the sound again. It is to be heard on all the different planes; even if we could hear the entirety of the song on one plane we should still have only a very small part, one note. As we reach plane after plane we shall always find more and more of its beauty and glory. The more one hears of it the more perfect the harmony becomes. If one struck all the notes of an octave at once one would not get harmony, but discord; but on the higher planes there is what I can only describe in a somewhat paradoxical way—the possibility that the more notes you are able to strike the more perfect is the harmony, because there

all things fit into one another in a way which down here one cannot in the least degree suggest.; If part of a melody is in one key and part in another we get an effect of disharmony. If we could imagine some kind of projection into space in which each of these parts would work itself out in perfect harmony within itself, and then a scheme in another direction in which those parts would blend together, in which each of those harmonies would be one note, it might give an idea of it; it is not possible to put it into words. But the effect of it is that you can so project a number of keys, which here would be discordant, that they make in higher worlds a perfect harmony.

Much modern music is less harmonious than the older music. It plunges into wild discords and seeks thereby somehow to produce a finer harmony. It does not succeed in doing so; but I believe that the people who are working at it are gaining glimpses of this of which I have been speaking, and are trying to express it. They are seeking for some method whereby discords will produce harmony. I do not think it can be done on the physical plane; but I must confess I do not like these curious later manifestations, and therefore I am probably far from understanding them. The people who compose all this weird music are probably aiming at something the astral and mental counterparts of which will not be discords but harmonies; but at this level they produce an effect which is not harmonious. I suppose those who have come to appreciate it have learned how to produce the effects in their higher bodies, and so they like that queer and inharmonious sound.

Many of the curious modern manifestations of art, not only in music but also in painting, are definitely struggling towards the future, and they are producing effects beyond that which can be seen and heard. What can be seen and heard is very unbeautiful in many cases, but I can well imagine that they are aiming at something which will be very beautiful when the result is attained. One wishes that it might be reasonably harmonious on all planes, so that even down here the thing might be beautiful in itself for those who do not understand the higher side!

I have heard a number of people say that one piece of music sounded much the same to them as another. There are many of us who get a certain amount of

vague pleasure from music, but do not in any way understand it. There are others to whom a piece of music is not only pleasing to the ear, but to whom it is as definite as speech in a lecture would be, to whom it conveys a clear form, which they can see and appreciate. I have heard great musicians speaking among themselves, and I therefore realize that the thought-form with which a composer writes a certain piece of music can quite definitely be conveyed to another man. I met with such a case when I was in Italy a few years ago. A man wrote a piece of music which was intended to represent a fountain in a garden, and this fountain had three basins one above the other. As he wrote his music describing this he had that thought-form in his mind. I know the same thought-form was conveyed to another musician who had never seen the fountain or the garden, and had no idea of what the music was intended to portray; when he played it, it called up the exact picture before him, so that he knew which parts referred to the different basins of the fountain and which part was descriptive of the garden. I could see certain correspondences, but until I had heard what it meant it did not call up the picture to me. That is a higher musical development; when we are at the level when we can sense a meaning like that in music, it will convey more than it does at present to most of us. The same thing is true of a picture. Precisely what it conveys to one differs from what is indicated to another. Some are like the man in Wordsworth's poem:

A primrose by the river's brink

A yellow primrose was to him,

And it was nothing more.

But to the poet the primrose suggested a host of beautiful ideas. When this faculty is definitely established we shall arrive at a condition of thinking in symbols. The ego does that in his causal body; he thinks in symbols, not in concrete things, and quite evidently one way of psychic unfoldment is along that line, although it is very different from the more ordinary form of development.

Many of the newer forms of art, such as the futurist and cubist pictures—things which are like nothing in heaven or earth, but may symbolize something at higher levels—are at present in a transition stage; it is half done work. They

always say that children should not be allowed to see half done work. Some of us are only children in this respect, so we do not appreciate it; but when it is completed it may be a great success. The song of life is not one part, but a whole orchestra; it is a vast number of melodies all run together, and it may be that the votaries of the new art are reaching up towards another manifestation which as yet we do not see.

Great changes may take place in art and music, as well as in religion, social reform and politics, when the World-Teacher comes. We think habitually of Him as leading us in religion only. I do not know why we should confine our ideas to that, because surely there is a great deal of human evolution outside of actual religious teaching. I do not mean that religious teaching ought not to permeate our entire life; I think it should, but that very religion may manifest itself in many different lines. It may therefore be that the Teacher will show us how these things should be done, that He will inspire not only the priest, but also the poet, the artist, the sculptor, the musician, and the scientist. When we get a more modern presentation of religion, one more in harmony with the particular stage of evolution which humanity has now reached, it may well be that that new statement will give us a wonderful impulse along all these lines. Very truly, His message will bring us nearer to the comprehension of the song of life in all ways. It will show us more of the underlying glory, and beauty, and harmony and order.

It is important to realize order. We are now passing through a democratic phase of things, in connection with which it seems inevitable that there should be considerable manifestation of disorder; some people, in fact, rather glory in disorder, call it individualism, and say that every man must go his own way no matter what happens to the rest. It *is* necessary that people should learn to be able to go their own way; it is also necessary that, when they have done that, they should also learn to subordinate their wills to the Divine Will. Having developed the power to stand alone, and the powers to act and think, they must learn to use them only in the right direction. One must have a will to subordinate to the Divine Will. When a man has no will life is quite easy, because he lets everything drift and trusts in "Providence". The people who have developed a will sometimes assert it against the Divine Will, and really it seems better for their evolution that people should be strong enough thus to go wrong in order

that they may presently go right, because the people who have not the will to do either good or evil are not likely to be particularly useful, nor to go very far.⁷¹

To follow the Divine Will is to listen to the song of life. The more we seek it the more we shall discover it. As we reach plane after plane, we shall hear it more grandly and more fully. It is said here that even now we may form some faint idea, may see some dim reflection of the splendour of the whole, because this song of life is within us, and if we look deep down we shall find it. We have the divine spirit, the divine breath within us. It is crusted over by what we call our human nature, and so the melody does not readily come through—the spark burns low. But it is there, and that spark is never separate, as we thought it. It is always part of the totality of the divine flame, and our duty is to make these lower selves of ours lamps through which that can shine. There is always within us a manifestation of the divine which is not soiled or in any way clouded by its association with matter. If we can realize ourselves as that, matter will no longer have any power over us; but to do that fully means a very high development—perhaps even more than Adeptship. Always there is that manifestation, absolutely unstained, unclouded, untouched; if we can realize even a little our oneness with that, feel that that is “I”, we shall hear the song of life always. However we may be surrounded by the struggle and clash of the lower worlds, that song will always be sung within us; we shall do our work in the outer world in utter peace and contentment, because we know that within is the only real truth and all the rest is merely a temporary manifestation. Some touch with our own higher consciousness or that of the Master is often the beginning of the hearing of this melody; it brings a sense of that inner life, of rejoicing, of bliss, of conquest, a feeling that you have been victorious in a great struggle.

The Master’s note continues:

He that chooses evil refuses to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself to the fact and build up for himself a

phantasmal outer form of horror.

If a man chooses evil it is because he refuses to look deep within himself. It is scarcely that he chooses evil intentionally, but as he never goes deep down into himself at all, he mistakes his astral vehicle for himself, and so lives in his desires, following the lower path because he wants to satisfy them. It is because he will not face the facts of life that he is working against the current of evolution. Long after he has reached the point where he could change over to the higher life he usually averts his face; it is too uncomfortable for him to realize that he has gone far on the wrong road, that he will have to turn round and face a great deal of hard work and trouble and sorrow, arising from the fact that he has set up an impetus in the wrong direction. It may not seem to be a very serious matter that there are many people in that state, but if a man having those characteristics reaches a position in which he has it in his power to do much good or much evil, he is in very great danger from the point of view of occult progress.

When one reads passages like this, one thinks usually of a man who takes up black magic on a grand scale, but it is equally true with regard to smaller matters. The man who will not face facts is very liable to be led away into the easier but more dangerous path. He will do what is easy, instead of what is right. We have to see ourselves frankly as we are. The man who wilfully declines to do so has probably reason to fear that if he did see himself face to face he might not like the prospect. Still, it is possible to err in the opposite way; to fall into a condition of morbid introspection is really a serious trouble and difficulty, as we saw in studying *At the feet of the Master*.⁷² The people who are always pulling themselves up by the roots to see how they are growing do not make progress. The great thing is to make sure that you are set in the right direction, that you are trying to work for good, and then go quietly and steadily on and do the best you can. Do not worry about your own progress. It is necessary, truly, that you should make progress, but the best progress is made when you are not thinking of it, when you have lost all thought of yourself in doing some good and useful work for others.⁷³ Such advance as I have myself been able to make in the course of the last forty-five years has come absolutely and entirely from throwing myself into any work that had to be done, and leaving the question of

advancement to take care of itself.

It is true that the man who blinds himself to the fact that he is divine builds for himself a form of horror. Our difficulty in dealing with him is that what we meet down here is the form of horror and not the soul behind. Nevertheless, we have to try to realize that that soul is there. I believe I have mentioned before that I had a certain amount of experience as a lay helper in the Church in my younger days in one of the worst parts of London. In the course of my experience there I met with people who were perhaps as low and degraded as any one would be likely to find in the world. They had no thought of gaining any sort of honest or reputable livelihood. Their only idea of life was to steal and to commit outrages of various kinds. They knew absolutely nothing more. Those who live under better conditions have very little conception of life among the real London poor. I have known five families living in one room—one in each corner and one in the middle. They got on fairly well in a curious pigsty sort of way, until the party in the middle took in a lodger, and then there was a fight. In the newer countries there is scarcely anything resembling the slums of Britain. In every race there are men more and less advanced, but in Britain we have produced extreme conditions, because we have not always lived up to our powers and responsibilities. In some cases we have massacred savage races, have slaughtered them as wild beasts, have gone out to shoot them as men shoot game. In many instances those who were so treated have in consequence incarnated in our own race, and become slum-dwellers. Though they are given the opportunity of a body of a superior race they are usually unable to take much advantage of it, especially while their surroundings are so bad.

When people are living under conditions like that I do not think we can expect anything very high in the way of morality, or humanity. These people, with a record of crime behind them, with a heredity of crime from their fathers and mothers, and living under terrible conditions such as I have described, nevertheless always had some little spark of something better in them—a little kindness that they would show towards a sick neighbour, to a child, to a dog. I remember one man who was a very bad case indeed, and I think the only gleam of anything I saw of good in him was that he had a strong affection for a dog, and would share his last morsel with him. The divine spark exists in every one of

those people, and will show through when you least expect it. You know it' is always there, and that is something to work upon. If there should ever be a case where you cannot find any trace of it, be sure all the same that it is there.

While we should always try to remember the glory that is behind a man, and that it will be in evidence in some future life, we have yet to face the fact that the external presentment at present is often very defective. We must try to help the divine spark to manifest, though we shall find cases in which we can scarcely touch it. It is not given to every one to find the way. We meet with persons for whom we cannot do very much. We try; we do our best; it may not be the man's karma that we should be able to help him; it may not be our karma to be strong enough to find the way in that particular case. In these affairs we must always remember the importance of common sense, and must not permit ourselves to be swept away from that into helplessness or despair on the one side, or into any kind of sentimentality which will blind us to obvious facts on the other. It is often said that there is only one step between the sublime and the ridiculous, and one may sometimes make that which is noble and beautiful quite ridiculous by pursuing it too far, or carrying it to an exaggerated length. There are many such instances and possibilities in connection with our Theosophical teaching and work.

The divine life is in every one, but in many cases it may be showing itself but poorly and dimly. We have then to deal with the matter as it stands. On the physical plane, for our life as a community, we must have certain laws. Those who offended against those laws, who become what is called habitual criminals, must be dealt with in some way that will help both them and the community. I know that some people carry the idea of the indwelling light so far that they say the criminal ought not to be restrained. That seems to me to be foolish, because we should then be delivering ourselves over into the hands of the criminal, and life and order and progress would become impossible for thousands of people whose opportunity of progress is very much better, who are far more important for the progress of the world than that criminal.

We must do no wrong to our criminal. We should treat him as a case, as a sick man, rather than as a wicked man, because the habitual criminal is a person

who is mentally defective. Clever he may be along certain lines, but he is certainly deficient in other ways. He is unable to see the necessity for unselfishness and unity and solidarity, otherwise he could not be the habitual criminal. Those who have read the works of Prof. Lombroso will remember that, after a long series of experiments, he came to the conclusion that all habitual criminals were defective in brain, and that in all cases, clever though they may be, their brains weighed less than the brains of normal men. He said that certain parts of the brain were not yet in activity in them.

The usual idea of taking revenge upon the criminal is surely quite the wrong way to approach the matter. It seems to me unworthy of a civilized body of people. We must protect ourselves against the attacks of the criminal classes, but since they are also men and brothers even though very much younger brothers, we should try in protecting ourselves to help and educate them, not to be revenged upon them. There is an idea that other crimes may be prevented by making an awful example of one person.⁷⁴ That is doing evil that good may come; history shows that good does not come in that way.

All these forms of horror are phantasmagoric. They have no existence in the divine reality. They say in China that evil is but a dark shadow of good. We have produced most of the evil in the world because we have not worked in harmony with the divine laws in this life or in past lives. If it were possible that we could all work in harmony with them, evil would be eliminated. It was necessary that some free will should be gained in order that we might learn how to use it, but quite naturally and with no blame attached to anybody we have used our free will wrongly about as often as rightly, and the consequence of that has been the introduction of what we call evil into the world. But always it is a mere surface disturbance, always in the deep waters behind are the great currents of the divine life, and the evolution which the Logos has mapped out for us. Those are the permanent realities of life. The other is only superficial, though to us it often seems of tremendous importance and of very great power. In reality, as compared to the rest, it is not at all a powerful thing. The great waters are not affected by anything that we can see. In some mysterious way it is true that "Blindly the wicked work the righteous will of heaven," as Southey said. In that sense it is that I say to you: All those beings among whom you struggle on are

fragments of the Divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which you live that it is hard to guess where you will first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others. But know that it is certainly within yourself. Look for it there, and once having heard it, you will more readily recognize it around you.

If we can look at things from the point of view of the ego in the causal body, still more if we can penetrate to the next plane, the buddhic, we shall see the real meaning of all this. It is no longer one little part of the lower side of it all that we then see, but the whole thing; and we can realize what the proportion is, and see how really small it is, how “The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound.” That is truer than perhaps Browning knew when he wrote it. Behind and beyond and above all the evil we may be very sure that the great current is steadily flowing, that the song of life is to be heard, if we go down deep enough to hear it, for the soul of things is sweet, and the heart of being is celestial rest as the Lord Buddha told us long ago.

We have to find the way to God by the cultivation of the spark until it becomes a flame. It will then burn away the walls that the individuality has built up, but in destroying them it will not lose the strength and definiteness which it gained in building and using them. So the power which it thus gains will enable it eventually to act not as a spark, but as a sun radiating life and light through a vast solar system, and then, indeed, man will have become as God.

We may now consider the Chohan’s comment on Rule 5:

Life itself has speech and is never silent. And its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song. Learn from it that you are part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony.

Down here on the surface one sees plenty of confusion, of crying and sorrow and misery and grasping and overreaching and ill-will, and one might well think that if one could penetrate to the heart of life one would find it a cry for help, a cry of misery; but it is not—one will find it is not a cry, but a song. Whatever the spray on the surface may do, whatever currents and eddies may be seen here by our outward eyes, the mighty current goes steadily on, and it is that which counts, that which makes the mark.

The cry for rest and peace is often all that we can hear in the physical world. When we rise to the higher planes we realize that the whole current of life which flows from within is not uttering any cry for rest, but is singing a glorious song of triumph as it flows steadily onward in the way which God has appointed for it. You may learn from that song, as is said here—you are part of the harmony and you may learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony. All this wonderful and glorious universe is an expression of God's will.; it moves steadily on as He means it to move, and all that we have to do, if we would only understand it, is to make ourselves an intelligent part of that movement, to see what it is that He wants us to do, and then do it.

There is no difficulty and there never has been any difficulty in knowing what He wants us to do, for religion in the world from the earliest times of which we have any record has taught precisely this with regard to the actions of men. They have had as 'many forms of belief, and as many different names for things, as there have been religions, but all of them are agreed as to what a man should do. That is the important thing, and it is strange that people cannot be induced to see that idea and to work with it. They all agree that the good man is the man of generous heart, the unselfish man, the kindly man who does not oppress others but tries in all ways to help them on their way—the man who is charitable to the poor, who will give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty and clothes to those who are naked, and will visit those who are sick and in prison. These are the things of which Christ is reported to have spoken as deciding the fates of men.⁷⁵ In Buddhism, the last of the religions-founded by His great predecessor, the Lord Gautama Buddha, you will find exactly the same virtues laid down. When the present World-Teacher came to us in His incarnation as Shri Krishna He preached the same doctrine. There is a variation in certain outward forms and names which do not matter, but the teaching itself has ever been the same. Yet although men have always been told, have always known what was God's will, it is very hard to get them to do it.

We read much of the simple life; the simplest lives of all I suppose were led by the hermits of old, are led even today in India by people who go forth into the jungle absolutely without anything, and devote themselves entirely to following the higher life. I am well aware that that often deteriorates some of them, and

those who are supposed to be devoting themselves to the higher life are sometimes in reality not yet able fully to do so, are not yet at the level where they can spend a whole life in meditation. Thus there are yogis who have caused yoga to be criticized, and hermits who have brought disgrace upon the religion for which they are working. Still, the fact remains that the highest and simplest life of all is in reality the fullest life—the life which is lived wholly upon higher planes.

That is not for all; most of us are on the line of karma yoga, or active service; our business is to work for the benefit of the world on the physical plane. The man who retires from the world should be working for it far more decidedly and strongly, but at the higher level. He does not retire to meditate in a jungle or a cave merely because he wants to get away from the rest of the world and save his own soul more easily in that way. He goes because, being already a soul which is saved, radiant, rejoicing, strong, a spiritual power, he feels that he can do greater work on higher planes than he could in a city, amid interferences from the physical plane.⁷⁶

Sometimes men have retired to the jungle merely to avoid the responsibilities and difficulties of worldly duty; but the man who has transcended worldly duty will find that it will fade away from him, and when the way thus opens up for him, he may permit himself to try the higher life of the sannyasi or monk. Yet even then in this period of the world's history that monastic life does not seem to be the way generally indicated. There is so much to do in the world that at least we must fulfil all our duties there before we may feel ourselves at liberty to retire from it and leave that work to others. It may be that when the great World-Teacher comes He will choose those who are to work upon these different lines. It may well be that among those who are young some may be chosen to lead the life of the monk. We do not know; but it is quite certain that He will need loving, active, willing helpers on the physical plane. For the moment let us do that work, because that comes to our hand to do. If when He comes He chooses to draw some of us away to do some higher work, then He will give us the power to do it, but for the moment let us do that, which is obviously our duty, and do it with all our might as unto the Lord and not unto men.

6. Store in your memory the melody you hear.

Only fragments of the great song come to your ears while yet you are but man. But if you listen to it, remember it faithfully, so that none which has reached you is lost, and endeavour to learn from it the meaning of the mystery which surrounds you. In time you will need no teacher. For as the individual has voice, so has that in which the individual exists.

If you listen you will hear the great song sometimes; then remember it and never forget what you have heard, so that nothing that has reached you may be lost; in that way, by piecing together the fragments of the great song you may gradually learn from it the meaning of the mystery that surrounds you.

Life is a mystery to those who do not see it as a whole, and none of us can see it fully until we become one with the Logos of the system, the Logos of whom all this life is the expression. Only He can see it fully. We, as minute fragments (I know that is not philosophical, but it comes nearer to the fact than any other expression, I think), as tiny parts, of His consciousness, may identify ourselves to a greater or less extent with that great consciousness. And just in proportion as we do so shall we be able to see this, to sense it, to know it. Each one of us who is trying to hear the song of life is trying to piece together the fragments which he sees here and there.

Probably the whole of nature is the expression of something which is simple; a very few simple forces under different conditions account for all we see around us; but we are not yet in a position to see exactly what these forces are and how the conditions work.⁷⁷ It seems at first strange, therefore, that the further we inquire in a scientific way into nature the greater is the complexity we find. You put on higher and higher powers to your microscope, for example, and you find that what seemed only a simple little speck is in reality a wonderfully complex organism. Until recently chemists used to think of an element, such as gold or iron, as a simple thing, but years ago, by clairvoyant sight, which goes far beyond the power of the microscope, we saw that it was a most complex object. We saw, for example, that what is commonly called a chemical atom of gold contains three thousand five hundred and forty-six of the ultimate physical atoms, and that they are moving in groups round their own centre of gravity in

close imitation of the solar system.

So it would appear that the more deeply we investigate the more complex we find everything. Yet ultimately that is not true, because if we go further and further still we at last find that all is built of bubbles in koilon—built of nothing—and the whole material universe is in a way an illusion. Indeed, the Indian books told us this, long ago—that there is an ultimate simplicity behind all the complexity. We cannot speak with certainty because as yet we have not seen it, but it seems so probable that we may almost take it as a certainty that that same rule will hold good everywhere: that while the complexities are quite infinitely greater than we have thought them to be, yet behind all that lies absolute simplicity.

7. Learn from it the lesson of harmony.

You can stand upright now, firm as a rock amid the turmoil, obeying the Warrior who is thyself and thy king. Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the Warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat—standing thus, cool and awakened, use the hearing you have acquired by pain and by the destruction of pain.

The great Venetian Master is describing here the state at which the man ought to have arrived when the higher self is the warrior, the one who fights. When the man recognizes that he is that warrior in truth, that he is that higher self, and that it is divine and within the Logos, then he becomes unconcerned as to the battle of life, except to do the bidding of that higher self.

At first in our struggle in the world, in our endeavour to do our work and fulfil our duties, we are very much concerned about the result. We feel that unless we are able to work for it the right will not win. The right will always win in the end. It would be sad that any one of us should fail to do his part towards securing that end, but we may be sure that whatever is done the right must eventually triumph, and so long as we do the bidding of the higher self, so long as we are making our utmost effort, the fact that that utmost effort appears to fail should not trouble or concern us. But we must be very sure that we are making

the utmost effort and that we are **not** using the certainty that the right will win as an excuse for laziness.

Thousands of people said with regard to the great war: “O well, the right will win; why should we do anything?” Yes, the right did win; but it was a very sad thing for those who, having had the opportunity to help, deliberately refused. On them lies the karma of a great opportunity lost, and also the karma of all the additional evil that happened because of the delay. If more people had come forward boldly and been willing to sacrifice themselves the right would have won much sooner and many lives would have been saved. Those who hung back were responsible for the lives of the additional people who had to die. I suppose there are many people, though it seems hard to believe it, who would rather send someone else to die for them than die themselves. It is a low stage in evolution, but there are those, apparently.

It is absolutely certain that in the great struggle of life the right will win, and also that all will evolve to perfection some day, somehow, not perhaps in this chain of worlds but in some other. Yet those who take that as an excuse for laziness, and say: “All will come out well; I need not exert myself; the ego will fight somewhere on some higher level; it does not matter what I, as a personality, do,” will be making very sad karma for themselves, because they are delaying the final triumph of good in this cycle of evolution.

There is a great difference between knowing that the warrior within you must win, and the stage before that when you do not know for certain. In the latter case you feel only vaguely that he must win, and you are very much concerned about your part in the battle; this is a necessary stage, even though it is a mistake. But he who certainly knows attains to perfect calm even in the midst of failure—not the calm of inactivity, but of the divine will in the higher self. From the point of view of the great consummation no one’s work is insignificant. All the little efforts taken together make the mighty whole, but yet each man’s part in it is so small a part that he must not be unduly proud with regard to it. The right must win, but the question is whether we are going to form part of this conquering host now or whether we are to be one of those who are to be left. We must be among either the lifters or the lifted; each man must be one of those who

are working for the world, or one of those for whom the work is being done.

The real Self will win; it is incapable of defeat. When the personality is thrown off and the warrior within the man fights he must win; when you have identified yourself fully with him, you stand cool and awakened, and you watch the contest in which you are taking part precisely as though you were not taking part in it. You try through it all to listen to that song of life; you use that hearing which you have acquired by pain and by the destruction of pain. So long as you have the pain, and feel it as such, you are still fighting, you are only on the way; but by the destruction of that you come into that state in which you have another sense, as it were, which enables you to hear and to see all the while what it is that lies behind. Amidst all the turmoil and the strife you hear the song of life; amidst the wild confusion you see the mighty current. You have come to know that this pain is only a temporary thing; you pass beyond it so that it is no longer woe to you; it is no longer suffering. You know its meaning, and its power to hurt you is therefore dead.

CHAPTER 4

RULES 9 TO 12

C.W.L.—We come now to the group of Rules 9 to 12. Once more we may put together each of the short rules with that portion of the Chohan's comment which goes with it.

9. Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.

Regard the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men; and as you learn to understand their constitution and meaning, you will by degrees be able to read the larger word of life.

Most people spend their time regarding not the life but the form which surrounds them. They do not dwell to any extent upon the thought of the indwelling life. That is why they can be so rough and careless about vegetation, cutting down beautiful trees, and turning a delightful country-side into a dreadful manufacturing centre or an ugly city, without a thought for the preservation of as much natural beauty as possible at the same time. That is also why they can be so incredibly callous in their dealings with our younger brothers of the animal kingdom, and even with one another.

It is also the reason why the evil in the world weighs so heavily upon the feelings of the better kind of people. If they looked beneath the surface of things and saw what is happening to the indwelling life, and how even the most distressing events are used to assist the life on its road to divine happiness, they would be less troubled. The disciple must turn his attention to the life in everything. The first thing to recognize in all life is that it is an expression of the Logos Himself. It is true that in much of the life around us we find many things that are repellant, things which we know as evil, and yet they too bear their part in the progress of the world, and because of that we may look everywhere for the manifestation of the Deity Himself.

There is always some human good in every person, except, perhaps, in the case of a personality that has definitely broken away from the higher self. That is a thing which sometimes happens, though very rarely indeed. It sounds dreadful, and so it is, but it has been grossly exaggerated. The idea of what used to be called the lost soul was harped upon a great deal in early Theosophical literature, and two or three statements referring to quite different conditions were sometimes all taken together, and the mixture mislead a number of people, making them think that lost souls were quite numerous.

There is a certain set of people in the world who are intensely attracted to anything gruesome; they always want to make the worst of anything and everything. This is quite strongly marked in the lower classes in England. One would judge from the fare that is provided by the newspapers that it is common also elsewhere. If they have bad news to tell, they seem to take a delight in telling it as vividly as possible, and adding numerous gruesome details to the tale. I suppose many people possess that temperament in varying degrees, and it is not confined to the lower classes, though it comes out very crudely in them.

I believe that we had in the Theosophical Society some people who were somewhat of that temperament, and they picked out very carefully all the references to subjects of this sort, to the eighth sphere and the possible loss of the soul, and wove out of them all a terrible story. Then they confused with that the remark of Madame Blavatsky's that we are elbowing lost souls by millions every day in the street. That is a statement which in any case would require a certain amount of modification. To elbow a million people would take one rather more than a day. It is not an idea which can be taken literally, but is a picturesque way of speaking of the two-fifths of humanity who will drop out of our evolution in the middle of the fifth round. They can be described as lost souls only as distinguished from those who will pass on safely.

They will be lost to this particular chain of worlds, but as has been explained, there is no eternal punishment for them; they will rest in drowsy contentment and be quite happy because they do not know anything better. They are not in the least to be pitied, unless it be because they will have another long cycle of lives to live in the next chain of worlds, and that is tiresome, as we all know. For those

to whom it comes it is the best thing—far better and easier and pleasanter than it would be for them to remain in our evolution, when they are not fitted for it, and thus to be pushed on at the cost of very considerable strain, which would probably eventually break them down altogether. They have not wasted their time, because all that they have learned and acquired in this particular chain of worlds will stand to their credit and there is some progress for them in their interchain devachan. They will therefore take a high place in the next chain of worlds, because they will begin in advance of the new egos of that chain.

Those, then, are the millions whom we jostle. That has nothing to do with the isolated cases in which the personality breaks away from the individuality. That is a dreadful thing, but it is very much better to regard it not as a colossal catastrophe, but only as an exaggerated case of something that is constantly happening, for, as I have explained,⁷⁸ at the end of each incarnation something is usually lost, though much may also have been gained. The loss of an entire personality would imply a life of most dreadful evil. Even then the ego does not evil intentionally, but he sometimes lets his personality get out of hand. He is responsible for that; he should not have allowed it; though that for which he is responsible is weakness rather than direct evil. Still, the ego of the man is going on. It has fallen back very terribly, but it does start afresh; though perhaps not immediately, because it seems to be stunned at first. After such an experience an ego would always be peculiar. He would always be dissatisfied, and would have recollections of something higher and greater which now he could not reach. It is a fearful condition, but still the man who casts himself so far back as that has to take the karma of it, and realize ultimately that he has brought it upon himself.

I do not know for certain what further possibilities of loss there may have been in earlier days of the world's history. As things stand now it seems quite certain that the very worst that can happen to any ego is that he shall lose the whole of one personality. That is a serious matter indeed, and might throw him back from a fairly advanced civilization into almost a savage condition, but it could not now throw him back into the animal world. I am not prepared to say that there may not have been a time when it could have done even that, but it is not possible now, so far as we can see.

It is not so very long ago, as occultists consider time, since a great many of our present humanity left the animal state. When the time of the shutting of the door from the animal to the human kingdom was drawing near, a great effort was made to get as many through as possible, to give the very last chance to every one. The Lords of the Flame came down from Venus expressly to stimulate things just at that period or a little before it, and all the efforts that were put forth then were chiefly with that aim in view, to give the opportunity to as many as possible to make the change from the animal to the human kingdom before the door was finally closed. Just as in infinitely smaller matters people make a special effort, when there is a big chance opening before them, whether it be to go to a bargain sale at a shop, or to pass an examination, so there seems to have been something of the same kind on an infinitely vaster scale, at the time of the last opportunity of leaving the animal kingdom and entering into the human in this particular incarnation of our chain of worlds.

There must then have been many who were not so very much above the animal kingdom, who only just scraped through. Several hundred of the incarnations of such people must have been spent in quite the lowest kind of savage condition, and with hardly any interval between them; they were practically in physical life all the time and only very gradually developed any astral possibilities. There may have been some of those who might almost as well not have got through, and at least such as those will be practically certain to drop out in the middle of the fifth round. Still they will have had a considerable experience of human life—from the middle of the fourth to the middle of the fifth round—so in the next chain of worlds they will come in not quite at the beginning. They will have passed through the primary classes and will be able to start again as very decent savages. People as low as they could not do anything to throw themselves very far back in evolution. They have not the power to make much progress, their advance must necessarily be slow; but on the other hand they have so little brain power that they could not throw themselves very far back.

Much is said in some ancient scriptures about people sinking back into the animal kingdom. We have no direct evidence of any cases. There are other ways in which men may come into touch with animal consciousness and suffer very

terribly through it, as I have explained in *The Inner Life*,⁷⁹ but to reincarnate as an animal is not possible now. We are now too far removed from the dividing line to be able to throw ourselves back across it, whatever may have been possible in the distant past. Not even the most determined black magicians can do it. We saw something of those beings in activity during the great war, because some of the Lords of the Dark Face of Atlantis came back into incarnation. That accounted for many of the horrors that took place. The karma which those people made for themselves was unquestionably ghastly. I have once or twice seen glimpses of the future karma of people who were much less guilty than some of those; it is a sight one does not forget—a hideous nightmare. There are people far short of these great meteors of crime who yet lay up for themselves futures of horror—those who beat children, and those who vivisection animals. At their future one looks with a shudder; but these are far worse. These have done the same thing on a colossal scale, and for insane selfishness have sacrificed half a world. Yet they do not become animals. In those rare cases in which a personality has broken away, it lives a life somewhat like that of Margrave in Bulwer Lytton's *A Strange Story*—the absolutely selfish man, without conscience, without a soul behind to guide him. He will be a terribly evil man, and may carry on his evil to a second incarnation. It was stated by Madame Blavatsky that such a personality may in some cases take another incarnation by seizing upon a baby body; there is no body provided for him, but he may seize upon that of some child who has just died, and revivify it and live in it, and so gain a second life. She spoke very little of these subjects, but when she did allude to them it was with a lively horror impressive to see. It was clear to us who heard her that she had herself at some time been brought into contact with cases of this kind, because she shrank from speaking of them at all.

We understood from what she said that a second human reincarnation for such a thing was not possible, but that it might happen that this decaying personality, which still had a certain amount of the ego torn away and vivifying it, might then descend into the animal kingdom. She told us once a very ghastly story indeed of the way in which such a thing, still consciousness, might drift backwards in what she called devolution. She said, I remember, that some snakes were inhabited by such entities as these, and that some of these things were

conscious that they had once been human. It is a horrible thing: it sounds a kind of nightmare, but we may be comforted by the fact that it is an exceptionally rare thing, that such a condition could be reached only by a determined devotion of life after life to positive evil.

We have only a sprinkling of really wicked people in the world, and even they mostly excuse themselves in some way. The burglar who steals your plate has generally some theory that property is improperly distributed, and that he is only taking the share which the Government or someone else ought to have given him, that he is taking it from somebody who is unfairly in possession of a quantity of wealth which really ought to be distributed to all. People very rarely do a wrong thing knowing it to be wrong. They always excuse themselves in some way. They may see afterwards that the excuse was rather flimsy, but I believe that at the time when a man does the wrong thing he practically always justifies himself somehow. Much more than that is needed in order to attain to the horrors of being a lost soul. The man must devote himself quite definitely and intentionally to doing evil, must set himself against the current of evolution.

Such hideous possibilities are becoming rarer; humanity is making progress and gaining more and more knowledge, and it becomes less and less possible as time goes on for people of the dark side to obtain recruits. Even now they are really relics of the past. We have heard much of vampires and were-wolves; such creatures did exist and still are occasionally found. I have seen examples of both, but do not expect to see any more. It is becoming less possible that men should be able to sink into those depths. Instead of becoming vampires people now fall into the grey world; that is a condition which we have apparently, introduced instead of vampirism. It is better, certainly, though it is bad enough.

Life in the grey world after death is due to the entanglement of the astral body with the etheric double.⁸⁰ There are people who have no clear belief in life beyond death, who yet hunger for continued existence. They would vaguely tell you that they believed in an after-state, but it amounts in reality to a very strong doubt. As no life but the physical means anything to them, they cling desperately to the physical body; so much so that after death the etheric matter cannot be fully drawn away from the dense physical matter, as it is in normal cases. Then

you have a person for quite a long time after death in a condition which is neither one world nor the other. He retains an amount of etheric matter which prevents him from using his astral senses fully, so that he does not, as he should, slip into the astral world, and on the other hand he cannot keep hold of the physical world, because he has lost his grasp of that, though there is still some of the etheric matter left round him. Thus he is suspended in what is sometimes called the grey world. In this condition he obtains only little glimpses, occasional impressions of each world, but he is in a very unsettled condition, struggling always to obtain full life somewhere. All that might fall from him in a single moment if he would let it, but often it is a long time before he can do so.

The Chohan says that the changing life about us is formed by the hearts of men. It is true that our outward conditions result from our inward thoughts and feelings. Sometimes people complain about the state of society, government, politics, religion, trade and education, but these very well express the inner condition of the people who swarm in our cities. It is all formed by the hearts of men. And even the less immediately caused human conditions of suffering and joy, such as geological and climatic changes, even such as earthquakes and floods, become our environment on account of karma which is due to our own feeling and thinking. We thus put ourselves into our place in nature, according to our inward nature, our hearts, and then we are apt to misunderstand it because we look at the forms instead of at the life.

A great deal of what seems to most men actively evil may yet have its good side. A physical plane example of this world be a terrible earthquake, like that which devastated a great part of Sicily and Calabria in 1908, and killed over a hundred and fifty thousand people, some suddenly, but others, I am afraid, with a great deal of suffering. Many people would look upon that as an evil. It is not evil for the world. It upheaves and changes the place of a great deal of the earth's crust, and renovates the soil, and in that it distinctly does good to the world. Look at Mount Vesuvius, in Italy, and you will see how after a certain time all the volcanic matter which is thrown out becomes the very finest fertile soil. But it destroys human life at the time. A thunderstorm, an earthquake, a great flood, are not evil at all. They may release some men from their physical bodies, but surely that does no harm to them, in any case; all that arises in such catastrophes

is a matter of karma, and in the long run it assuredly works out for their good.

The Theosophist ought to understand quite clearly that death is not in itself an evil, but is very often given as a reward. Our general attitude in this matter is due to wrong religious teaching. There is implanted in every one of us the desire for self-preservation, the instinct to try to save our physical body from injury or destruction. That is a very wise and necessary instinct. We ought to protect our physical bodies, to make them last as long as we can; because, if one may venture to express it so with all reverence, the Logos has taken the trouble to put us into this incarnation, it is clearly our duty to make of it as much as we can.⁸¹¹

But there sometimes comes an opportunity when the very noblest use that we can make of our incarnation is to risk it, even to throw it away, as happens to a soldier who goes forth on a forlorn hope, knowing that he must be killed, and yet that his death is a necessary part of a great scheme which will end in victory. Such a man puts his incarnation to the noblest use when he lays it down voluntarily, when he throws it away; but for most of us and under ordinary conditions our duty is to take all reasonable precautions, and try to make our bodies last as long as we can; otherwise we cause a great deal of trouble by shortening our lives.

Some people have been a little foolish in their confidence in the protection which they expect the Masters to give to them. They say: "As long as I do the Master's work I need not take any precautions against infection when I visit people who are ill. I am sure He will take care of me. I will plunge into the water although I cannot swim; I am sure He will support me." Perhaps He will, if He thinks it worth while; but what right has anyone to put Him to the trouble of doing that which with a little ordinary common sense he might have done for himself? If it be our work to visit those suffering from infectious diseases, I think instead of blindly trusting to the Master to protect us, we ought to save Him trouble by taking ordinary precautions. We ought to do all we can on our side. If He chooses to supplement that, it is His affair. It would be very wrong of us to calculate upon it beforehand. Such interventions do happen, but we have no right to expect them. I have seen strange things myself along those lines, but I should never willingly put the Master to the trouble of having especially to protect me

against anything, when I can reasonably guard myself.

The instinct of self-preservation is for the advantage of the race. It is a right thing, but the brave man is always ready to risk pain and danger and even life itself for higher objects. The man who knows that death is not the greatest evil will be very willing to risk it for the sake of averting a greater evil—just what hundreds of thousands of our fellow-men did in the war. We know that death is not the end of everything, as people so often think, and for us a catastrophe like that of Messina is not terrible simply because a large number of people were suddenly thrown out of their bodies on to the astral plane. When I was in America there was a great fire in a theatre in Chicago, in which a large number of women and children were killed. Some of our members came to me and asked: “How can it be that Providence really governs the world, when all these innocent women and children have been killed?” I said to them: “Do you think that only men ever deserve the reward of a rapid release from the earth?” That was a new point of view to them, that this might really be a kindness releasing them from troublesome conditions of various kinds, so that they might start again in better circumstances. So we should not regard that great earthquake as an evil, merely because it suddenly threw a number of people on to the astral plane. The cases of those who were imprisoned and died slowly were comparatively few. There were some who were burned to death, and some who were buried among the ruins. Those would seem to us cases of very terrible suffering, but even then we must apply our Theosophy in the extreme cases as well as in the ordinary cases and realize that the great suffering of an occasional individual probably wiped out from his account karma which might have taken twenty ordinary lives to cancel. Therefore, while we should feel the greatest pity for the people who suffered in that way, and should do all in our power to help them, still we are not to mourn over them as though the whole thing were useless. It is a short but drastic way of getting rid of the result of a great deal of evil—truly terrible, but yet, when it is over, see how much has been gained.

We have compared painful experiences roughly—it is not wise to press an analogy too far—to the slow natural curing of some serious disease in one case, and the curing of it in another case by a surgical operation. The surgical operation is dreadful to pass through but when it is over the trouble ought to be

done with. A slow cure might mean in the aggregate even more suffering, distributed over many years. I suppose we must take terrible pieces of karma as karmic surgical operations. We do not sympathize, in the ordinary sense of the word, with the dead, because we know that they are far better off than before. With the relations who mourn their loss we do sympathize. But even then let us correct the mistake which causes people to feel horror at these things, and to think that God can no longer be good since He permits them. The experiences are terrible indeed but the result of the whole process is invariably good.

We must rise altogether above personal points of view to see how all is working together for good, and how the life in others is threading its way through the maze of karma to the feet of the Eternal. The Chohan says we must read the larger word, take the larger view, of life. Doing this, we shall never classify people in the smaller way. We shall not, for example, think of religious men merely as churchmen and dissenters, but as devotional men. So also we shall think of statesmen not merely as tones or radicals. We shall take wider views, and regard our fellows as men of thought, or of love or of will, according to the type of human conscious activity that dominates their lives. We shall qualify them according to their rays; adopting this deeper classification, we get nearer to the heart of reality, and find ourselves better able to understand life.

It is very difficult to understand fully all the different types, but we should try to do so. The Adept does understand quite fully, and sympathizes with every possible type; but it takes an Adept to do that. Our duty is to try; however impossible the point of view of the other man may seem at first, one must try to understand it. This does not for a moment mean that one must adopt his outlook; we have just as much right to our own point of view as this other man has to his, but he has also just as much right to his standpoint as we have to ours. A man who can sympathize with those who entirely and radically differ from himself has already made a considerable step towards understanding at least a section of the world in which he lives.

It is very clear that what the Master says here is a definite command for the disciple—we must learn to understand every type of person as fully as we can; and whenever we can use influence in any way to get people out of their ruts,

that is a good thing to do. It must always be done with understanding, however, for sometimes we may not be able to get a person out on our side of the rut; we may actually throw him into a less desirable condition by what we teach him. I have known that to happen.

Those whose memories go back to the older Theosophical literature will perhaps remember that it was not very sympathetic to the Church. Madame Blavatsky herself was a little impatient of the orthodox presentation of religion. She had evidently seen a very great deal of the effect of ignorant religious belief in cramping the minds and souls of the people, and sometimes she made quite a severe attack against the narrow religious beliefs that were taught. I think she did not always stop to tell people that there was another and higher side to it all. She was a deadly foe to superstition in any and every form, and she was more concerned in shaking the people out of their superstitions than with providing them' with anything else. Probably those people needed just that shaking out, and required to be treated in that drastic way. Probably they could not have been brought immediately to our outlook on life.

I knew Dr. Besant when her attacks on Christianity were even more slashing than Madame Blavatsky's. She would address large numbers of freethinkers in the Hall of Science in London, and when they had a Christian evidence man or a clergyman defending orthodoxy, it was interesting to listen to her, for she was probably the greatest debater of the time. I have heard her debate before and after she came into Theosophy. The Theosophical debate was much more charitable than the previous type, but it was not nearly as interesting. She pointed out very gently and kindly the weak points of the other side, and dropped inconvenient questions as much as she could, out of consideration for the feelings of the other party. When first I heard her debate she pushed her advantage to the full, and made it much more interesting, though not pleasantly so for her opponent.

Her power is just as great today, but she uses it so much more mercifully that one does not see it in debate to anything like the same extent. She has now what perhaps in her free-thought days she had not, this faculty of understanding everybody. She has that very wonderful power; but she has acquired it by

definite work. She has grown into it by making herself understand other people and by putting herself in their places. In her free-thought days, when I first heard her debate, she certainly did not put herself in the place of her opponent, whom she sometimes reduced to stuttering imbecility by the faultless logic and the violence of her attacks.

The man who wants to understand all, who wants fully to learn this larger view of life, must also identify himself with the lower kingdoms, must understand nature as a whole as far as he can. He must enter into a sympathetic attitude towards the great Devas, the nature-spirits, the spirits of the trees and of the country-side. We seem to have lost that in these modern civilizations, though here and there we find a poet, an author or an artist who has it. Because they had it, such men as Ruskin and Turner could write and paint as they did.

In ancient Greece we looked at things very differently from the way in which people regard them now. Everything in nature meant much more to us then than it does in these days, except to the few who are artistic. We thought less about money and business, and we enjoyed nature more. It is well to understand such a point of view as that. In the development of the lower mind, and in sharpening it on the business and practical side of life our modern races have lost very much, though unquestionably they have also gained a great deal—the faculty of managing a great many things at once and also that of concentration under exceedingly difficult circumstances, amid the fearful noise and racket and tear of this civilization. We had nothing like that in Greece; we could not travel about so quickly, but we saw very much more when we did travel.

I think we should try to recover the ancient outlook to some extent, by entering into the life and glory and beauty of the world which is all around us. The surroundings that man makes in these times are rarely beautiful, but in the days when men understood nature more, they did not spoil her forms nearly so much. The Greeks could build temples which were not out of place amidst the most beautiful natural surroundings. Perhaps we also will learn to combine beauty with usefulness; for example, we may learn to erect a building like a cathedral to be used as a factory; but in the meantime it is one of the weak points in this civilization that it is out of sympathy with nature in all her deeper aspects,

so that we need cultivation to acquire what was inborn in the Greeks—sympathy with nature. When one reads Ruskin's *Queen of the Air* one begins to understand a little of it.

Let us try to make all-round progress. We have all lived in races of the past which made beauty their principal influence—which had leisure and largeness of life. We, therefore, have it all in the ego. Our present life crushes it down to a great extent, but it needs only to be appealed to, and it will break through the barrier. That can be done, and it is worth doing even if only from a selfish point of view, for we should then enjoy life far more fully.

There are some people who feel disharmony with nature, who say that we are surrounded by “evil influences”, and that the world is full of scorpions and snakes and tigers. There is no inherent wickedness in a snake or a scorpion or a hornet, but they are all exceedingly easily irritated, and entirely—as we should say if they were human—unscrupulous as to the methods they employ. They simply run amuck, and sting or bite every one near by, if they happen to be a little annoyed; but you cannot call them wicked creatures, because they are not doing this with malignity. They are very full of life, so they plunge about and injure anyone who happens to come in their way.

It is the same in the astral and etheric regions as well. There are plenty of the lower types of nature-spirits who are not wicked, not seeking to do evil, but are very unpleasant creatures to deal with—the sort to be avoided. Fortunately it is easier to avoid these things on the astral plane than in the physical world, because a strong wish is sufficient there to drive them away from you. Creatures of that sort will take advantage of you if you lay yourself open to their influence. Many of them, as I have before explained, are delighted to find a man in a royal rage. They do not in the least care why he is angry—I am not at all sure that they know that a man is involved—but when they find a vortex of vivid coarse vibrations which happen to suit them they plunge in and enjoy it and stimulate it, and in every possible way make more and more of it.

Vibrations of cruelty are greatly enjoyed by some of these creatures, and there is no doubt that they are eager to seize upon one who has this vice, and stir him up to greater cruelty than the man himself would ever have thought of. If

you let anger take hold of you, you may do and say all kinds of things you would not wish to do in the least. The same is true of cruelty: certainly it is also true of jealousy, envy and hatred. When a man plunges into any one of these passions, it is as though the astral body suddenly became alive and vindictive, because it is seized upon by a quantity of these creatures. It is very difficult for us to feel at all kindly towards them. We naturally think of the bad effect that they produce upon us. Yet the poor thing is only enjoying himself after his kind. That does not, however, excuse our letting him get hold of us; we ought to have risen above it. But we have to remember that all kinds of intensifications of that sort do take place, and when we are studying our fellow-men we must constantly make allowances for them.

There are vast forces moving round us of which most men have very little idea. We all know that in a general sort of way. We know that forces such as public opinion press upon us without our feeling them but we do not quite realize, perhaps, the tremendous strength of the law of evolution and the many and diverse ways in which it is acting all about us. God hides Himself in matter, but He is not dead because He hides Himself there; all the time His activities, His forces, are playing upon all His creatures. When they are acting strongly on a man they stir him up, and that is somewhat like the stirring up of a pool. All the water is put into motion, and whatever there is in the pool is churned up and brought to the surface. The pool may become very muddy for the time being by the process, but by it one learns what was lying at the bottom; it is better that the water should be stirred up, even if there is mud, than to let it stagnate and go hopelessly to the bad. So sometimes all this disturbance which is a part of His divine life brings out in people qualities which are undesirable.

It might be suggested that it would be better for a person if he had not been stirred up, but that is not so. He has for the time being been made more alive—disagreeably so, but it is better that the unpleasant qualities should come to the surface. Then he will know of them, and his friends, who see them too, may help him; whereas otherwise they might remain unnoticed, and might produce seriously bad effects when an opportunity occurred for their being stirred up later on. So sometimes it is the very divine force itself which brings forth activities which seem undesirable. We may be very sure that He who doeth all

things, doeth all things well. He knows what He is doing, and when He stirs up foul matter of some kind it is in order that it should be expelled, though at the time it does not always look well or hopeful for evolution. We have constantly to remember that every man we see is on a different rung of the ladder of evolution, so that what for one is very good, even necessary, is precisely that which would be harmful for another. We have to watch, and learn how to be entirely impartial and not to judge hastily, whatever happens. All lives are in the Logos and are quite definitely part of His life; so it follows that all these things are really His aspects and expressions. In that way we have kinship with all these manifestations, and a duty towards them. We may have opportunities of helping one and not another; we must take what comes in our way to do.

10. Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.

Study the hearts of men that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part.

In this Rule the word heart is used symbolically; we must look into the whole nature of man as far as we can; not only into his feelings, which are usually represented by the heart, but into his mental processes as well. We are required to try to understand him deeply, and to do that we must search for the manifestation of the ego in him.

When we see men round us acting in ways different from our own we often exclaim: Whatever could have made the man do such a thing as that? We could not conceive of ourselves doing that particular thing under any circumstances, and we cannot see why our fellow-man should do it. Most of us have rather given up many such riddles long ago, because they seem almost impossible to understand. I cannot understand, for example, why huge crowds should go to see a boxing-match; I cannot see what is the interest in it, because to me the whole thing is a brutal exhibition. If it were a question of paying, I should prefer to pay to go away somewhere not to see it. If I think over it carefully and try to reason it out, I find that perhaps the attraction is an exhibition of skill—of a certain brutal and degraded sort, but nevertheless it is skill—and perhaps there is also the idea of courage and staying power.

In the same way numbers of people stand about the corners of the streets, guffawing and talking in coarse and raucous voices. What pleasure they get out of it I do not understand in the very least; still, there they are, and they constitute a large section of human beings, whom we ought more or less to try to understand.

People do all kinds of strange things. Sometimes they fall into ecstasies of jealousy over nothing in particular. At others, one sees people acutely affected by what somebody else says about them. You apply reason, and say that it does not in the very least matter what other people say, because it does not do them any harm. But the fact remains that they are very strongly and seriously affected. We ought to understand why, to some extent, if we can. I quite admit it is out of the question in many cases; still manifestly it is our business to try to understand our fellow-men.

Some people might say that it is not an interesting study. It is not interesting for us personally, if we are thinking about that; but it is interesting from the larger point of view. Since we think of ourselves as having evolved a little further than these people, it is very clearly our duty to help them, but without understanding our help will be futile. It is very true that the things in which most of these people are interested do not interest us, but that is only a symptom of our having grown a little beyond them in the age of the soul. The soul grows, and people become more rational as they advance. Small children do all sorts of things that we cannot understand. Boys and girls of thirteen or fourteen have a set of motives which are somewhat nearer to ours, but still we do not know why they do what they do. We have to go back to our own youth before we can realize at all what they are doing and how things will strike them. It is always difficult; I know that well, because I have had very much to do at one time and another with boys and young people. If you put an idea before them in a certain way, in the hope that they may perhaps take it as you take it, sometimes they do, but often they approach it from quite another point of view, and decide upon it for reasons which would never have occurred to you. Sometimes you can make out what they are aiming at, but sometimes you cannot. Schoolmasters and other people who have much to do with boys and girls ought to make it part of their business to try to understand their bizarre lines of thought and feeling, because

then they are more likely to avoid offending the young people.

That is an extreme case, but you have to do the same thing with the adult people round you. If you are desirous to help them you must try to put yourself in their place; that is what is meant here by learning to look intelligently into the hearts of men. They have their prejudices and you have yours; it is highly probable that the prejudices are different in some ways, and so you have to discover the other person's point of view and make allowance for it. Endeavour to find how he arrives at his position and why his particular prejudice exists, so that perhaps you may be able to help him to surmount it.

Prejudice is indeed very subtle. It is so strong and so ingrained generally that the man does not know it is there; he does not believe that he requires any help, and it is therefore often difficult to give it without offence. Still, it is a very great advantage to a man if he can be helped somehow to get rid of his prejudice. In order to succeed in that work and do it skilfully, you must find out just why the man thinks this or that, and how his prejudice arose. Your own prejudice in the matter will have to be put aside resolutely; otherwise you will be dragging him from one false point of view to another.

Most of the causes of people's strange interests arise in their astral bodies. The mental body is only in process of being developed. This fact can be seen in all the phenomena that surround us in the mental plane after death. When the average better class man passes into the astral world he is fully capable of taking an intelligent part in the life of that plane, though some do and some do not, and some soon get the matter of their bodies rearranged, and thereby become greatly limited in capacity. The astral body has its faculties well developed; they are ready for use, though many people do not know what they ought to do and how they ought to use them. When those who have made some study of these matters pass to the astral plane, they find themselves in a vehicle which expresses them more fully than did the physical body; but when they reach the heaven-world it is generally not so.

There we usually find them working *inside* the mental body, and so very much shut up in it that it is really more of a shell for them than an expression of their life. That is what is meant by all that is written so strongly in the older

books as to the fact that men in the heaven-world are shut away from all the rest. It is often spoken of as though it were a reserved part of the mental plane. It is not that, but each man has shut himself up in his own shell, and therefore he takes no part in the life of the mental plane at all; he does not move about freely and deal with people as he does in the astral plane. The only openings in his shell through which life outside can reach him are those windows which he has made for himself by developing his mental body on certain lines. Whatever the man has done with his mental body lays him open to mental influences. Whatever it is, he will reap the result during his heaven-life, and he can to some extent communicate with the outside world through that. But the results which he will be able to produce upon the inhabitants of that plane will be much less on the whole than those which they will produce upon him, because it is often only through very narrow channels that he is able to express himself at all on that plane.

That very fact, which for a long time in the earlier days of our Theosophical study we did not understand, shows that the mental body of the average man is only partially developed. When we come to look at the manifestations down here in the physical world we find that the same thing is true. Probably every one has experienced these limitations in other people; we can find them in ourselves if we wish, but we see these things more readily in others than in ourselves. When you talk to strangers about Theosophy, for example, you will find that some of them take it up with great eagerness, and others do not know what you are talking about. They listen to what you say, and they say: "Yes, yes," but they are obviously not interested. The usual reason for this difference between people is that some of them have met ideas of this sort in previous lives and others have not. I think we should be justified in considering that all people who have been civilized for some thousands of years have certainly met with these ideas in earlier lives. Anyone who had a birth in ancient India or ancient Egypt, or who was sufficiently respectable to enter the Mysteries in Greece or Rome, will already have had some touch with these ideas. Some will have gone deeply into the matter, and by doing so will have developed that part of their mental bodies which is able to think of ideas such as these. Others cannot understand, and they do not care about it. All they want is to have a good time, as they put it. Apart from these grosser and lower desires their brains are of no use to them. If you

could get them to read a page about Theosophy they would not remember it.

The brain must be educated along the line in which we want it to work, and that is precisely what we do in Theosophy. Those people who take it up readily and eagerly do so partly because it answers many questions which they have been asking themselves, and partly because they have thought to some extent along such lines in other lives. Their brains are already opened so far as that part of them is concerned; it is very hard work for the person whose brain is not yet at all opened, as regards the philosophical part of it, to try to understand Theosophy. You give him a simple explanation and he probably assimilates only a very few of the broad ideas. The fact is that men need a great deal of preparation. The average man cannot see anything in it. I am not for the moment talking about his being clever or stupid, but simply of the fact that he is not conversant with this line of thought. He requires a good deal of preparation. He gains this for the most part through religion, and in religion he ought to be gradually trained. A fully developed religion ought to be able to meet all classes of people. All religions in the beginning do that, but as time goes on some of them lose one part and some another, and sometimes they crystallize along undesirable lines.

If we are to try to understand men we must remember the extent to which they are developed or undeveloped. We must remember that the mental body is not as yet fully developed, and therefore necessarily the causal body, which is higher, is still less developed, so that it is hardly working at all in the lower classes. Sometimes people who have studied Theosophy and have therefore understood a great deal about life and developed their minds along that line, are apt to rest upon their laurels and think that they have done all that is needful in the development of the mind. But often that is not the case, and sooner or later they must undertake some form of intellectual work or mental training.

What we should like to study in every man is the working of the soul, yet it is not every one who gives us that opportunity, and in our endeavours to understand we must bear that in mind. On the one hand we must always expect the highest from every man; we must confidently assume that he will do what we feel he ought to do, because the fact of our taking that mental attitude will very

much help him to do it. Again and again one sees that if a man who has, perhaps, been mixed up in shady transactions is treated honourably, and shown that honour is expected from him, he will rise to it. On the other hand, if we meet him with suspicion, he will probably soon deserve that suspicion. Yet too much must not be expected from people; we should assume that they are going to do the highest,' and should try by our thought to help them to do it, but when they fail we should not be impatient or angry with them, because evolution is a very slow process and a man can manifest only as much as he has developed.

There is never any use in feeling annoyance because someone falls below our standard; we should not blame a man for being what he is, for being at the stage at which he has arrived in evolution. When a person is developed to a high standard and then fails in some way, one may feel: "That is a pity; because he knows so much better than that," but there is no reason or use in being annoyed. While we must think the best of our fellow-men and must always try to help them to rise to the best that is in them, yet we must take it philosophically if they fail to do that. We must not show annoyance or impatience, but just try to help them where they are. That, I think, is the lesson we are meant to learn when we are told to look into their lives and hearts, and try to understand them.

There now comes a long note by the Master Hilarion, which we may take up with advantage bit by bit. He says:

From an absolutely impersonal point of view, otherwise your sight is coloured. Therefore impersonality must first be understood.

We commonly speak of being impersonal when we mean being just or balanced, when we do not bring into our decision anything of our own likes or dislikes, when we act as a judge does on the bench. But the Master means more than that. He holds impersonality to mean the condition in which the personality is for the time entirely transcended, so that not only do we in the personal life regard everything with perfect impartiality, but also we look at things from the point of view of the ego. That is a much more difficult achievement; to do it fully would mean having the causal body fully developed. Humanity at large is still developing the lower mental body. Students of occultism are trying to do something more than that, but as yet there are comparatively few among them

who can use the causal body with any kind of certainty. In the beginning the student must therefore *reason*, out for himself what the view of the soul would be, and then follow it, eliminating everything else.

It is hard to be impersonal. If there is a dispute between two people, one of whom is a personal friend whom you know very thoroughly, while the other is a stranger, it is scarcely humanly possible to avoid a certain amount of bias in favour of the friend. The reason for that bias is quite a good one—you know more about that person, and the more you know of him the better you come to understand him and the more you will make allowances for him.

We can hardly help being a little prejudiced in favour of a friend. I do not think we always realize how very much we are the creatures of circumstances and surroundings. We happen to be born in a certain suburb of a certain big city. We grow up to know a certain small circle: out of that small circle we choose some friends. Presently one may move away and then acquire new friends in other places, but in the beginning the friendships which we form are a question generally of where we happen to be. If we had been born in another suburb, we should probably have had quite a different set of friends.

Sometimes people who have been brought together fall in love and marry. They cannot understand that if they had happened to be born somewhere else they would probably have felt just the same to some other person. There is much in propinquity. I know karma comes in, too, in many cases, but these matters are quite often the result of propinquity. We are strongly influenced by our human as well as by our other surroundings. Therefore it is difficult to make this research into the hearts of other men, and finally into our own hearts.

We are in the habit of thinking of everything as it happens to affect us. Many people are incapable of taking the wider view, and seeing how it affects the nation as a whole. We have plenty of instances of that in these days when almost everybody has a vote. Quantities of people can think only how the result of the election is likely to affect them personally; they seem incapable of understanding that there is a duty to the community. It is not that they wilfully put the thought of themselves before the thought of the community, but that it never occurs to them that there is a wider point of view.

There are three ways in which the soul may be developed and may influence our lives, as I have explained before.⁸² One is that of the great scientists and philosophers of the world, who have developed not only the lower mind, but to a considerable extent the higher as well, so that a great deal of its more abstract kind of thought, its wonderful comprehensive way of thinking, comes down into what they think, although they cannot perhaps express it in their writing. Those who have an attraction for that way, will have to pass through the stage of being the great scientist or philosopher; the buddhic development will come much later.

Secondly, through the higher emotions, such as strong affection, devotion or sympathy, it is possible to awaken the buddhic principle to a great extent, without developing especially the intermediate causal body, yet not without affecting it, since all buddhic development reacts very powerfully on the causal. The method of working of most of our students is to use the higher emotions and work from them upon the buddhic vesture. I do not mean that they are yet developing a buddhic vehicle in which they can permanently live. That would be an eminently desirable thing to do, but it is perhaps beyond the reach of most as yet; but the use of the higher emotions unquestionably evokes vibrations in the buddhic matter. It stirs up the as yet unformed buddhic vehicle so that many of its vibrations come down and brood over the man's astral body; thus one may gain a considerable amount of influence from that plane before the vehicle is at all fully developed.

There is also another and more obscure path in which the will is called into activity; just as the astral body reacts on the buddhic and the lower on the higher mental vehicle, so does the physical somehow react on the nirvanic. I know very little indeed of how it works. But the way of most students is through devotion to the Masters and keen sympathy with their fellow-men.

Intelligence is impartial: no man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers. Your enemy becomes a mystery that must be solved, even though it take ages: for man must be understood.

If you have friends you may indeed be very thankful, but in this particular matter you look on them impersonally, as from above, and say: "These are my

friends; why have we as souls been thrown together?” Then probably you will find that either there are points of great similarity between you, or you are complementary to each other—you go well together in your vibrations and so make a satisfactory whole.

In the same way, from this impersonal point of view no man is your enemy. If anyone foolishly puts himself in that position, you say: “Why should he be doing this? He could not have these feelings towards me unless somewhere in the past I myself had given him cause for it. Let me see if I can discover the cause, and whether there is any way in which his attitude can be changed.”

Your friend becomes a part of yourself, an extension of yourself, a riddle hard to read. Only one thing is more difficult to know—your own heart. Not until the bonds of personality be loosed can that profound mystery of self begin to be seen.

However well one knows a person, even after many years of friendship, one yet sometimes touches a layer of his consciousness which is strange. It has been said, and I think with great truth, that no human being ever perfectly knows another, not even after a long life together. The Adept must know. That is one of the great comforts of being associated with the Masters; we are so absolutely certain that They know much more about us than we know about ourselves, that They really know us all through. We see in ourselves weaknesses and failings, and we try so far as we can to deal effectively with them; but we may also have other failings that we have not seen, which may come out in great emergencies or moments of strain. It is then a comfort to think that, if there be such things, the Master knows about them, and He will sooner or later bring to the surface anything that we do not know already, and will thus help us to remove it. Those whom He draws nearer to Himself in the relation of discipleship at least have this consolation, that they cannot be hopelessly bad, even though well-justified modesty may make them think poorly enough of themselves⁸³.

At all stages of inner progress the necessary work must be done by us, and with our own will behind it. Even the Master himself cannot do it for us, though He can and does help us by His magnetism, affection and sympathy, as well as by indirect influence which He gives through various pupils of His. He can help

us along the way only if we make such karma as allows Him to do it. We must make ourselves fit for the opportunity and then, when it is given, by taking it thoroughly we shall become ready for the next one.

Without this the Master has not the right to help, because He also is under the great law of karma, and however willing He may be to lift us straight up to the Adept level, He cannot do it. But that we shall receive His invaluable help on the road as soon as we deserve it is very certain; for even He is a friend in the common acceptance of the term. He cannot give us something which we have not earned; He can really help us only when we have become one with Him.

Not till you stand aside from it, will it in any way reveal itself to your understanding. Then, and not till then, can you grasp and guide it. Then, and not till then, can you use all its powers, and devote them to a worthy service.

The Master is clearly thinking here of the higher self, the ego in his causal body, grasping and guiding the lower self. As we have seen before, all of this is to be understood at different levels, according to whether you are dealing with those who are pupils or with the Adept Himself. For some the task is that the ego in his causal body shall learn to control and direct the personality down here. For others it is that the Monad shall take hold of and direct the ego. And when that has been achieved, which is the case of the Adept, even then He will still have to take whatever it may be that is next higher to that Monad and convert the Monad to be a perfect expression of that.⁸⁴

11. Regard most earnestly your own heart.

For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.

Unless you recognize God within yourself you can never find Him outside. Through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes. Its evocation can be very much helped from without. Your Master Himself cannot give you that light, though He can help you to awaken it within yourself; it must come from within, and it *is* within, whether you know it or not.

It surely ought to be a very great blessing and encouragement to us when we find so strongly emphasized in Theosophical teaching the fact that the Divine is within us and we are essentially part of it. We forget it many times, and allow ourselves to fall away from the consciousness of it, so that temporarily we take short views and are unable to grasp the width and the depth and the glory of His plan. People forget, or perhaps never knew, that they are one with the Divine, and that it is only by coming nearer and nearer to the expression of that Divinity that they can ever attain real development or happiness, or indeed any truth which shall put them right with the rest of the world. It has been universally recognized by all mystics that it is only through the God within that we can come into touch truly with the God without. The Master has said in another place: "If you cannot see it within yourself then it is useless to look elsewhere."

CHAPTER 5

RULE 13

C.W.L.—At this point in Part II of *Light on the Path* the numbering of the rules undergoes a change. We have no longer sets of three aphorisms from the old manuscript, followed by a comment by the Chohan. Rule 13, to which we have now come, is given by the Chohan.

13. Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.

The Master Hilarion's note on that says:

It is impossible to help others till you have obtained some certainty of your own.

One may study the Theosophical system thoroughly, look at it from all points of view, compare it with other ideas which attempt to account for the state of affairs we see in the world, come to the definite conclusion that it is very much the best hypothesis before the world, and consequently accept it as true. I suppose one cannot quite call that knowledge, but it is at least a full and reasonable conviction upon which one can act with certainty.

If we examine the orthodox Christian statement we see at once that it lacks stability and is inconsistent; though it professes to account for everything it can hardly be said to offer a satisfactory theory. That is why many Christians fear to think. When we come to the Theosophical explanation of life, however, we see that we are on firm ground. Suppose someone comes from outside as an inquirer; he may feel that some of our statements are too strong, direct and positive, and may ask: "What evidence have you that these things are so?" He may doubt the accuracy of some particular statements. But no one could deny, taking the philosophy as a whole, that it is at least a coherent theory, and if it be true it does account for everything. That in many cases is all that can be claimed for scientific theories. We have before us a certain number of facts; the hypothesis

has to account for those facts; here is one which is clearly better than the others, which explains better than the rest all that has been observed; therefore we accept that as provisionally true.

When I came to a knowledge of Theosophy I was already a priest of the Anglican Church, yet I doubted a great many of the dogmas put forward by the Church, and always avoided preaching any dogma, but taught morality and illustrated it. Here in Theosophy was a reasonable theory, and because it was so reasonable I was very willing indeed to take it. I had then little proof, yet even at that stage I had as much proof for it as we have for a vast number of the facts in astronomy. I had as much evidence for it as we have, for example, for many widely-accepted theories in chemistry or physics. Certain experiments are explained by those theories, but there are a good many other things which are not yet explained.

Then came for me the further step of meeting Madame Blavatsky, seeing in relation with her certain things which proved some of her contentions. Of course that did not necessarily prove the truth of all the rest, but very soon, within three years after coming into the Society, I knew of my own knowledge of the existence of the Great Teachers whom she had described. To find that much true was very good evidence towards the truth of the other statements, especially as they all fitted in so beautifully and made so perfect a system.

Later, I became able to investigate for myself many of these questions, and so far as I have yet gone I have found no error in any of the great truths which she laid before us. In her books she gave a vast mass of teaching; as to the meaning of some of it I am not yet in a position to speak from direct knowledge. There are also some statements which I cannot yet understand; but the more I have learnt myself the more I have realized how much she knew. Therefore, while she admitted that there were many mistakes in her books, I have given up looking for them. At first, when we came to anything we did not understand, we thought it was one of the mistakes; later we found the mistake was with ourselves—we had not fully understood. Errors exist, no doubt, and when we know a great deal more we shall probably come across them. I suspect certain statements of belonging to that class, but am unwilling to assume that they do until I know it to

be so—one prefers to take her statements with great respect.

Having definite knowledge ourselves, it is true that we can speak with greater conviction.⁸⁵ I have had that said with regard to myself. People have said that they found my conversation convincing. Others without direct knowledge but far more eloquent than I have put these matters from their point of view; and yet people have said: “Yes, but do *you* know it?” I have replied: “Yes, I do, but how do you know I do, although I tell you it is so?” “We do not know,” they would answer, but somehow we feel when a man is speaking of that which he himself knows, and when he is speaking of that which he has merely read and studied.” There are all sorts of analogies for the idea that it is impossible to help others till you have obtained some certainty of your own. If you want to lift a person out of stormy waters your own feet must be on the rock.

When one soul knows, it conveys its certainty to other souls, and they recognize that certainty; even though down on the physical plane and with the physical brain they probably could not give any reasons, they feel it when a man really knows. It would be impossible for a man to help others along the line of higher development, or to draw pupils nearer to their Masters, unless he knew for himself.

This difference is clearly marked in the Theosophical Manuals, most of which were written by Dr. Besant. The first three—*The Seven Principles of Man*, *Reincarnation* and *Death and After*—were written before she could see any of these things, for herself. She very soon recognized that *The Secret Doctrine*, wonderful as it is, was most difficult for the average student, and that he would not get out of it one-tenth of what was there unless he could have some preliminary study to prepare for it. So she set to work with her characteristic energy and prepared certain epitomes for her people, simply writing them from her own study of the books, and from answers to questions which she had asked Madame Blavatsky. I doubt whether any other person could have taken *The Secret Doctrine* alone and got out of it what she did. She has a wonderful power of welding things together and making them clear. However, by the time she got to the fourth Manual, which was *Karma*, she was beginning to see the working of these things for herself. Then I wrote *The Astral Plane* and *The Devachanic*

Plane, and she wrote the seventh Manual, *Man and His Bodies*. By the time she wrote the last she had fully learnt to see for herself. There is a distinct difference in style in both *Karma* and in *Man and His Bodies*. Both those Manuals show that she knew what she was talking about at first hand. In the other books she was quoting, and although she wove in the different quotations with wonderful skill, the first three Manuals contain a great deal which is not quite clear, and is difficult to understand. She has often said she would like to rewrite them, but she is always writing other books, and has never had time. Also she has had the idea that they are historical documents, to show what we knew and what we did not know at that stage.

In the early days most of us had a very incomplete idea of the scheme of things; there were many gaps in our theories. Mr. A.P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* was the first effort to make a fairly complete and orderly statement. That book was based entirely upon a vast number of letters which were received by Mr. Sinnett through pupils of the Master Kuthumi. At first we attributed all the answers directly to the Master Himself, but afterwards we found that they came, if one may put it so, from His office, from His entourage. There was a vast amount of information in the letters, which were largely answers to questions propounded by Mr. Sinnett. It was out of those that Mr. Sinnett's earlier books were written.

It is Dr. Besant who has done most of the work of tabulating Theosophical knowledge for us, who has arranged facts and made them so that he who runs may read. In those earlier days we had to study much harder in order to grasp Theosophical truths. But one can see the difference between even her work, splendid as it was, at a time when she was guided only by the books, and when she saw the things for herself. Madame Blavatsky saw many things for herself, but her mind, so far as we could understand it, for it was a very gigantic mind, worked somewhat differently from ours. If one may say it with respect and reverence, it was of an Atlantean type in that it massed together vast accumulations of facts but did not make much effort at arranging them. Swami T. Subba Row said that *The Secret Doctrine* was a heap of precious stones. There is no question that they are precious stones, but one must classify them for oneself; she did not attempt to do that for us, for she did not feel the need of it at

all.

In the course of my own study I have repeatedly come upon ideas which were quite new to me, and have noted them down, thinking of them not exactly as discoveries, but as ideas that were fresh to me; perhaps months afterwards, or a year or two later I have looked back at *Esoteric Buddhism* or *The Secret Doctrine*, and have found that the idea which I thought to be new was distinctly implied in that book—perhaps not stated in so many words, but certainly implied. Certainly many ideas which we have recently thought to be new ought to have been deduced by us. I can see how those truths follow from the other ideas, and I wonder now how I could have been so stupid as not to have made the deduction. The same experience occurs in quite a striking way at each Initiation; the key of knowledge which is then communicated is an absolutely obvious thing. We say to ourselves: “Well, what have I been doing not to see that myself?” But we never do; nobody does until it is told to him. We need no proof for the statement; it speaks for itself, it is absolutely self-evident. There the fact was, staring us in the face all our life long, and we never saw it. If one ever had any pride in one’s intellectual development, it is very soon broken up on this line of experience.

Only the Masters are capable of giving *full* help to anyone. Their knowledge is universal, and it extends into all higher worlds as well. They appear not to need all the knowledge stored within Their brains as we do, but are able to turn a certain faculty on to anything that is wanted and by the use of that faculty, then and there, to know all about it. It might be that there was some information which the Master wanted; He would not need to read it up as we should, but He would turn His all-seeing eye on that subject and thereby absorb the knowledge somehow. I think that is what must be meant by getting rid of ignorance. It is obvious that one could never obtain all knowledge along the lines on which we gain knowledge. It is distinctly stated that the last fetter which the Arhat must cast off is *avidya*—ignorance.⁸⁶ When we asked: “What does that mean? About what must he know?” we were told: “About everything in the solar system.” One shrinks back appalled, because one has some little experience of the lower planes of this world, and one has also established consciousness at various higher levels. I can definitely say that though this is the Path along which

universal knowledge is gained, yet as one advances one becomes more and more oppressed with the sense of universal ignorance; every time one rises to higher levels, though one does understand the things one has been trying to understand, one at the same time sees rising up and stretching away in front of one wider and wider fields of which one is ignorant. The more a student gains the more he realizes how very much more there is to learn, and how little, beside that, is all he thinks he has gained. Even that is only half the difficulty, for every additional elevation gives a new point of vision with regard to all the things one already knew, and so one has to learn them all over again from that new point of view.

The attempt is not a hopeful one along any line which we have as yet learnt to follow. If we are to have the universal divine knowledge there must be some altogether different way of grasping it, which will open before us as we go further on. I take the whole matter philosophically now, because there is nothing else to be done. I learn all I can along our present lines, and as I gain new methods I use them, but I see I shall never really attain the higher goal along these lines. There must be some entirely new method of acquiring knowledge, and I think we get a little guidance as to what that may be from the buddhic consciousness of which I have already spoken; in that one no longer has to collect facts from outside, but one plunges into the consciousness of all these things, whether they be minerals or plants or devas, and understands them from inside. Then one finds that it is all a part of one's own consciousness somehow. Along that line it may possibly be worked out.

When you have learned the first twenty-one rules and have entered the Hall of Learning with your powers developed and sense unchained, then you will find there is a fount within you from which speech will arise.

The hall of learning refers in the beginning to the astral world; at a later stage the Master probably means something very much higher than that by the same expression. In the first place, when only astral experiences are available to the aspirant, there is a great deal that he can learn in the astral world. It is altogether a new thing for him; new faculties unfold and he finds vistas opening before him in different directions, enabling him to approach everything from that new point of view. To begin with there is the extra dimension. Besides that, there is the

power of seeing through every material thing. Further, the observer translates everything through his emotional vehicle, and that is very different from trying to sense things through a physical body. So there is much to be learnt and to be done in that higher world, because it is there that people most of all need help; it is there that we have all the newly dead in their many different conditions and stages of development, so it is chiefly there that work for those in trouble can be done out of the physical body⁸⁷.

There comes a later stage when the man becomes free in the mental plane in the same way as most of us are free in the astral when we are away from the physical body. Pupils of the Masters are taught especially to develop the mental body until they are able to use it as easily as the astral body; then they are taught how to make the mayavi-rupa, that is to say, a temporary astral body, not the astral body naturally attached to the man, but a temporary materialization on the astral plane which only those can make who have learnt to travel about in their mental vehicles.⁸⁸

The next stage is to learn to use the causal body freely. Then, whatever lower vehicles the man may be using he retains this new consciousness to some extent. He cannot use the full faculty of the causal body through the astral or the mental, because they form a veil, a limitation; but still he will have the memory of his causal experience with him. If he has also broken through that which acts as a veil between the astral and physical bodies, he will physically remember everything that he does in the higher worlds, so that his existence will be continuous. In the causal body itself his consciousness will be unbroken, not only through sleeping and waking, but through life and death, because that is a permanent consciousness. When a man enters into the next higher hall of learning, the buddhic plane, he will have direct acquaintance with all that comes before him. He will be able to enter within others, and in another way to draw them inside himself, and so will understand them fully.

When a man has his powers developed and his senses unchained at these high levels he certainly will have a very great deal that he can say. At the same time he will always find himself hampered by a serious difficulty in expression. He sees and knows; and because of that he can say a great deal more than the man

who does not know for himself, and can put it very convincingly; and yet with all his effort, and even with all his success as far as certain people are concerned, he will never be free from the consciousness that he is not expressing half of what he has seen. No words will impart to another what has been experienced in a realm beyond words.

People who are full of devotion now and then, rise into a condition of ecstasy in which they glimpse the higher planes. When one has once touched that condition he will immediately recognize it in the descriptions attempted by some of the Christian saints, and also by Hindu yogis. St. Teresa speaks of such experiences; St. John of the Cross, St. Francis of Assisi and others also mention them once or twice. These Christians reached a condition which they described in Christian terms, whereas a Theosophist would describe them in more Theosophical terms. He would speak of it in reference to the Masters; they spoke with reference to the Christ.

It is a great thing to obtain that touch of the reality behind phenomena, or rather that nearer approach to the reality beyond the forms, because a fragment of personal experience counts far more than a very great deal of instruction by hearsay; when we have some touch of personal experience we find that there is a fount of speech which arises within us. We feel we have something different to say, something which we *must* say, which is laid upon us as a charge that we shall give to the world—that we shall bear witness of these splendid realities. The Master says that when you come to know these things for yourself you will find this fount within you from which speech will arise. You will feel that you must and ought to tell the great things which the Lord hath done for you to put it in the Christian form.

One does not wish indiscriminately to thrust one's experiences upon people, but one has the feeling that those who have really definite first-hand knowledge of any sort ought always to be willing to bear testimony to it. Those who have personally seen and met and remembered some of the great Masters, should, I think, always be willing to bear witness to that fact, because the outer world is constantly in the attitude of saying, when they hear of such happenings: "Well, is there anyone who has seen these great Beings?" I do not wish to degrade the

idea of a Master by bringing it before those who cannot understand it, but if any such people, even at a public meeting, ask: "Have you seen any of these great Masters?" I say in reply: "Yes I have, but it is not a matter which I care to discuss in a public meeting." It is quite likely that in such a gathering there might be some who would mock at the idea; even though they said nothing, they might be in a condition of disbelief. While all that makes not the slightest difference to the Masters, it is only fair that we should remember that it does make a great difference to the blasphemer. The man who mocks at great people such as These makes for himself an especially evil form of karma; that I have seen over and over again. So if sometimes it seems that we hold back these things, our real reason for doing so is not only the natural repugnance that we feel towards subjecting names which to us are sacred to the ridicule of the ignorant and the foolish, but it is also out of consideration for the ignorant and foolish themselves, that they may not heap up for themselves very unpleasant experiences in the future. I cannot thoroughly explain that, but I do know that it is so. I have seen it again and again, far too often for it to be a mere coincidence, or the result of any kind of accident.

No man has the right to ridicule any religious teacher; he may not believe in him or feel it his duty to follow him, but at least no man of fine feeling would ever ridicule the religious belief of another. The man who does so is doing what is wrong on general principles, irrespective of the nature of the teachings given.

It is well, perhaps, that a general caution should be sounded in all directions that one should not adopt a scornful attitude with regard to anything, because there may always be some fragment of truth even in what seems to us incredible and incomprehensible. Every effect—even a superstition—has a cause, and though in the form in which it now presents itself to us it may be ridiculous, we shall find, if we follow it back, that there was something of truth in it at the beginning, and there is still something behind it.

After the thirteenth rule I can add no more words to what is already written.

The Master Hilarion means that the notes made the Venetian Chohan comprise all that He feels it is safe to say. He then concludes His notes with the

words:

My peace I give unto you. Δ

These notes are written only for those to whom I give My peace; those who can read what I have written with the inner as well as the outer sense.

“My Peace I give unto you”, we saw in Part I, can only be said by the Master to the disciples who are as Himself, or to others who have attained the buddhic level and are one with Him by virtue of attaining that consciousness.⁸⁹

Suppose people exchange among themselves a salutation of that sort: “Peace be with you,” and the reply: “And on you be peace.” What do they give to one another? We may imagine them to stand at the same level, and from each of them goes a strong wish or thought of peace to the other. That would be a real gift, a quite definite material thing. But that happens also whenever one sends out a thought of affection towards somebody one loves. One quite definitely transfers a little part of one’s astral body to him as the vehicle of the thought-form; one may also transfer higher matter as far as the buddhic plane if one has developed up to that level.

It is well to realize that one is actually giving something material in these cases. Often people do not think that the wish is anything. When they send out a good wish, it is just as material a gift as a book or jewel would be, only it is composed of mental and astral matter. It is a gift the poorest can give as well as the richest.

Suppose one receives the blessing of a priest: “The peace of God which passeth all understanding be upon you.” That again is quite a definite phenomenon. The good wish of the priest which one may receive as well, would be only an infinitesimal fragment of what comes from him. When a priest gives a solemn blessing in the name of God he is exercising his function as a priest; he is drawing spiritual power from that reservoir which the Christ set apart precisely for that purpose. It is from the very same reservoir which is drawn upon when the Eucharist is celebrated, only this is drawn from a different layer, and gives a different kind of force. There have been Great Ones who have

chosen to found a special section of the reservoir, filled in the first place by Themselves, and afterwards kept full by Their particular followers. This the Christ Himself did in His descent in Palestine. Therefore peace and blessing of a very much higher order than one man can give to another flows over the congregation through the will of the priest. It is not his \own, but comes from that higher source.

If one receives the blessing of the Bishop one has a higher stage of the same thing, a fuller outpouring. The Bishop, when he gives his blessing as such, makes three crosses instead of only the one which the priest makes. He does that to express the threefold force which he sends out. I do not mean to say that being a Bishop he would not give that force if he made only one cross, but the reason for his making the three signs is that he has at his disposal a threefold variety of the same force at a higher level than that given by the priest. If one of our great Masters said to a person "Peace be with you," He would throw upon him a still wider and higher peace.

The blessing of the Christ Himself is the highest that this earth can give. The Lord of the World truly stands yet above, but it does not come in His way so much to give blessing as to give strength. I think we may say the blessing of the Bodhisattva is the highest of that religious type which this world can give us. How much each one is able to receive of that peace and blessing depends not in the least upon the Bodhisattva, but entirely upon the individual. His power pours forth like the sunshine; earth-born clouds may get in the way of the sunlight, may obscure the action of that divine force, but it is there nevertheless—a glorious and wonderful power.

Most people are in one way much too materialistic and in another not nearly materialistic enough, in their feeling about these higher facts. We have so much materialism clinging about us that unless we can definitely see or at least feel a thing ourselves we can hardly credit its existence. Yet on the other hand we are not material enough in our ideas. People should understand that when we speak of/ the blessing outpoured by the Great Ones, even that of the Christ Himself, we mean something as definite as electricity or a jet of water. It is through matter that spiritual force manifests itself to us, so when we receive a blessing it is an

actual, definite power, which can bring us nearer to the Deity.⁹⁰

CHAPTER 6

RULES 14 TO 21

C.W.L.—Rule 14 is once more a comment by the Chohan, not so much upon what has gone before as in preparation for another set of three aphorisms, which are numbered 15, 16 and 17.

14. Having obtained the use of the inner senses, having conquered the desires of the outer senses, having conquered the desires of the individual soul, and having obtained knowledge, prepare now, O disciple, to enter upon the way in reality. The path is found: make yourself ready to tread it.

It seems strange when we are past the middle of the second part of this book to be told that only now are we entering upon the way in reality. It is, of course, a higher stage of the way that is referred to. Just as we speak of the probationary path first, and then the Path proper after the first Initiation has been passed, so here the Chohan speaks of entering upon the way in reality. The same idea is applicable at different levels. The Arhat enters on a new way, that of the nirvanic plane, a greater reality than that of the buddhic plane, and the Asekha or full Adept enters a yet higher path, a still fuller reality.

There seems no end to this Path. We cannot speak with certainty as to anything final. We can say that the ladder reaches before us till it is lost in glory far beyond our understanding, and we know quite certainly that there is evolution before us lasting for millions of years yet. What is the final end, who shall say? But that we shall reach the consciousness of our solar Logos, we know. For us that might well seem an end, yet I have no doubt that beyond that stretch further glories; but as to the finality we can say nothing. Even if such things could be laid before us in our present stage of development it is quite certain we should not understand them.

When the Chohan speaks of having conquered the desires of the individual soul He means the desires which the ego himself may have. They are not such as we term desires down here. At a high stage of the Path two fetters must be cast

off which are called ruparaga and aruparaga and they are interpreted “desire for life in a form” and “desire for formless life”. When one reaches the consciousness of the ego one finds that he has before him two varieties of life—that in his causal body, which is life in a form, and the buddhic life, which is life without a form in any ordinary sense of that word.

The ego has thus experiences of a consciousness in a form and a consciousness without form, and they are both wonderful beyond all words, because the ego’s life in form is life among his peers, among other egos, and when he is conscious at that level, he is enjoying the companionship of all the brightest intellects that the world has ever produced, including the great Angel kingdom as well as the human kingdom. The life of the ego on his own plane is glorious beyond any conception possible to the personality. If one could imagine an existence in the company of the great men of the world—artists, poets, scientists, and even our Masters themselves—and add to all that an understanding of Them unattainable down here—then only would one begin to have some idea of the life of the ego.

When one advances that far in development, one can see that it is a life of intense attraction, and for a man having that possibility before him to put it all aside and say: “I have no longer the slightest desire for this,” would be a stupendous sacrifice.

It would be an even greater renunciation if beyond and above that he had the formless life at his disposal—the life on the buddhic plane—which has not only that companionship, but actually becomes one with all that, and with a great deal more. Then he would say: “I have no desire even for that life; I am absolutely free from desire. If the Logos sends me, through our Masters, into one of these lines—life in form or life beyond form—most happily, most gratefully will I accept the work and try to do my best, but I have no desire for one or for the other, and am equally willing to be sent down into physical plane work.” I suppose few people have the least idea what an awful plunge the physical plane life is after such experience. To come down to this lower level even under the most desirable conditions, the most beautiful surroundings, is to fall back again into darkness out of a marvellous light; it is to be confined, to be bound and

helpless, because all the faculties of the higher worlds are so fine that they cannot be used down here.

It was said in one of the earlier letters from the Masters, of those who had touched the nirvanic level, that when they came out of it they were in a condition of profound depression for many weeks. I can imagine that to be true of some of our Indian brothers who in high ecstasy—in samadhi—had experienced that, and on coming down again to the physical life had found it a condition profoundly depressing. Those who are pupils of the Masters and have had experience of the higher levels have been taught not to allow themselves to be depressed by descent into any limitation or surroundings.

He who has sacrificed himself for service must be willing to surrender everything completely, when it is necessary. He must be ready to be sent down into any kind of surroundings, to give up altogether for the time that life in the higher forms and that formless life which is higher still. Only so can he cast off entirely those two fetters. It is the Arhat who has to do this. One may gain the Fourth Initiation and yet have touches of desire for those higher realms, so we need not despair unnecessarily. But it does mean a high development, a strong sense of the necessity for service, to be entirely unattached to such bliss. The temptation is very far beyond anything one could possibly imagine.

15. Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.

In this rule we have the original aphorism in the first sentence and the Chohan's comment in the second. I have already spoken with regard to what is indicated here—that we have to come into closer communion with nature, if we want really to understand her. All religions so far as we know, even including many of the rites of savage tribes which can hardly be thought of as religions at all, have a theory of cosmogony, of the way in which the world or the solar system came into being. There is a reason for that. It has been strongly impressed by the World-Teacher upon the sub-races of people to whom He came at different times that they should try to understand the universe of which they form a part.

The more we understand of the whole plan of evolution the more we can live in harmony with it, and become able to work with it even in minute detail. I am afraid it is impossible for people who have not had the experience fully to grasp all that is meant here by coming more closely into touch with nature. The writer is not talking vaguely, but with very perfect and intimate knowledge, when He says: "Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you." Those secrets would help men to understand this great and wonderful evolution. Even a little knowledge of them would at least save people from the danger of being self-centred. Many people very distinctly have been self-centred, because they have the absurd idea that all these kingdoms were created especially for mankind. If there are vegetables, well, it is stated in the Bible that God gave them to man for food; if there are animals, they assume (although I do not think it is distinctly stated) that God intended them to be man's servants, that they exist only to serve him, and, apparently, many of them, only to be eaten by him. That is not what is stated in the Bible; it is the herbs and fruits of the trees which are there said to have been given to man for his meat. There has been very strongly this idea that everything existed for the sake of man—that the air was made that he might breathe it, that the water existed that he might use it to drink or to wash with, and that everything pivoted round man as a centre. But all that is not so by any means.

The same people think of the moon as useless, except to light their way at night. If that was the intention it has been very inefficiently carried out, because half the time it does not do that at all; but still they persist in saying that the sun exists to light them by day and the moon to light them by night. Men have always talked like that, and when we know the facts it certainly strikes us as curious. We are the highest of the animal evolution. We hold ourselves to be a kingdom apart from the animal, but the fact remains that we are the highest of these creatures which have dense physical bodies. There are vast numbers of entities higher than ourselves who have mental and astral vehicles, and others which use physical bodies to the extent of the etheric matter, though only during temporary materialization.

If we were to choose one evolution apart from the rest and say that the solar system exists for that special one or even to say that our earth exists for that one

alone, then we should have to take the great deva evolution rather than the human, because it certainly reaches much higher and is altogether more splendid than our own. There are a great many other lines which have finished their physical experience on other chains of worlds and are now utilizing the higher planes of this world. Those evolutions which are at the stage of the buddhic plane, for example, do not interfere at all with the three lower worlds in which we are evolving. Since they are already at that height where their lowest level is the mental plane, which to us is so high, it may well be that they are far more important than we.

So far as we have been able to test it, or to see, no space anywhere is being wasted, or is unoccupied. I remember a statement made once at a spiritualist meeting which I attended, before I knew about Theosophy. The communicating entity said that to his sight the room was packed densely with what he called spirits, and furthermore beyond that room there extended on into the sky a dense mass of higher entities—whom he called angels—of various sorts, pouring down and rising up again. He said, “The whole air, as far as I can see, is densely packed with these higher beings.” He represented them all as being focused upon the particular circle in which we were sitting, and I have no doubt that a certain set of entities may have been attending to that, but apart from that, and always, all space is being utilized for evolutions which have nothing to do with us or with our set of parallel schemes at all.

The whole of space is absolutely full of life. More than three-fourths of the earth is covered with water; men cannot live in it, but that vast space is nevertheless very fully occupied with life. The solid earth is also full of a kind of life that moves through it as we move through air, without being conscious of obstruction. That is at a level lower than humanity; it is cleverer in some ways, but on the whole lower, and so utterly different from ours that what is their normal evolution would be evil for us. Much of this life could not be explained in ordinary language at all, but one can sense it by getting away from one’s body and going in among it and observing it. I should not advise people to do this, however, until they have the higher faculties and the other qualities which have been mentioned, because they might get themselves into serious danger, especially among these lower forces which are tremendously strong, but are not

guided by any considerations which we understand—what we would call moral considerations do not exist at all among some of those evolutions. It is all quite different from anything of which we have any knowledge, but all this we must know before we ourselves can reach the level of the Divine and become one with that, because all of this is the life of the Logos just as much as is the life within ourselves, and to understand Him we must understand it all.

16. Inquire of the Holy Ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you.

The comment upon this is:

The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

The Holy Ones of the earth are certainly, among others, our Masters. I think that here He means also the great Angels. We may come into touch with them and may learn much from them, but also we may learn—we have learnt—much from our own Masters, for They, through Their disciples, have taught us much knowledge which otherwise we should have been a long time in reaching for ourselves. They told us in the beginning that it was our business to verify for ourselves the things They taught us. That is what we have been doing, and it is in that way that we have in many of the later Theosophical books much more detail than was given in the earlier books, which depended very largely upon what had been told us.

To inquire from a Master does not always mean to go and ask a question. There are other ways besides that. There are cases in which we have done precisely that thing. We have formulated definite questions, and when the opportunity occurred have put those questions, one might say by word of mouth, except that on the higher planes there is no word of mouth in the ordinary sense; we have sometimes put those questions to a Master in a moment of His leisure and have received definite answers to them. There are many things in every-day work about which we should like to have the benefit of His wider insight, yet we could not think for a moment of troubling Him to give an answer. As has been explained before, it is possible for a pupil to lay his thought beside that of the Master and so, without appealing to the consciousness of the Master to see what

He thinks on any given subject.⁹¹ That makes no call upon Him whatever. It is simply that by drawing back up the line of communication we can put our thought beside His. It means that one has oneself thought out the question first and come to some conclusion that seems the best; then one lays that conclusion beside the Master's thought on the subject, to see whether there is any difference. If there is, one promptly alters one's own thought, knowing that He is much wiser and that His thought is accurate.

Thus there are ways of consulting the Master, without troubling Him at all. Still, there are other cases where that is not a suitable method of communication, where we have absolutely to wait for an opportunity to ask a question and get an answer; but certainly in order that one may inquire of Them he must first of all bring himself to the point where he will cause no disturbance in coming near to Them.

It is the duty of some of us to go every night when we fall asleep to the houses of our respective Masters for orders, to see whether there are any special instructions for us. Sometimes there are. But sometimes we find the Master obviously busy, deeply engaged; then we do not thrust ourselves upon His notice, but go quietly away and go on with our ordinary regular work. Any pupil, of course, would do that. He would study first the Master's convenience, and when he considered that he had something important to report he would not think of himself, but of the Master. But sometimes newer recruits are very full of the importance of something that they have been doing, or that they want to ask, and they wait about and thrust themselves on the attention of the Master, so that He turns aside for a moment from what He is doing.

The older pupil is always most careful as to what sort of thought and feeling he sends along the lines of communication between himself and the Master, so that there shall be no slightest jar. This needs a certain amount of care on the part of the pupil, because there are very often jars which the pupils cannot help. In a great city, for instance, there must often be surroundings which are very unpleasant; in a crowd during the busy time of the day, in the midst of a perfect pandemonium of noise, all sorts of clashing and crashing vibrations impinge upon a person to some extent. One may guard oneself to some degree, and must

indeed take good care that no such vibrations, if they do affect one should be transmitted to the Master.⁹² () It is not that the Master could not deal with it all by a single thought, but one does not want to cause Him a single thought; His time is so precious, the outpouring of His force so valuable, that the pupil does not want the smallest amount of it to be wasted. He lives for the work, as the Master does, and it is part of his duty to see that the very great beneficence which his Guru has extended towards him in making him an outlying part of Himself, does not cause the least trouble. It is easy to prevent these disturbances from reaching Him, when one has reached the stage of knowing how to do it. In the meantime, it is the conquering of the desires of the outer senses that gives one the right to come into such touch with the Masters that he can inquire from Them.

17. Inquire of the Inmost, the One, of its final secret which it holds for you through the ages.

The Inmost, the One, for the personality, is no doubt the ego, but for the ego it is the Monad. What it is for the Monad I do not know certainly, because I cannot yet see the Monad. One can see the triple atma, which is the threefold manifestation of a Monad, and from that a great deal may be deduced; but face to face I have not seen it. Our Masters have, but what They see and what They know They cannot fully tell us; that is quite clear. The Monad is said to be a spark of the Divine Fire, but also we believe that in the primal manifestation of the system the Logos poured Himself out through His seven Ministers—"the seven spirits before the throne of God." I do not know, but I imagine, that for the Monad, who must have come out through one of those glowing colours on his way from the divine Fire, that great Minister or Planetary Spirit through whom he came forth might well be the Inmost—and so we reason on to yet higher beings. These things are not comprehensible to us, and not to be stated in words. In some way which means very little to us and yet in meditation may mean a great deal, God puts part of Himself down into matter, and divides that part so that it becomes spirit and matter—two manifestations of the same thing, and yet having done that He remains behind it all, unlimited, omnipresent, unaffected. The Inmost, the One, has held secrets for us through the ages because always from the very beginning the inner self, the Monad, has known certain things. We

do not know what things the Monad knows from the beginning. The Monad is a spark of the divine Fire, and the Logos, who is the divine Fire, knows all.

The comment on the seventeenth rule says:

The great and difficult victory, the conquering of the desires of the individual soul is a work of ages; therefore expect not to obtain its rewards until ages of experience have been accumulated. When the time of learning this seventeenth rule is reached, man is on the threshold of becoming more than man.

That sounds rather excessive, but we must presume that He who writes knows whereof He writes. We must remember that all this has to be taken at two levels. When it is a question of the desires of the personality and of their being laid aside in favour of the aspirations of the soul it surely is not such a difficult matter. Putting aside the desires of the individual soul for those of the Monad behind is a very much higher thing, and when it is said that it may take ages one is prepared to admit that it might well be true; and yet when you have once accomplished this at one stage, to do it over again at another and higher stage ought not to present any insuperable difficulty, because what has to be done is the same thing, though from an entirely different point of view. It will, no doubt, take ages for those who slowly tread the broad main road of human progress, but generally only a few lives, as we have seen, for those who now enter the Path, and breast the mountain-side.

When one gets a glimpse behind the veil into the plans of the Hierarchy one finds that They habitually talk in large figures. They lay their plans with a wonderful, almost deadly, certainty, and it would seem that nothing whatever can interfere with them. They lay out Their future in blocks of ten thousand years or so, and They say: "In this ten thousand years we will get such and-such work done." And They do it. Yet that work does not at all necessarily spread itself evenly over that block. It seems to me, from what I have observed, that there might be a plan laid out in which a certain amount was to be done in the first two hundred years, so much in the next, and so on, so that by the end of a thousand years a certain definite goal was to be achieved. It would seem that in those smaller divisions of two hundred years the prescribed proportion of work is not

always achieved; yet what They have calculated to get done in the course of the larger block of one thousand years is always done. When the work moves slowly at first it hurries in the end.

The people or the nations to whom the opportunity to do the work is first offered do not invariably take it, but there is always an understudy being prepared. If a man or a nation fails, the next line is brought up and the work is done, though it may be delayed a little. The British Empire had a trial of that nature in connection with the great war. As a whole it rose to the emergency and proved itself worthy. Had it not done so, another great nation was being prepared to take its place, but it would have done the work a century or two later, because it is a long way behind. Now, because we have so far risen to our opportunity (and I hope we shall continue to do so till the end), that other nation will have a longer time to develop, and therefore will progress more soundly and more easily, and will not have such a strain put upon it in its development as it would have had if we had failed.

The Theosophical Society, and also each member in it, is in a somewhat similar position. Any member who proves himself good in the general work, or shows signs of being good in the near future, will be tried with some of the efforts which are being made in connection with the founding of the sixth subrace of our Aryan race. In all this there is, of course, no conscription or compulsion; all will evolve to perfection sooner or later, and we can take just as long as we like. The wisest policy is to do the very best we can in a steady way, not putting ourselves under a strain which we cannot permanently endure. It is a considerable advantage in doing any of this work to know to which of the rays one belongs. Most of us in the Theosophical Society are on one of the five rays, numbered three to seven, but many are in process of transferring themselves to the first and second rays, in order to work under the two great Masters who founded the Society, and who are to be the Manu and Bodhisattva of the Sixth root-race, which will be established in some seven hundred years' time. Many of our people will be born into that race, but there are others who will prefer to work on in the fifth race, and help in bringing it to the perfection that is still before it. Others will prefer to go with the great geniuses who will certainly come into the fifth root-race at its highest point, rather than to follow the two

Masters into the pioneer work of the new race.

In Australia and America, and some other places, there is now a special opportunity for those who wish to help in the development of the sixth sub-race, because it is rapidly coming into existence there, while there are only isolated members of it in the older countries. Many of those who were killed in the great war have already been reborn, though there is nothing so far to indicate that they are abandoning their former countries in order to come to the newer lands. Those of the new race type who remain in the old countries will probably have more difficulties to face than the others, because of the pressure of old ideas and conservative customs.

In all these undertakings, no one is ever indispensable. As to our own Theosophical movement, we may be very sure that the Great Ones behind will take care of it as a whole. Only lately, since I have had to take up again a good deal of church work, I have found how very closely, that organization is being directed, how very intimate may be the relation between those who guide the Church down here and the real Head of the Church behind, if those who are working down here make themselves channels such as they should be. That in many cases they have not done so, but have worked for their own selfish power and interest is lamentably true, and those who have done that have thereby shut off from themselves a vast tract of spiritual power, usefulness and efficiency which they might have had. But it is only quite lately that I have found out how tremendous are the possibilities and how ignorant most people are of them, and I am quite sure from what I have already seen that the same thing must be true in many other quite unsuspected directions.

I shall never again be surprised to find traces of the work of the Great White Lodge in anything that is good anywhere, whether it be small or great, for They miss no opportunities, not even the smallest; wherever there is anything of good in any movement, just to the extent of that good it is being utilized. There may be much in the movement that is not good; that is regrettable, and that has to be put aside, but it does not appear to interfere with Their employment of every ounce of good that does exist in it. There may be bigotry, persecution, pride, self-seeking and many other qualities that are undesirable in some movement or

person. Thirty years ago I might have thought that those qualities would probably prevent their possessor from being utilized at all. They do stand seriously in his way, and prevent him from making any real progress, but if there is any good quality in that person, to the extent of that good quality he is being used.

This method of the Brotherhood is most encouraging. We are all very conscious of being so far from perfect ourselves that we might perhaps think: "How can a Master make use of anything in me, when I so often make mistakes?" "But it is our duty to do our best and then whatever there is of good in us He will use. At the same time this lays upon us a still greater duty: to get rid of that which makes it difficult for Him to use us. He will use us as much as He can; let us make it easy for Him by making ourselves perfect channels.

There are many lines of development for human beings, and it takes many lives to develop the characteristics of any line perfectly. I have spent most of this life in developing the psychic side of my nature, in learning how to see clairvoyantly, and writing about it. I met in our Society, and have worked with, Sir William Crookes; that man spent his life in the study of chemistry, and he knew it perfectly. Over and over again I have felt: "If only I had your knowledge, or if you had my clairvoyance, what work we could do!" It seems a pity that one cannot have in one life both these forms of development. It takes a lifetime to attend to each. He spent his life studying chemistry; and he will come back into his next incarnation not with the detailed knowledge but with the faculty that will pick all that up almost automatically. I have spent this life in developing the psychic side. I do not know how much I shall be able to transmit into-my next body, but I will carry over as much of it as I can. Then I will start along one of these other lines, if the work will permit me to do so; but in the meantime those who are willing to do our special work are set to do it, and we have not much time for other things. We must attain all things one by one; they will come, because we do not lose one when we drop it and take up another. So if in this life we happen to have the Theosophical development, then in the next life the opening up of the intellect and of high devotion may come much more easily because in this life we have had this training, and there will be the further great advantage that we shall be practically certain not to misuse them when we

get them.

We must push on rapidly. We may be much nearer than we know to the higher development. If we have to spend a life or two in acquiring those capacities, what is that? There is plenty of time before us, so let us set our aim high, and try to develop all we can in the way of spirituality, intellect and inner knowledge. We are digging through a wall of ignorance and prejudice that we have built round ourselves in the course of many lives; we are like a man trying to escape from a prison. He goes on digging; he does not know at what moment the pick will go through the wall; when the reward is due it will come suddenly. We have many things yet to attain, but perhaps the development will come quickly; for that we must follow in Their footsteps and learn what They would have us learn.

Rule 18 is once more a comment by the Chohan. It warns the aspirant never to lose his caution and watchfulness, but always to be afraid of himself, as a Roman philosopher put it, even though he has ceased to be afraid of anything else.

18. The knowledge which is now yours is only yours because your soul has become one with all pure souls and with the inmost. It is a trust vested in you by the Most High. Betray it, misuse your knowledge or neglect it, and it is possible even now for you to fall from the high estate you have attained. Great ones fall back, even from the threshold, unable to sustain the weight of their responsibility, unable to pass on. Therefore look forward always with awe and trembling to this moment, and be prepared for the battle.

That great ones fall back even from the threshold seems impossible; the more nearly you approach their level the more incredible it appears, because anything like selfishness would seem quite impossible to the man at that stage. However, it must be so, because it is said by one who knows that of which He speaks. The thought of self is very subtle and turns up in unexpected guise at levels where there should be no such thing. Therefore we shall do well to heed the warning, and not too soon think that we are safe from the attacks of selfishness. That is the only fetter that can hold us back, but it has many forms, and is very subtle indeed.

The last three aphorisms once more form a series; in number 19 there is a preparatory comment by the Chohan:

19. It is written that for him who is on the threshold of divinity no law can be framed, no guide can exist.

The disciple at this stage is utterly beyond the need of outside teaching. He has read the book of nature on all the five planes of human evolution. He is at the point of conquest of the last fetter—avidya. Henceforth the law of his life comes utterly from within himself. Therefore no comment is possible. Says the Chohan:

Yet to enlighten the disciple, the final struggle may be thus expressed:

Then come the three rules:

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.

20. Listen only to the voice which is soundless.

21. Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.

PEACE BE WITH YOU

Notes

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Ante., p. 424

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Ante., p. 501

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Ante., pp. 172, 181.

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Ante., Vol. II, pp. 137-45

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Op. cit., 11, 40.

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See also *ante.* Vol. II, pp. 139-40.

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Ante., Vol. III, Chap, on *The Four Preliminary Statements*

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Ante. Vol. II, p. 333

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Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 1: *Liberation, Nirvana and Moksha*

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Vol. I, Part III, Ch. 2: *The One Good Desire*

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Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 3: *Right and Wrong*.

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Vol. II, p. 292.

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Vol. I, Part I, Ch. 7: *The Four Qualifications*. Part III, Ch. 1: *The Removal of Desire*. Vol. II, pp. 56, 264-5, 314, 324

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Op. cit., iii, 17-20.

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Ibid., iii, 22-24.

[←16]

Ibid., iii, 25-26.

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Ibid., iv, 16-18.

[←18]

Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 2: *Love in Daily Life*. Ch. 6: *Service*

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Op. cit., iv, 20-23.

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Ante., Vol. I, Part I, Ch. 1: *The Occult Path and the Interests of the World*; Part IV, Ch. 1: *Control of Mind*; Ch. 4: *Cheerfulness*; Vol. II, pp. 141, 218, 244,

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Ante., Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 2: *The Life of the Bodies*

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The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 66

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 67

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 67

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Ante, Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 6: *Service*

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Ante. Vol. II, p. 106

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Ante. Vol. II, p. 106.

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Ante. Vol. II, p. 154, 315

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Ante., Vol. I, Part I, Ch. 4: *The Preliminary Prayer*

[←34]

See *ante.* Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 5: *Superstition*.

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Ante. Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 6: *Service*

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S. Matthew, 10, 39

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Ante., Vol. I, Part III, Ch. 2: *The One Good Desire*. Vol. II, pp. 360-1

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S. Matthew, 6, 33

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Ante., Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 3: *Right and Wrong*.

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Garuda Purana Saroddhara, xvi, 17, 18.

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Op. cit., Ch. V.

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Ante., Vol. I, Part III, Ch. 2: *The One Good Desire*. Vol. II p. 216, 347.

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 217, 375.

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S. Matthew, 20, 27.

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Acts, 2, 3

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Op.cit., Vol. I, p. 145

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Op. cit., II, 27

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Ante., Vol. I, Part I, Ch. 2: *Initiation and the approach thereto*. Vol. II, p, 128.

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Ante. p. 100

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 102

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S. Matthew, 7, 7

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 66, 103

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S. John, 15, 27

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Ante., pp. 62-3. 20

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S. John, 1, 18

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S. John, 7, 17

[←63]

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 59, 111

[←64]

Galatians, 4. 24

[←65]

The Light of Asia, Book the Eighth.

[←66]

¹ *Ante.*, Vol. II, p. 67, 103.

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See *A Textbook of Theosophy*, Chap. IV, for an account of group souls. The subject is too big to

be explained here

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Ante, Vol. I, Part III, Ch. 5: *Mind your own Business*

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Ante, Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 5: *Unselfishness and the Divine Life*

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Ante, pp. 55, 162

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Ante., Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 4: *Cruelty*

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S. Matthew, 25, 35-40

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Ante., Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 2: *Love in Daily Life*; Ch. 6: *Service*; Vol. III, p. 74.

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Ante., Vol. II, p. 284

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Op. cit.. Vol. II, Section 1

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Ante, Vol. II, p. 364

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