

Chapter 4

Probation

The Living Image

Out of the ranks of earnest students and workers of the kind I have already described, the Master has on many occasions selected his pupils. But before he definitely accepts them he takes special precautions to assure himself that there really are the kind of people whom he can draw all into intimate contact with himself; and that is the object of the stage called Probation. When he thinks of a man as a possible pupil, he usually asks one who is already closely linked with him to bring the candidate to him astrally. There is not generally much ceremony connected with this step; the Master gives a few words of advice, tells the new pupil what will be expected of him, and often, in his gracious way, he may find some reason to congratulate him on the work that he has already accomplished.

He then makes a living image of the pupil--that is to say, he moulds out of mental, astral and the etheric matter an exact counterpart of the causal, mental, astral and the etheric bodies of the neophyte, and keeps that image of hand, said he may look at it periodically. Each image is magnetically attached to the person whom it represents, so that every variation of thought and feeling in him is accurately reproduced in it by a sympathetic vibration, and thus by a single glance at the image the Master can see at once whether during the period since he last looked at it there has been any sort of disturbance in the bodies which it represents--whether the man has been losing his temper, or allowing himself to be a prey to impure feelings, worries, depression, or anything of that kind. It is only after he has seen that for a considerable time no serious excitement has taken place in the vehicles represented by the image, that he will admit the pupil into near relation with himself.

When the pupil is accepted he must be drawn into a unity with his Master closer than anything we can imagine or understand; the Master wants to blend his aura with his own, so that through it his force may be constantly acting without special attention on his part. But of relation so intimate as this cannot act in one direction only; if among the vibrations of the pupil there are some which would cause disturbance in the astral and mental bodies of the Adept as they react

upon him, such union would be impossible the prospective pupil would have to wait until he had rid himself of those vibrations. A probationary pupil is not necessarily better than other people who are not on Probation; his only more suitable in certain ways for the Master's work, and it is advisable to subject him to the test of time, for many people, swept upward by enthusiasm, appear at first to be most promising and eager to serve, but unfortunately become tired after a while and slipped back. The candidate must Concord any emotional failings that he may have, and go on steadily working until he becomes sufficiently calmed and pure. When for quite a long time there has been no serious of people in the living image, the Master may feel that the time has come when he can use fully draw the pupil nearer to him.

We must not think of the living image as recording only defects or disturbances. It mirrors the whole condition of the pupil's astral and mental consciousness, so it should record much of the benevolence and joyousness, and should radiate forth peace on earth and goodwill to men. Never forget that not only a passive but also an active goodness is always a prerequisite for advancement. To do no harm is already much; but remember that it is written of our Great Exemplar that he went about doing good. And when the Lord Buddha was asked to epitomize the whole of his teaching in one verse, he began: "Cease to do evil," but immediately he continued: " Learn to do good."

If a pupil on probation does something usually good, for the moment the Master flashes a little more attention on him, and if he sees fit he may send a wave of encouragement of some sort, or he may put some work in the pupil's way and see how he does it. Generally, however, he delegates that task to some of his senior pupils. We are supposed to offer opportunities to the candidate, but to do so is a serious responsibility. If the person takes the opportunity, all is well; but if he does not, it counts as a bad mark against him. We should often like to give opportunities to people, but we hesitate, because although they take them it will do them much good, if they do not take them it will be a little harder to do so next time

It will be seen, then, that the link of the pupil on probation with his Master is chiefly one of observation and perhaps the occasional use of the pupil. It is not the custom of the Adepts to employ special or sensational tests, and in general, when an adult is put on probation, he is left to follow the ordinary course of his like, and the way in which the living image reproduces his response to the trials and problems of the day gives quite sufficient indication of his character and progress. When from this the Master concludes that the person will make a satisfactory disciple, he will draw him nearer and accept him. Sometimes a few weeks is sufficient to determine this; sometimes. stretches into years.

Effect of Cruelty to Children

In a chapter on " Our Relation To Children " in *The Hidden Side of Things* I have dealt at considerable length with what is necessary for the training of children, that they may preserve all that is best in what they bring from the past and developed into full flower the many beautiful characteristics of their nature, which are so generally, alas, ruthlessly destroyed by uncomprehending elders. There I have spoken among other things of the devastating effects of fear induced in children by roughness and cruelty; but on that subject I should like to add here some mention of an experience which illustrated the unspeakably terrible results which sometimes follow in its wake. Parents who have children of an age to be sent to school cannot be too careful and searching in their inquiries before they entrust those children to an instructor, lest ineradicable harm be done to the little ones for whom they are responsible.

Sometime ago a very striking instance of the calamity which may in certain cases be brought about by such brutality came prominently before my notice. I had a very great honor of being present at the Initiation of one of our younger members, the Initiator on that occasion being the Lord Maitreya Himself. In the course of the ceremonial the candidate, as usual, had to reply to many questions dealing largely with the manner in which help can best be given in certain difficult or unusual cases, and a special interrogation was added as to whether he forgave and could help a certain man who had treated him with terrible harshness and cruelty in early childhood.

The Initiator made an image of an aura with the most wonderfully delicate little puffs or touches or souls of lovely color, of light playing over its surface, as it were peeping out of it, and then drawing in again, and said: " Those are the seeds of the highest and noblest qualities of mankind--fragile, delicate as gossamer, to be developed only in an atmosphere of deepest, purest love, without one touch of fear or shrinking. He who, being otherwise ready, can unfold and strengthen them fully may reach Adeptship in that same life. That was the fate we had hoped for you, but those to whom I trusted you (because they offered you to my service even before birth) allowed you to fall into the hands of this person, who was so utterly unworthy of such a trust. This was your aura before the blight of his wickedness fell upon you. Now see what his cruelty made of you."

Then when the aura changed and twisted about horribly, and when it was still again all the beautiful shoots had disappeared, and in their place were innumerable little scars, and the Lord explained that the harm done could not be cancelled in the present life, and said: " I hope that in this life you will attain Arhatship; but for the final consummation we must wait a while in our eyes there is no greater crime than thus to check the progress of the soul."

As the candidate saw this aura writhe and harden, so all its fair promise ruthlessly destroyed by the brutality of this man, he felt again for a moment what he had to a great extent forgotten--the agony of the small boy sent away from home and, the ever-hovering fear and shrinking, the incredulous horror, the feeling of flaming outrage from which there is no escape or redress, the sickening sense of utter helplessness in the grasp of a cruel tyrant, the passionate resentment of his wicked injustice, with no hope, no foothold anywhere in the abyss, no God to whom to

appeal; and seeing this in his mind, I who watched understood something of the terrible tragedy of childhood, and why its effects are so far-reaching.

It is not only when approaching Adeptship that this most loathsome sin of cruelty to children checks progress. All the new and higher qualities which should now be unfolding show themselves in light and delicate buds of a similar nature, though and a lower level than those described above. In thousands of cases these are ruthlessly crushed out by the insensate ferocity of parent or teacher, or repressed by the brutal bullying of bigger boys at the boarding school; and thus many good people remain at the same level through several incarnations, while their tormentors fall back in evolution. There are certainly many egos coming into incarnation who, although they fall short of the great heights of Initiation, are nevertheless unfolding rapidly, and need now to add to their characters some of these further and more delicate developments; and for the advancement intended for them also brutality would be fatal

I had not heard, until the occasion mentioned above, that the last life in which Adeptship is attained must have absolutely perfect surroundings in childhood; but the appropriateness of the idea is obvious when once it is put before us. That is probably one reason why so few students gain Adeptship in European bodies, for we are much behind the rest of the world in that particular. It is at any rate abundantly clear that nothing but evil can ever follow from this ghastly custom of cruelty. We should certainly work wherever possible for its suppression, and should be, as I said in the beginning, most especially careful to make certain that no children for whom they are in any way responsible shall be in any danger from this particular form of crime.

The Master Of Children

The Lord Maitreya has frequently been called the Teacher Of Gods And Men, and that fact is sometimes expressed in a different way by saying that in the great kingdom of the spiritual work he is the Minister For Religion And Education. It is not only that at certain intervals, when he sees it to be desirable, he either incarnates himself, or sends a pupil, to state the eternal truth in some new way--as we may put it, to found a new religion. Quite apart from that, he is constantly in charge of *all* religions, and whatever new and beautiful teaching is sent out through any of them, new or old, it is always inspired by him. We know little of the methods of worldwide instruction which he adopts; there are many ways of teaching apart from the spoken word; and it is certain that it is his constant and daily endeavor to raise the intellectual conceptions of millions of angels and of men.

His right-hand man in all this marvelous work is his assistant and destined successor, the Master Kuthumi, just as the assistant and destined successor of the Lord Vaivasvata Manu is the Master Morya. Just because, then, the Master Kuthumi is the ideal Teacher, it is to him that we have to bring those who are to be put on probation or accepted at an early age. It may be that later on in life they will be used by other Masters for other portions of the work; but at any rate

they all (or almost all) begin under the tutelage of the Master Kuthumi. It has been part of my task for many years to endeavor to train along the right lines any young person whom the Master regards as hopeful; he brings them in contact with me on the physical plane and usually gives brief directions as to what qualities he wants developing in them, and what instruction should be given to them. Naturally he, in his infinite wisdom, does not deal with these younger brains and bodies exactly as with those of older people.

In the case of elder people put upon probation, they are left to a large extent to find the most suitable work for themselves; but with the younger people he sometimes quite definitely puts a piece of work in the way of one of them and watches to see how he does it. He condescends sometimes to give special messages of encouragement and instruction to individuals among these young people, and even to give advice as to their training. Extracts from some of those messages are given here:

Advice From The Master

" I know that your one object in life is to serve the Brotherhood; yet do not forget that there are higher steps before you, and that progress on the Path means sleepless vigilance. You must not only be always *ready* to serve; you must be ever watching for opportunities--nay, *making* opportunities to be helpful in small things, in order that when the greater work comes you may not fail to see it

" Never for a moment forget your occult relationship; it should be an ever-present inspiration to you--not only a shield from the fatuous thoughts which float around us, but a constant stimulus to spiritual activity. The vacuity and pettiness of ordinary life should be impossible for us, though not beyond our comprehension and compassion. The ineffable bliss of Adeptship is not yet yours, but remember that you are already one of those who live that higher life; you are dispensers of their sunlight in this lower world, so you, too, at your level, must be radiant sons of love and joy. The world may be unappreciative, uncomprehending; but your duty is to shine.

" Do not rest on your oars. There are still higher peaks to conquer. The need of intellectual development must not be forgotten; and we must unfold within ourselves sympathy, affection, tolerance. Each must realize that there are other points of view than his own, and that they may be just as worthy of attention. All coarseness and roughness of speech, all tendency to argumentativeness, must absolutely disappear; one who is prone to it should check himself when the impulse towards it arises; he should say little, and that always with delicacy and courtesy. Never speak without first thinking whether what you are going to say is both kind and sensible. He who tries to develop love within himself will be saved from many mistakes. Love is the supreme virtue of all, without which all other qualifications water but the sand.

" Thoughts and feelings of an undesirable kind must be rigorously excluded; you must work at them until they are impossible to you. Touches of irritability ruffle the calm sea of the consciousness of the Brotherhood. Pride must be eliminated, for it is a serious bar to progress.

Exquisite delicacy of thought and speech is needed--their rare aroma of perfect tact which can never jar or offend. That is hard to win; yet you may reach it if you will.

" Definite service, and not mere amusement, should be your aim; think, not what you want to do, but what you can do that will help someone else; forget about yourself, and consider others. A pupil must be constantly kind, obliging, helpful--not now when then, but all the time. Remember, all time which is not spent in service (or fitting yourself for service) is for us *lost* time.

" When you see certain evils in yourself, take them in hand man fully and effectively. Persevere, and you will succeed. It is a question of will power. Watch for opportunities and hints; be efficient. I am always ready to help you, but I cannot do the work *for* you; the effort must come from *your* side. Try to deepen yourself all round and to live a life of utter devotion to service. "

" You have done well, but I want you to do better yet. I have tested you by giving you opportunities to help, and so far you have taken them nobly. I shall therefore give you more and greater opportunities, and your progress would depend upon your recognizing them and availing herself of them. Remember that the reward of successful work is always the opening out before you of more work, and that faithfulness in what seemed to use small things leads to employment in matters of greater importance. I hope that you will soon grow closer to me, and in so doing will help your brothers along the Path which leads to the of the King. Be thankful that you have a great power of love, that you know how to flood your world sunlight, for yourself out with royal prodigality, to scatter largess like a king; that indeed is well, but take care lest in the heart of this great Flower of love there should be a tiny touch of pride, which might spread as does an almost invisible spot of decay, until it has tainted and corrupted the whole blossom. Remember what our great Brother has written: ' be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom; be humbler still when Wisdom thou has mastered. Cultivate the modest fragrant plant humility, until its sweet aroma permeates every fiber of your being.

" When you try for unity, it is not enough to draw the others into yourself, to inform them with your aura, to make *them* one with *you*. To do that is already a long step, but you must go yet further, and make *yourself* one with each of *them*; you must enter into the very hearts of your brothers, and understand them; never from curiosity, for a brother's heart is both a secret and a sacred place; one must not seek to pry into it or discuss it, but rather endeavor irreverently to comprehend, to sympathize, to help. It is easy to criticize others from one's own point of view; it is more difficult to get to know them and love them; but that is the only way to bring them along with you. I want you to grow quickly that I may use you in the Great Work; to help you in that I give you my blessing. "

" Daughter, you have done well in exercising your influence to civilize as far as may be the rougher elements around you, and to help another pure soul upon her way to me. That will be ever a bright star in your crown of glory; continue your help to her, and see whether there be

not other stars which you can presently add to that crown. This good work of yours has enabled me to draw you closer to me far earlier than would otherwise have been the case. There is no more certain method of rapid progress than to devote oneself to helping others upon the upward Path. You have been fortunate, too, in meeting a comrade from of old, for two who can really work together are more efficient than if they were putting forth the same amount of strength separately. You have begun well; continued to move along the same line with swiftness and certainty."

" I welcome you, the latest recruit to our glorious band. It is not easy for you to forget yourself entirely, to yield yourself without reservation to the service of the world; yet that is what is required of us--that we should live only to be a blessing to others and to do the work which is given us to do. You've made a good beginning in the process of self-development, but much yet remains to be done. Repress even the slightest shade of irritability, and be ready always to receive advice and instruction; cultivate humility and self-sacrifice, and fill yourself with a fervid enthusiasm for service. So shall ye be a fitting instrument in the hand of the Great Master, a soldier in the army of those who save the world. To help you in that I now take you as a probationary pupil."

" I am pleased with you, but I want to do more yet. For you, my child, you have the capacity of making rapid progress, and I want you to set this before yourself as an object which you are determined at all costs to achieve. Some of the obstacles which you are instructed to overcome may seem to you unimportant, but in reality they are not so, because they are the surface indications of an interior condition which must be altered. That means a radical change which it will not be easy for you to make, but the effort is well worth your while. The rules which I wish you to make for yourself are these:

- (1) Forget yourself and the desires of your personality, and remember only the service of others, devoting a street, your thought, your enthusiasm wholly to that.
- (2) Do not offer an opinion on any matter and less directly asked for it.
- (3) Before speaking, always consider how what you say will affect others.
- (4) Never betray, or comment upon, a brother's weakness.
- (5) Remember that you have yet much to learn, and therefore may often be in error; so speak with becoming modesty.
- (6) When called, move *at once*, not waiting to finish what you happen to be reading or doing; if you are performing a duty of importance, explain very gently what it is.

I wish to draw you closer to me, and if you will keep these rules I shall soon be able to do so. Meantime, my blessing rests upon you. "

Become As Little Children

Many who read these instructions may be surprised by their extreme simplicity. They may even despise them as being a little suited to guide and help people in the immense complexity of our

modern civilization. But he who thinks thus forgets that it is of the essence of the life of the pupil that he shall lay aside all this complexity, that he shall, as the Master put it, " come out of your world into ours ", come into a world of thought in which life is simple and one-pointed, in which right and wrong are once more clearly defined, in which the issues before us are straight and intelligible. It is the simple life that the disciple should be living; it is the very simplicity which he attains which makes the higher progress possible to him. We have made our life an entanglement and an uncertainty, a mass of confusion, a storm of crosscurrents, in which the weak fail and sink; but the pupil of the Master must be strong and sane, he must take his life in his own hands, and make it simple with a divine simplicity. His mind must brush aside all these man-made confusions and illusions and go straight as an arrow to its mark. " Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. " And the Kingdom of Heaven, remember, is the Great Brotherhood of the Adepts.

We see from the extracts how high is the ideal which the Master sets before his pupils, and perhaps it may seem to some of them to be what in theology we call a counsel of perfection-- that is to say, a goal or condition impossible to reach perfectly as yet, but still one in which we must constantly aim. But all aspirants are aiming high, and no one yet can fully reached that at which he aims; otherwise he would not need to be in physical incarnation at all. We are very far from being perfect, but the young people who can be brought close to the Great Ones have a most wonderful opportunity, if just because of their youth and plasticity. It is so much easier for them to eliminate those things which are not quite what they should be than it is for older people. If they can cultivate the habit of taking the right point of view, and acting for the right reasons, and of being in the right attitude, the whole their lives, they will steadily draw nearer and nearer to the ideal of the Masters. If the pupil who has been put on probation could see while awake in his physical body the living images that the Master makes, he would understand much more the importance of what may seem to be but minor details.

Effects Of Irritability

Irritability is a common difficulty; as I have already explained, to be irritable is a thing which is likely enough to happen to anyone living in his present civilization, where people are always very highly strung. Within the to a large extent in this civilization of torturing noises; and above all things noise jars the nerves and causes irritation. The experience of going down into the city and returning home feeling quite shattered and tired is a common one for sensitive people. Many other things are contributory, but principally the weariness is due to the constant noise, and the pressure of so many astral bodies vibrating at different rates, and all excited and disturbed by trifles. It makes it very difficult to avoid irascibility--especially for the pupil as bodies are more highly-strung and sensitive than those of the ordinary man.

Of course, this petulance is somewhat superficial; it does not penetrate deeply; but it is better to avoid even a superficial peevishness as far as possible, because its effects last so much longer than we usually realize. If there is a heavy storm, it is the wind that first stirs the waves; but the waves will continue to swell long after the wind has died down. That is the effect produced on

water, which is comparatively heavy; but the matter of the astral body is far finer than water, and the vibrations set going penetrate much more deeply, and therefore produce a more lasting effect. Some slight, unpleasant, temporary feeling, which passes out of mind in ten minutes, perhaps, may yet produce an effect on the astral body lasting for forty-eight hours. The vibrations do not settle down again for a considerable period of time

When such a fault as this is known, it can most effectually be removed not by focusing attention upon it, but by endeavoring to develop the opposite virtue. One way of dealing with it is to set one's thought steadily against it, but there is no doubt that this course of action arouses opposition in the mental or astral elemental, so that often a better method is to try to develop consideration for others, based of course fundamentally on one's love toward them. A man who is full of love and consideration will not allow himself to speak or even to think irritably towards them. If the man can be filled with that idea the same result will be attained without exciting opposition from the elementals.

Selfishness

There are many other forms of selfishness that can delay the pupil's progress very seriously. Laziness is one of these. I have seen a person enjoying himself very much with a book, who did not like to leave it in order to be punctual; another perhaps writes very badly, careless of the inconvenience and the damage to eyes and temper of those who have to read his calligraphy. Little negligences tend to make one less sensitive to high influences, to make life untidy and ugly for other persons, and to destroy self-control and efficiency. Efficiency and punctuality are essential, if satisfactory work is to be done. Many people are inefficient; when a piece of work is given to them, they do not finish it thoroughly, but make all kinds of excuses; or when they are asked for some information, they do not know how to find it. People differ much in this respect. We may ask a question of someone, and he will answer: " I don't know "; but another will say: " Well, I don't know, but I will go and find out ", and he returns with the required information. In the same way one person goes to do a thing, and comes back and says he could not do it; but another holds on until it is done.

Yet in all good work the pupil must always think of the benefit that will result to others and of the opportunity to serve the Master in these matters--which even when they are small materially are great in spiritual value--not of the good karma resulting to himself, which would be only another and very subtle form of self-centeredness. Remember how the Christ put it: " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. "

Other subtle effects of the same kind are to be seen in depression and jealousy, and aggressive assertion of one's rights. An Adept has said: " think less about your rights and more about your duties. " There are some occasions in dealing with the outside world when the pupil might find it necessary gently to state what he needs, but amongst his fellow pupils there are no such things as rights, but only opportunities. If a man feels annoyed, he begins to project from himself

aggressive feelings; he may not go so far as actual hatred, but he is creating a dull glow in his astral body and affecting the mental body as well.

Worry

Similar disturbances are frequently produced in the mental body, and are equally disastrous in their effects. If a man allows himself to be greatly worried over some problem, and turns it over and over again in his mind without reaching any conclusion, he has thereby caused something like a storm in his mental body. Owing to the exceeding fineness of the vibrations at this level, the word storm only partially expresses the reality; we should in some ways come nearer to the effect produced if we thought of it as a sore place in the mental body, as an irritation produced by friction. We sometimes encounter argumentative people, people who must argue about everything, and apparently love the exercise so much that they scarcely care on which side of the problem they are engaged. A person of that sort has his mental body in a condition of perpetual inflammation, and the inflammation is liable on very slight provocation to break out at any moment into an actual open sore. For such a one there is no hope of any kind of occult progress until he has brought balance and common sense to bear on his diseased condition.

Fortunately for us, the good emotions persist in even longer than the evil, because they work in the finer part of the astral body; the effect of a feeling of strong love or devotion remains in the astral body long after the occasion that caused it has been forgotten. It is possible, though unusual, to have two sets of vibrations going on strongly in the astral body at the same time--for example, love and anger at the moment of feeling intense anchor a man would not be likely to have any strong affection feeling, unless the anger were noble indignation; in that case the after results would go on side by side, but one of much higher level than the other, and therefore persisting longer

Laughter

It is very natural for boys and girls to wish to enjoy themselves, to be merry, to read and to hear amusing things, and to laugh at them; that is quite right, and it does no harm. If people could see the vibrations set up by jovial, kindly laughter they would realize that once that while the astral body is disturbing to some extent, it is the same thing as shaking up the liver in riding; it actually does good, not harm. But if the results of some of the less pleasant stories foul-minded people are in the habit of telling were visible to them they would realize a ghastly difference; such thoughts are all together evil, and the forms produced by them remain clinging for a long time to the astral body, and attracts all kinds of loathsome entities. Those approaching the Masters must be utterly free from this coarseness, as well as from all that is boisterous and rough; and the younger must constantly be on their guard against any relapse into childishness or silliness.

There is sometimes a tendency toward inane giggling, which must be avoided at all costs, as it has a very bad effect on the astral body. It weaves round it a web of gray-brown France, very unpleasant to look upon, which forms a layer which hinders the entrance of good influences. It

is a danger against which young people should sedulously guard themselves. Be as happy and as joyous as you can; the Master likes to see it, and it will help you on your path. But never for a moment that should joyousness be tinged by any sort of roughness or rudeness, never let your laughter become of boisterous guffaw; never let it, on the other hand, degenerate into silly digging.

There is a definite line of demarcation in this, as in other matters, between what is harmless and what may easily become harmful. The most certain method of determining it is to consider whether the amusement passes beyond the point of delicacy and good taste. The moment that the laughter oversteps these--the moment that there is in it the least touch of boisterousness, the moment that it ceases to be perfect in its refinement, we are passing on to dangerous ground. The inner side of that distinction is that so long as the ego is fully in control of his astral body, all is well; as soon as he loses control, the laughter becomes vacuous and meaningless--the horse is, as it were, running away from its rider. An astral body thus left unchecked is at the mercy of any passing influence, and may easily be affected by a most undesirable thoughts and feelings. See to it also that your mirth is ever pure and clean--never tinged for a moment with a malicious delight in the suffering or discomfiture of another. If a mortifying accident should happen to someone, do not stand there laughing idly at the ridiculous side of the incident, but rush forward at once to help and console. Loving kindness and helpfulness must be always at your most prominent characteristics.

Idle Words

A clairvoyant who can see the effect upon the higher bodies of the various undesirable Emotions finds no difficulty in understanding how important it is that they should be controlled. But because most of us do not see the result we are liable to forget it, and allow ourselves to become careless. The same thing is true of the effect produced by casual or thoughtless remarks. The Christ in his last incarnation on earth is reported to have said that for every idle word that men shall speak, they should give a count on the day of judgment. That sounds a cruel thing to say, and if the orthodox view of judgment were correct, it would indeed be unjust and abominable. He did not mean in the least that every idle word spoken would condemn a man to eternal torture--there's no such thing as that; but we know that every word and every thought has its karma, its results, and when foolish things are repeated again and again, it makes an atmosphere round the person which does keep out good influences. To avoid this, constant attention is required. It would be a superhuman ideal to expect a person never to forget himself for a moment; but disciples are after all trying to become superhuman, because the Master is beyond man. If the pupil could live the perfect life, he would himself already be an Adept; he cannot be that yet, but if he constantly remembered his ideal he would approach much nearer to it. Every idle word that he speaks is certainly affecting for the time his relations with the Master; so let him watch his words with the utmost care.

Forms Made by Speech

The pupil should watch the manner of his speech, as well as its matter, so that it may be graceful, beautiful and correct, and free from carelessness and exaggeration. His words should be well-chosen and well-pronounced. Many people think that in daily life it is not necessary to take the trouble to speak clearly; it matters much more than they think, because we are all the time building our own surroundings, and these react upon us. We fill our rooms and houses with our own thoughts, and then we have to live in them. If, for example, a man allows himself to be overcome by depression, his room becomes charged with that quality, and any sensitive person coming into it becomes conscious of a certain lowering of vitality, a loss of tone. Much more, he himself, who lives in that room much of the time, is perpetually affected by the depression, and cannot easily throw it off. In the same way the man who surrounds himself with unpleasant sound-forms by careless and uncluttered speech produces an atmosphere in which these forms constantly react upon him. Because of this perpetual pressure the man is likely to reproduce these unpleasant forms; if he is not careful he will find himself getting into the habit of speaking roughly and coarsely

I have heard again and again from schoolteachers: " We can do nothing with the children's speech. While we have them here in school we try to correct them, but when they go home they hear the wrong pronunciation of the words, and that always persists, and makes it impossible for us to counteract it. " The children are in school for perhaps five hours a day, and are in and about the home most of the remaining time. In that home an atmosphere of undesirable sound-forms may be pressing on them all the time, so that they are absolutely enslaved by it; there are certain words they actually cannot say, for they cannot utter a pure sound. You may think that a small thing and unimportant; it is by no means small, and a number of such things perpetually repeated produce a great effect. It is surely better that we should surround ourselves with beauty than with ugliness, even though it be in etheric matter. It is of great importance to speak correctly, clearly and beautifully, for that leads to refinement inwardly as well as outwardly. If we speak in the coarse and slovenly manner, we degrade the level of our thought; and such a manner of speech will repel and disgust people whom we wish to help. Those who cannot be accurate in their use of words, cannot be precise in their thinking; even in morality they will be vaguer, for all these things react one upon another.

Each word as it is uttered makes a little form in etheric matter, just as a thought does in mental matter. Some of those forms are most objectionable. The word " hate ", for instance, produces a horrible form, so much so that, having seen its shape, I never use the word. We may say that we dislike of thing, with that we do not care about it, but we should never use the word " hate " more than we can help, for merely to see the form that it makes gives a feeling of acute discomfort. There are words, on the other hand, which produce beautiful forms, words, which is well to recite. All this might be worked out Scientifically, and will be some day, I have to doubt, when people have time to do it.

Such word-forms are not determined by the thought which accompanies the word; the thought builds its own form in a higher type of matter. For example, that word " hate " is often used quite casually without any real hatred of all, when speaking, perhaps, of some article of food;

that is a perfectly unnecessary use of the word, and it obviously does not convey any serious emotions; so that the astral hate-form is not produced; but the ugly etheric sound-form appears just as though the speaker really meant it. So, clearly, the word itself is not a good word. The same is true of the oaths and obscene words so often used among uneducated and uncultured people; the forms produced by some of these are of peculiarly horrible nature when seen by clairvoyant sight. But it is unthinkable that anyone aspiring to be a disciple would pollute his lips with these. We often hear people using all sorts of loose slang phrases which in reality have no meaning or legitimate derivation. It is important that all this should be avoided by the student of occultism.

The same thing is true with regard to the habit of exaggeration. People sometimes talked in a most extravagant way. If a thing is a hundred yards distant they say it is " miles off ". If the day comes that is harder than usual, they say it is "boiling ". Our command of English as poor if we are not able to find words to express different gradations of thought without plunging into these wild, meaningless superlatives. Worst of all, if they wished to convey the idea that something is especially good, they describe it as " awfully " good, which is not only a contradiction in terms, and therefore an utterly silly and meaningless expression, but it is also a shocking misuse of a word which has a solemn connotation of its own which renders its employment in such a sense grotesquely inappropriate. All such abominations should be strictly avoided by one who aspires to become a student of occultism.

We emphasize control of speech from the point of view of regulating the meaning of our words- and quite rightly; nothing is more necessary; I wish we could all control the *pronunciation* of our words, and regard that also as an act of self-training. The importance of accuracy and refinement in speech cannot be exaggerated.

Whenever we speak or laugh we make color as well as sound. If it is the right kind of laughter, hearty and kindly, it has a very pleasant effect, and spreads a feeling of joyousness all round. But if it should be a sneering or sarcastic laugh, a coarse guffaw, a snigger or a giggle, the result is very different, and exceedingly unpleasant. It is remarkable how closely all shades of thought and feeling mirror themselves in other planes. This is very evident when we pass from one country to another, and find the air filled with quite different sound effects. If one crosses the channel from England to France, one sees at once that the sound-forms made by the French language are quite different from those produced by the English. It is especially noticeable with regard to certain sounds, because every language has some sounds peculiar to itself, and it is those which are the principal features which distinguish the appearance of one language from that of another.

The color of the forms produced depends more upon the spirit in which speak. Two people may speak the same words, and so make broadly the same form, but the forms may have a different spirit behind them. When you are parting with someone use say " goodbye ". Those words may be accompanied by reeled out rush off friendly feeling; but if you say " goodbye " in a casual tone, without any special thought or feeling behind it, that produces a totally different

effect on the higher planes. What is just a flash in the pan, meaning little, doing little; the other is a definite outpouring which you give to your friend. It is well to remember that the expression means " God be with you "; therefore it is a blessing which you're giving. In France we say " Adieu ", "to God I command you ". If you think of the meaning of such words whenever you say them, you would do much more good than you do, for then is your will and your thought would go with the words, and the blessing would be of real help and not a mere casual flicker.

In all these ways the disciples' speech should be refined and evolved. Remember how it is said in *The Light of Asia* that the King, the Self, is within you, and that whatever comes out of your mouth in his presence should be a golden thought expressed in a golden words:

Govern the lips
As they were palace doors, the king within;
Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words
Which from that presence win.

Fuss

Especially is it necessary for the aspirant to avoid all fidgetiness and fussiness. Many an energetic and earnest worker spoils most of his efforts and makes them of no effect by yielding to these failings; 40 sets up around him such an aura of tremulous vibrations that no thought or feeling can pass in or out without distortion, and the very good that he sends out takes with it a shiver that practically neutralizes it. Be absolutely accurate; but attain your accuracy by perfect calmness, never by hurry or fuss.

Another point that is necessary to impress upon our students is that in occultism we always mean exactly what we say neither more nor less.

One rule is laid down that nothing unkind or critical must be said about another, just that is exactly what is meant--not that when we happen to think of it we should slightly diminished the number of unkind or critical things that we say every day, but that they must definitely altogether cease. We are so much in the habit of hearing various ethical instructions which no one seems to endeavor to put seriously into practice, that we have a habit of thinking that a perfunctory assent to an idea, or an occasional feeble effort to approximate to it, is all that religion requires of us. We must put aside that frame of mind all together and understand that exact and literal obedience is required when occult instruction is given, whether by a Master or by his pupil

The Value of Association

Very much help in all these matters is often given to the aspirant, both probationary and accepted, by the presence of an older pupil of the Masters. In the early days in India, when a

Guru selected his chelas, he formed them into a group and took them about with him wherever he went. Now and then he taught them, but often they received no instructions; yet they made rapid progress, because all the time there were within the aura of the teacher and were being brought into harmony with it, instead of being surrounded by ordinary influences. The teacher also assisted them in the building of character, and always watched the tyros carefully. Our Masters cannot adopt a plan physically, but they have sometimes arranged matters so that some of their elder representatives can draw round themselves a group of the younger neophytes, and attend to them individually, much as a gardener would deal with his plants, raying upon them day and night the influences needed to awaken certain qualities or strengthen weak points. The older helper rarely receives direct instructions with regard to this work; though now and then the Master may make some remark or comment.

The fact that the novices are together in a group also assists their progress; they are influenced in common by high ideals, and this hastens the growth of desirable characteristics. It is probably inevitable in the course of karmic law that one who is aspiring shall be brought into contact with someone more advanced than himself, and receive much benefit through his ability to respond to him; and it is generally the fact that the Master does not advance or raise any person unless he has been with an older student who can guide and help him. There are, however, exceptions, and each Master has his own way of dealing with his catechumens. In one case, it has been said by Dr. Besant, the Master makes the practice of sending his pupils " to the other end of the field ", so that they may gain great strength by the development of their powers with a minimum of external assistance. Each individual is treated as is best for him.

It has been asked whether advancement is possible for a lonely student, whose karma has placed him on some remote farm or plantation, or has bound him to some spot where he is not likely to meet anyone already established on the Path. Undoubtedly such a man may make progress, and though his task is harder because he has less physical-plane help, he will learn to rely upon himself, and will probably develop greater will power and determination just because he is so much alone. It will be well for him to get into correspondence with some older student, who can answer his questions and advise him in his reading, as by that means much time may be saved, and his way may be smoother for him.