

The Path of Attainment

by **D.N. Dunlop**

FOREWORD By

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FOREWORD

The H.P.B. Lodge of The Theosophical Society is to be congratulated both on the publication of the addresses gathered together in the present volume and on the choice of lecturer to deliver them. Mr. Dunlop asks us to remember in these times of stress and turmoil that the great Fathers of the world watch over us as They have ever done, that there is open to us the same ancient and narrow way to communion with Them as has existed from time immemorial, testimony to the existence of which may be found in the Scriptures of every world religion. We are told of the existence of Masters, our Elder Brethren, Those who have learned the lessons we are learning now, and Who have dedicated Themselves to the task of guiding us along the road Their feet have already trodden. We are told of some of the conditions whereby we may become apprenticed to these Great Ones so as to learn more swiftly the lessons appropriate to our class in the school of life in the world. We are told of the great expansions of consciousness - called Initiations - marking our progress in apprenticeship, expansions of consciousness which involve an ever-increasing, active understanding of the unity of all life.

Great truths these, and perhaps only for the few who dare to climb to the summit of the mountain by the rough, little-trodden path, rather than follow the well-beaten road of far longer - though easier ascent. But some of us hope that the trials through which we are passing are giving to many the courage to dare. We are beginning to long to see the summit, at least to be reassured of its existence. We had, indeed, almost forgotten the goal. Now we are in the mists, that we may once again bethink ourselves of a summit whose attractive power depends upon its being veiled from time to time from constant though oft unseeing gaze.

Out of the mists comes the voice of one who tells us what has been known to the wise of all time, and reminds us of what all the world will some day realize.

As one who also has seen the way, not unlike the path herein described, allow me to endorse his invitation to tread that path. The way is steep, the obstacles rough and piercing. The feet indeed do bleed, but the heart of the wanderer rejoices in all sacrifice that brings him to the radiant sunshine of eternal Life.

George S. Arundale,

General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in England and Wales.

This book contains three addresses, originally delivered extemporaneously before *The H.P.B. Lodge* of The Theosophical

Society at 19 Tavistock Square, W.C., in October, November, and December 1915. I have been urgently requested to publish the reports made by a stenographer, and have, therefore, hurriedly revised them for press. The substance, however, remains unchanged, and I sincerely hope that readers will find suggestions in the ideas presented, and will pursue their investigations by studying the works of H.P. Blavatsky and examining their philosophical and scientific basis.

D.N.Dunlop

ADEPTS, MASTERS AND MAHATMAS

Before I begin the subject of the address tonight I wish to pay tribute to H.P. Blavatsky, who was the founder of The Theosophical Society, assisted by Colonel Olcott and one or two others. Anything I know on the subject of Adepts, Masters and Mahatmas I first learned from her.

The Secret Doctrine and Max Mueller

In the early days of this Society a great deal of ridicule was heaped on Madame Blavatsky by the public and also by some members of the Society because of her frequent reference to Masters and Mahatmas. The newspapers were full of comments of rather a jeering nature, and Max Muller, the famous Oriental scholar, who was particularly interested in the subjects which The Theosophical Society was discussing at that time, got himself into rather a difficult position over the matter. Probably some of you will remember a statement he once made to the effect that the stanzas upon which *The Secret Doctrine* is based were not discoverable anywhere in Eastern Literature, and that, therefore, they must be an invention of Madame Blavatsky herself. His attention was drawn to the fact that if this were so it would prove her a much greater individual than she made any claim to be. On investigation it amounted to this: that if she were the writer of the stanzas, she was practically a Master herself.

Influence of H.P. Blavatsky

Since its formation The Theosophical Society, like other movements of a similar character, has split up into various sections, and, as also in most other movements, the differences have generally arisen around personalities: some supported Mrs. Besant, others Mr. Judge; some believed in Mr. Leadbeater, others disbelieved. And so, through the years during which the Society has been in existence, it has divided up into various little Theosophical Societies, the largest of them being the one of which Mrs. Besant is now President. In my opinion the one outstanding fact in connection with these various Societies is this: they all look upon Madame Blavatsky with the same reverence and love. Although they have had differences of opinion in other directions, they all have the same feeling with regard to H.P. Blavatsky. That, I think, speaks volumes for her influence and her position.

You may wonder why I speak about Madame Blavatsky at the beginning of an address of this kind. My explanation is simply this: I believe that the personality known as H.P. Blavatsky represented a consciousness which I will explain later as the Master-Consciousness. She had many human failings, as all great persons have, which endeared her to her friends; and those who knew her most intimately were perhaps more interested in her and felt all the greater reverence for her because of the peculiarities of her personal temperament.

Now she stated, and I repeat the statement, that in the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century the spiritual brotherhood of Masters, Adepts and Mahatmas made an effort to reinvigorate and reinforce the spiritual philosophy of the ages, and selected various instruments (persons and movements) in the world, and the object of working through them and drawing the attention of humanity to the ancient teachings concerning the soul of man; and she declared that she herself was an agent chosen for that particular work.

Cosmic Evolution

In order to understand the question which is the subject of the address, it is necessary to regard it from the point of view of cosmic evolution. It is not sufficient to rely entirely on the evidence of individuals, unless that evidence is supported by a rational

study of philosophy and religion, of cosmology and cosmogony. The study of cosmogony and of the philosophy of evolution enables one to see quite clearly the need for Adepts, Masters and Mahatmas in the cosmic scheme. In fact, it is impossible to have any rational and satisfactory explanation of the process of evolution without the acceptance, at least as possibilities, of such Beings; their existence appears, indeed, to be in the nature of things. The development of this planet is not a separate process detached from that of the cosmic scheme generally. The human evolution which is taking place upon this globe is part of a great scheme of evolution which embraces many globes and many systems of globes, and unless one is able to take a cosmic view of evolution, it is impossible to have a proper perspective of one's own place in the scheme, or of the relative position of such great figures as Pythagoras, Plato, Apollonius, Buddha, Jesus, and all the other teachers who have appeared upon the pages of history.

Cosmic evolution, from the microscopic cell to the greatest planetary system, proceeds at every moment according to a definite Law and in obedience to Intelligence, which in its essence is Wisdom and Love. Every individualized Centre of Consciousness has a distinct relationship to the Substance in which "the plan" is being carefully and marvellously carried out in every detail. The plan is in man; nature furnishes the material by which it is expressed, from the "huge first nothing" to the organized and highly diversified scheme in which man finds himself and in which various hierarchies of beings have their place and fulfil their functions.

The following diagram is taken from *The Secret Doctrine*.

The triangle at the top represents the three higher planes of the Cosmos in its septenary aspect, the invisible half of the whole sphere; the manifested half begins with Globe A. I wish particularly to draw attention to Globe D which stands by itself below the line of the third plane on the manifested side of the circle. Globe D according to this system represents the earth, and it stands in opposition to the triangle at the top, by itself, outside the circle. That explains why the physical world and the physical body are said to be the bodies or vehicles of the highest principle, namely, Atma or Spirit.

The theory is that evolution takes place on these globes around the circle, and that Globe D is the turning-point of human evolution. At the beginning the progress of the life-impulse is downwards. "Man" comes out into expression when a new day of activity begins on what is here marked Globe A and then comes into expression on Globe B; then seven times round Globe B,

and so on, until Globe D is reached. According to this explanation, the most ancient in the world and corroborated by practically all systems of cosmology, we have passed the middle point in this cycle of evolution. As the life-wave descends it becomes more and more immersed in matter, and on Globe D it reaches the densest point; as it proceeds to Globes E and F the matter becomes less dense, and consciousness, thought and desire become more defined until humanity reaches Globe G.

Races

In this process of evolution it must be borne in mind that on each of the planes of manifestation in the archetypal world, the intellectual world, the formative world and the physical world, there are Centres of Intelligence who dominate the particular forms that belong to each of those places or worlds. Every world has its own peculiar condition of substance or matter; it has also, existing in that substance or matter, entities peculiar to itself, who are instruments in the work of evolution as it proceeds upon that plane. Globe A is the one upon which the whole plan of evolution is outlined, where Intelligence dawns and begins its operations in matter. You remember the words in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was Light." Intelligence-Light - was in operation simultaneously with the beginning of the planetary system. "The Word" of God is the language of creation, and we must consider the whole universal system if we wish to have a complete understanding of what that language means. In the beginning was the breath-body and the breath-race. Madame Blavatsky says this is an *undying race and exists throughout the whole cycle of globes* [The reason for this is obvious if we consider the nature of Life and the revelations of modern Science] The second race is the life-race; the third, the form-race; the fifth, the race of purified desire; the sixth, pre-eminently the thought-race, where thought *per se* is the dominant factor; and the seventh race expresses complete individuality, as far as the limitations of this particular system of evolution will permit it to manifest. These races are in existence now, and always have been. They manifest in seven great root-races, each including seven sub-races, so that there is time and opportunity for unfolding the perfection potential within each race through the various forms which a planetary system like this provides.

We now come more directly to the subject of the address. In the literature that is published on mystical subjects there is a great deal of confusion with regard to the use of the terms *Adepts, Masters, Mahatmas*. These terms are used indiscriminately today by many schools of pseudo-mysticism, and indeed it is very difficult for the student of any school to clearly understand the function of the Adept, the Master and the Mahatma in human evolution without coming unduly under the influence of authority and undermining to a great extent his individual responsibility. "The best and most important teacher is one's own seventh Principle centered in the sixth" are words attributed to a Master, and, whatever their source, carry their own conviction. The greatest possible advantage may be derived from a study of the whole problem of Masters in terms of principles; by so doing the student may be able to exercise discrimination at each stage and to "hold fast to that which is good."

Self-conscious Principle

Adepts, Masters and Mahatmas are basic principles in the plan of evolution, and they operate intelligently in all the worlds each in his own place and in his own way. When similar principles are active in any man of the race, he may be said to meet the Adept, Master or Mahatma, as the case may be, but he will regard the principles operating, and not the form or substance in which they manifest objectively. The conscious principle which links the physical and psychic worlds may be named the *Adepts*; the conscious principle which links the psychic and mental worlds may be designated the *Master*; and the word *Mahatma* best describes the conscious principle which links the mental world to that which we term the spiritual. It is these intelligent, conscious principles in organized operation throughout the four worlds, acting on relatively unintelligent matter or substance, which bring the phenomenal worlds into expression from out the noumenal world, and turn "the wheels" ceaselessly, until that which is manifest passes again into the unmanifest. They are all intelligent agents of universal laws.

The four Worlds

The Sons of the Race who have been articulate, who have been free to mirror the images in the mind of humanity, have spoken in different symbols of four worlds or spheres in which man lives more or less consciously, according to the relationship which exists between himself, as Consciousness, and the matter of his bodies. These are the chemical, the physical, the psychic, the mental and the spiritual world; or, in other words, the sex-world, the form-world, the life-world and the breath-world. Involution and evolution are complementary processes; the latter begins with desire in the form-world, continues with thought in

the life-world, and completes Individuality in the spiritual or breath-world. The physical world balances the spiritual, mental and psychic worlds. Man, in the physical world, may not be conscious of life in other worlds, and similarly he may live in either the psychic, mental and spiritual worlds, and only be aware of the one in which he is conscious. But, as each world represents definite principles, and as man contains these worlds within himself, even if he be not consciously aware of their existence, he is continually affected by the laws of Being, expressed as principles in each of the worlds. The legends tell that the task before us is to build out of the substance of each world a body in which we can live and function consciously and intelligently; they declare further that this must be done while in the physical body, so that consciousness may be conscious of itself from the densest world to the “throne of God.”

Distinctions in terms

The term *Master* may be used to mean an Adept and *vice versa*. But students who enter more thoroughly into the study of occultism understand the difference between the three classes of Masters as distinct from Man. The Adept is a *master* on the psychic plane, the Master is a *master* on the mental plane, including the psychic, and the Mahatma is a *master* on the Spiritual, mental, psychic and physical planes; he has complete control over the whole world of consciousness within the limitation of manifestation. Some persons seem to think that power is best exercised in freedom; they imagine that when power is “free” it is entirely unfettered and without limitation. A deeper understanding shows that power is never power unless under control of limitation. If you cut an electric circuit the current ceases to flow; the limitation of the circuit is necessary in order to have efficient expression of the power. And in the cosmic scheme power is everywhere manifested through limitation; in fact it is the very limitation which makes it possible for power to express itself. If it were universally diffused in the sense that there were no circuit, no limitation, it could not be experienced and it could not be named or described; but, because there is a focus, because there is a circuit, because there is differentiation and definition we are able to speak of it as power.

Staff of Mercury

The Caduceus or Staff of Mercury is a symbol of the Path of Initiation, and its construction indicates how the Beings whom we call Adepts, Masters and Mahatmas have succeeded in reaching conscious freedom, within the limitations which condition self-consciousness. They have taken the straight path to knowledge. Instead of going round in a long and labourious process through the various divisions, races, sub-races, globes and so on, they have cut the road short by intensity of experience, and taken the direct and difficult upward path, the way of the Cross, to what in the Christian system is known as Golgotha. Golgotha is a state; when it is achieved, when the condition of full illumination is attained, the auric emanation is manifest as the wings of the dove. The Caduceus illustrates this direct process spoken of by practically all the mystical philosophers, and it has, for many ages, been used as a symbol of the progress of the Soul along the pathway of initiation.

Purified races

As I have indicated, humanity has reached Globe D, the outermost point of evolution as far as our substantial, dense form is concerned, and, therefore, I believe that in the future the form will improve in beauty and grace if the incoming races act in accordance with the principles to which they belong. When the desires of men are pure, when each one has identified his personal interest with the interests of humanity, then desire *per se* will be purified and consciously used for purposes of racial evolution; a race of true thinkers will develop and begin to exercise its functions. At present practically all our thinking is only a reflection of true thought, because human beings seek reality through many hindrances. The desire and the thought of the complete individual will have gradually more and more control over the forms, so that future races will appear under conditions entirely different from the present.

Have you considered the meaning of the word *Mahatma*? *Ma* represents the individual ego or mind; *Mahat* the universal mind; *Mahatma* indicates that the individual mind is united with the universal mind, while, at the same time, each completely realizes itself. In that state of consciousness which is represented by the Mahatma it may be said that ideals, or the eternal ideas, in the archetypal sense, are expressed. It is the realm of pure ideas, the true thought-world. Then there is what we call, in our theosophical classification, the astral world, that world of form in which the plastic model is prepared which begins to reflect the true ideas of the world of thought. In the physical or chemical world these thoughts are reflected objectively in the things we see around us. The physical body is familiar to all of us; the desires are indefinite, but the form is quite definite.

The Adept

We must find terms with meanings to describe men who can function as completely in the other worlds as we can in the physical. The term *Adept* may be correctly applied to the man who has a conscious life in a definite form in the physical world. This world, like the physical, is a sense-world, a world of form-desire, and in it there are degrees of culture and position. The desires are clearly defined, and the true Adept is not deceived; he can control the plastic forms and compel them to action in any direction he chooses. He is interested in phenomena, and the result of the action of his desire on the forms in this world of emotion may lead him into strange situations. The Adept has an astral or desire-body, in which he is able to function in the psychic world, as we can in the physical. He controls thought, and therefore, the forms of thought, so that an Adept is a Master within these limits of the physical and psychic, or astral world.

The Master

A Master has a definite thought-body, in which he is able to function in the thought-world and to control the life-currents, free from the desire-body and free from the influences of the senses which act through the physical body. He is master of life, and shapes the ideals of life by his thought. By the power of thought he controls desire and may live free from the influence of his psychic and physical bodies, and use both as he wills. He is not deceived by the images in the reflecting ether of the astral or psychic world, but is interested in the realities behind the reflected images. He uses the "earth's words" more than audible words, and exercises his power so that "all merges toward the presentation of the unspoken meanings of the earth, toward him who sings the songs of the truths of the body and of the earth, toward him who makes the dictionaries of words that print cannot touch." He views all according to the amplitude of the earth, and appears when the materials are prepared and ready, enclosing all, faithful to all. He has balanced the sex-nature of the physical body, "knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things."

The Mahatmas

The Mahatma is man perfect within the circle of our evolution. He has completed evolution, and acts freely in the spiritual world, fully conscious as an individual being. At the dawn of our system He began to work for the perfection of man, and at the completion of Globe G He will realize that aim. Thus He has anticipated the evolution of the whole human race. He can use at will the thought-body, the psychic body, and the physical body, and move freely in the "breath-world" of the spirit as an immortal individual. He fully comprehends the law of all the worlds of form and works and the law on all levels, from the unmanifest to the manifest, from the hidden core of the atom to its circumference; the eternal laws are an expression of His ideas. The Principles on which He acts consciously are universal in their operation and include the whole manifested universe. He is free from the necessity of rebirth. He does not appear, however, *as a Mahatma* among men, nor seek in any way the worship or adoration of human beings.

I have already said that in this great system of evolution each of these orders of Beings is essential to the whole. They assist humanity and use the elementary forces in nature. They are intelligent agents of the universal law, and, in my opinion, the whole doctrine of reincarnation would be meaningless without them. What is the purpose of recurring births upon this or any other globe unless there is an idea of this kind before us? Unless we see some purpose the whole thing is meaningless. As an indication of the qualities of characteristics of consciousness in each of these types, you may take Jesus as a Mahatma, Pythagoras as a very good type of the Master acting in the world, and Apollonius as an illustration of an Adept.

Schools and lodges

The organizations of Adepts and Masters are usually divided into lodges, schools, degrees, hierarchies, and brotherhoods. According to most of the literature on the subject, the *lodge* is the place of meeting, the *school* indicates the work upon which they are engaged, the *degree* determines the rank attained or capacity exercised, the *hierarchy* represents the race to which they belong, and the *brotherhood* the relationship between all the lodges, schools, degrees, and hierarchies. It is also stated that many groups of Adepts have a teacher, and, organized in schools according to degrees, they are instructed in the control of the desires and also in the direction of the elementary forces and powers of nature. Masters perform the same function in the mysteries of the mind in the mental world. The brotherhood of humanity includes the brotherhood of each hierarchy, and exists

in every world. It is composed of those who think and act in terms of the whole race.

Their habitations

Now it is constantly asked: Where are these Beings? Why do they not perform some miracle by which we may be assured that they exist? My reply is that *their functions indicate their likely habitations*. To maintain the balance of the forces of evolution on this planet it is necessary that some such Centres of consciousness should inhabit it. We know that we like rooms for study to be quiet; that it is necessary to place observatories on mountain-tops away from disturbing vibrations; and that caves have been used to protect people from certain planetary influences. We also read, in the legends of the world, of races living in the interior of the earth. The place of habitation of these is chosen with regard to the work they have undertaken, and the assistance of natural forces which may be required for carrying out their designs is more readily obtained by a suitable choice of place. They work with a full knowledge of the law of evolution; the rise and fall of a civilization is known to them, as the hours on the face of the clock are known to us. They understand when it is wise to work through and with some of their agents among men, and they arrange their appearances in such a way that it is necessary to develop intuition to discern who they are and what their business is. The majority of men who have not developed a corresponding consciousness in themselves might pass a Master in the street and not recognize him as such. His physical form would probably be precisely the same as the other physical forms among which he lived, and unless you knew him by his Light, unless you had developed a state of consciousness that would respond, in a vibratory sense, to the vibration coming from him or her, then indeed the Master would not be known by you.

As I said, we read of races living in certain parts of the interior of the earth, and of caves that lead to temples and halls and vast spaces. I can only speak of them as dreams myself, for I have not yet been able to visit them in the physical body; but in dreams I *have* entered some of these temples in the interior of the earth, places where there are huge libraries and individuals to answer almost every conceivable question, Beings who are aware of all that is going on on the earth's surface, and who have pronounced ideas with regard to the relative importance of the events that seem to be so tremendously tragic for mankind. There are places in forests, in mountains, in caves, and in many other physical centres where cosmic influences can be used to the best advantage.

Those individuals or centres of consciousness who have attained liberation are quite unconcerned about any agitation for evidence of their existence. They know that by the unfoldment of the God-consciousness in man he will reach their state. When we have attained even in a minor degree to the consciousness represented by an Adept, or Master or Mahatma, we shall find ourselves functioning in the spheres in which those Beings live. Our state of consciousness determines our "place." Only to the Master-Consciousness can the Master be known, only by the Master-Mind can the Master be seen and understood and realized. The actual physical appearance of a Master among ordinary mortals would only create confusion, and probably stimulate vibrations which most individuals would not be able to regulate.

Symbolic images

Another question often asked is: When will the disciple know the Master? Some think they will meet Him after death, that when they leave this physical plane they will come face to face with Him. It should be remembered that the astral world is full of images of the Masters. You will probably find hundreds of persons who have seen the vision of a body representing the state of consciousness equivalent in their minds to the person of a Master. They have seen a thought-form; but that does not necessarily mean that they have actually seen and come into conscious communication with a Master. Such appearances are frequent in the astral world, where symbolic images and forms of many Adepts and Masters may be found. These appearances are deceptive; they are less than the shadows of realities. The play of the thought-energy of many thousands of people upon these images may set them in motion and cause them to become objective. Messages and definite directions as to work may even be given, and the "voice of the Master" parodied. Mere sentiment and "religious gush" are not within the Master-Mind. Persons with psychic power may use these astral images and appearances to help on work for some end to which they are partial. Such images often take the form of a picture of a physical appearance stated to be that of a Master, and, if pictured in meditation by students, they may be used to communicate impressions from the higher principles of the student, or they may be infilled by other principles leading to confusion of the mind and often to emotional innovations which give a pleasant stimulus to the otherwise

ordinary life of the student, as he feels he is making progress. Reaction, however, results after a time, and the last state is worse than the first. It was for this reason that H.P. Blavatsky wrote of the Master in *The Voice of the Silence*: “Allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine.” Most of the forms of Masters are thought-forms made temporarily visible by increased vibration. The path leading to the Master involves a distinct knowledge of noetic action in a high grade of substance. The “Presence” cannot be described in terms of the senses. “The spiritual is its own proof. Only to Consciousness can Consciousness be known.”

One criticism often made in regard to the idea of Masters and their influence in human affairs is that from it arises the danger of authority being too readily accepted. Mankind is always crying out for leaders, for those who can be looked upon as authorities, and it seems to me inevitable that some men should endeavour to make use of the idea of vicarious atonement which has so long held sway among religious organizations. Instead of doing the work himself by following slowly along the path outlined by all the great sages and seers of the world, instead of learning gradually to master his desires and to control his thought, and so to function in the superphysical world consciously in touch with the Beings who belong to it, man desires rather to become acquainted with the *physical persons* of these Beings. I believe that if the service of humanity be entered into unselfishly by men and women, they may, sometimes, to their own surprise, “meet” a Master, or an Adept, or even a Mahatma, because those who work impersonally for the good of humanity as a whole are ready at all moments to assist a particular consciousness which is related to the same undertaking.

The work of masters

The enterprise may be called the redemption of humanity, *the physical achievement of individual Consciousness, in which the form will respond to pure desire, and itself be a complete embodiment of that state which comprehends the perfection of the whole plan.* There are very few who are able to sustain such consciousness for more than a few moments, but in it all the bitterness generated by one nation against another disappears, and the seer is able to live in the Consciousness which sees humanity as one Being, working forward toward one great purpose, manifesting and functioning, through the cycles, in types and nations and races, each of which represents a different phase of that struggle, whose final triumph is *the victory of Consciousness over matter.* Therefore our daily tasks may be pursued in the consciousness that we are working not for one nation, one city, one family, nor for ourselves, but that we are working and thinking for humanity as a whole, irrespective of these temporary appearances of the various forms we see around us. And, if even a passing glimpse is possible for us, we can see how it is possible for a Being to sustain that Consciousness permanently, if he has already reached this position by using the processes of evolution; we can see how sympathetic such a one will be with the limitations of those hardly able to sustain that Consciousness for more than a moment. I think each of you will have experienced moments when you are sufficiently interested in the higher spiritual attainment to withdraw your consciousness from external life, to create in your own mind images that are in themselves embodiments of truth and beauty, and to people, as it were, the space about you with those influences that are enduring. At such times you enter a Consciousness where you contact forces and powers that may or may not assume shape, but which, even if you do not see, you feel as an exaltation of your whole being; the vibration of your body changes, you feel as if you were floating in some ethereal world. Such a state of exaltation transmutes the body for the time being, so that the mind is enabled to move and think freely. After such a mood you pay pass through a terrible reaction that may overcome the memory of the other state. Therefore the careful student must guard against the reactions becoming too strong.

Reactions

Many, many students have reacted so far from that mood of exaltation that they have lost balance for a few days, or even weeks or months. They have almost despaired, and have even denied the existence of other worlds, so terrible was the depression, gloom and despair following the exaltation which was as the Mount of Transfiguration itself. It is advisable to train oneself gradually by various exercises to understand the operation of the laws of ebb and flow, and of action and reaction, so that we shall not ignorantly undertake what cannot be more or less successfully fulfilled; it is well not to be too zealous, not to walk too hurriedly, so that steps have to be retraced; the work should be taken in hand cautiously, with due allowance for the limitations of personality.

Two types of adepts

According to Madame Blavatsky there are two types of Adepts, Masters and Mahatmas. Those of one type act for themselves as separate units, and those of the other act for humanity as a whole. Most people have heard many references to black magicians; these are found in all the schools, and are those who act for themselves as separate units, and not for humanity as a whole. Egoism carried to excess leads to the effort to control the minds of other men, and those who act thus violate the prescribed laws and receive worship and adoration for themselves. These Adepts sometimes attempt to establish new religions in the world. I believe such an effort was made a few years ago in Paris by a body of people calling themselves Adepts.

There is never a movement initiated by conscious beings for the good of mankind without a corresponding movement arising to frustrate it; thus between the action of the two energies a balance of consciousness may ultimately be attained. A number of such minor religions are of spurious order. The so-called Adepts instruct a chosen representative in the mental or astral world as to the methods to be adopted. The instrument thus selected believes himself to be favoured by his god among men, and his zeal and enthusiasm bring others under his influence. Religions are essential to certain groups of people who need one fold and one shepherd, and are undoubtedly one of the necessary schools for young humanity in its development.

False religions

But many religions have been instituted and falsely used for purposes of selfish power by beings of a high order. The phrase used to describe these in the New Testament is “those who practise spiritual wickedness in high places.” They appear as friends of men, and very often originate seductive secret societies with pernicious teaching and practices. There are many in the world at the present time. One of the signs of these secret orders, Madame Blavatsky says, is their method of working; they generally want to charge so many guineas for initiation. She adds, “No messenger of the White Brotherhood will ever charge for the truth - it will be given freely as it was freely attained.” In America these spurious societies appear frequently, and in them fifty or a hundred dollars are paid for “complete initiation”. Sometimes a small fee is charged for “the outer court,” a higher fee for “the inner court,” and still higher for entrance into the “innermost sanctum.” Experiments of this kind may do a certain amount of good to some persons, as they meet those of equal temperament and may have a most interesting and useful time up to a point. But these experiences generally lead in the end to confusion.

The statement has been made that Adepts may perform magic by their knowledge of the astral world; that they may take part in and decide the issue of wars and overrule events that are concerned with the destinies of nations; that they may appear as poets or statesmen, and when they do so appear they are the link between the great Lodge or Brotherhood of Philosophers and Sages, and humanity.

The link with humanity

The Adept acts with forms and desires and their transformations; a Master acts with life and thoughts and their ideals; a Mahatma deals with ideas and the realities of ideals. They are the links, mediators, transmitters, interpreters of divinity and nature to man.” History being a record of physical events does not record the real life of the Adept, Master or Mahatma as such. Great philosophies, religions and sciences are probably the best evidence of experience gained by embodied principles in the psychic, mental and spiritual worlds. Only “gaps” between Consciousness and matter make principles inaccessible to men; as matter responds more and more to Consciousness, association with Intelligences who are embodiments of the Law is in the natural order. We rarely come into communication with the real being in the men and women we meet every day; is it any wonder, then, that we rarely “meet” an Adept, Master or Mahatma? They are not physical bodies, although they may use the body furnished by the matter of any world, by the race at any point in evolution; but in any assembly of human bodies they can be recognized only by principles; outward decorations and symbols are no guide to their identification, nor can they be accepted on “authority.” They can be distinguished only by the principles ruling in the world of Consciousness to which, in their respective degrees, they belong.

The true Master is felt; He is not seen.

When He who was unseen is seen, He disappears.

Then the Spiritual Presences are gathered into the unity; they know not one another, but they are the

One Self.

In that darkness there is but One.

In that silence there is no knowledge, but Being -
which is all - is fulfilled.

This is the path of the true disciple.

Before man can find the true Master, he must lose
Him. That loss is pure gain; to lose Him thus is
to find Him indeed.

This should be known: the disciple who finds
Him on the plane of the senses has objectivised his
Karma; he loses the Master after a higher fashion.

Know that there is only the One Self, the Master,
and lose thyself also to find Him who is never found
until He has been lost.

When He is lost to every sense then the One
Flame arises, pure as before the beginning of worlds.
Thou shalt never *know* it: thou *art* It.

THE PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

Deep down in the human soul is implanted that divine instinct which reveals to man his oneness with God and his fellows. Any wilful segregation of a soul, or group of souls, for the purpose of syndicating God's benefits to his children, is rightly esteemed unnatural, and is sooner or later disintegrated, either by powers, opinion, or the trend of human evolution which, in accord with the divine law of nature, wills obedience from all things. The Order of the Philosophers, if not in accord with this law, could not have endured through every age of which records exist. This organization of the Order of the Philosophers is composed of those souls who have reached the crest of evolution on this planet and who have passed beyond intellectualism into spiritual realization. The aim of all souls who have attained to this level of consciousness is an entirely disinterested one - the stimulation of human evolution and the benefit of mankind. They have renounced the personality. Renunciation is the word of power compelling admission to the Brotherhood of the Servants of God, and inevitably bringing association with its members through the attainment of that Consciousness which transcends the barriers of time and space. There are no oaths, no vows of secrecy, and nothing is required of a member which is contrary to the dictates of his own soul. Yet no true initiate has ever been known to sell Divine Knowledge for money, nor to exercise his spiritual gifts for personal gain.

On the last occasion on which I addressed this Lodge, I spoke of "Masters, Adepts and Mahatmas," and I pointed out that nature is a unity, although there are planes or degrees of nature which interpenetrate. It is necessary, however, for purposes of study, to make comparisons and to analyse experiences, as that is the method of the reasoning brain-mind. It is essential, then, to speak of *planes of consciousness*; and, although it may be quite true that the words *Master*, *Adept* and *Mahatma* are used interchangeably to describe certain states of consciousness, it is advisable to have a clear definition of what we are talking about, and I suggested, therefore, that it is desirable to use (1) the word *Adept* when speaking of a centre of consciousness more particularly concerned with the psychic world; (2) the word "Master" as representing a highly individualized consciousness, exercising fully the powers of the mental world; and (3) the word *Mahatma* as representing a great Being, using particularly the spiritual plane as a vehicle for the exercise of His consciousness. I pointed out that the Mahatma includes the other two; His sphere extends from the lowest to the highest within the field of manifestation; He has complete knowledge of the mental worlds and also entire understanding of the astral world - the psychic plane.

The first step

The first consideration, it appears to me, is this: How may I become a disciple? I will assume that all here are desirous sooner or later of becoming disciples. Some of you may want to put it off for a season, until you have had a "good time," for the Path

of Discipleship is usually associated with certain rigorous restrictions, with sacrifices and renunciations, which are not always palatable to us in our enthusiastic days of youth. We wish to spend our substance in riotous living; to come to ourselves, in another sense, before we seek to tread the path of self-mastery back to the home of the Father. But at some time or another all progressive men and women desire to enter the way that leads to true spiritual development. Some of us may have already started on the Path, or, at least, promised ourselves that we will dedicate ourselves to this task. And, if that be so we have probably come to the point in our lives where we say: How may I be appointed a disciple to a particular Master or a particular Adept or a particular Mahatma? I suggest that you have to be *self-appointed*, and having appointed yourself, you begin to consider the necessary steps upon the Path. You will no doubt come to the conclusion, as most of us do after a little reflection, that there is no hurry, and that if you undertake more than you can accomplish, Nature will somehow warn you that there is no need to hasten unwisely with your obligations.

The motive

The motive for desiring to become a disciple is important. Unity of mankind, unity with the race, unity with humanity, seeing one's self in them, and *vice versa*, is generally regarded as the best incentive. In appointing yourself you are the only witness to the pledge. There is no other witness required. Documentary evidence is of no value where many lives of effort are needed; the pledge must be a much deeper thing. An esoteric body or school may help in throwing light on matters of erudition, on obscure points with which occultism is concerned, but claims to intimacy with Adepts or Masters or Mahatmas are usually to be condemned, especially in the young disciple. The determination to succeed must be maintained and kept fixed, even though progress may be remarkably slow. "Fix the mind on your ideal, eliminate all causes of distraction. One pointedness is necessary.

Obstacles

In looking through the literature dealing with this subject, and also in considering the matter from my own personal experience, I have jotted down a few observations dealing with obstacles to discipleship. Anger is a great obstacle. Passions are obstacles. Appetites, desires and wasting diseases are obstacles. Paralysis of any kind is an obstacle, because all the bodily powers are required in this task. I noticed, in looking up some of the works of Western occultists, that even the amputation of a limb is considered an obstacle. Diseases which prevent the use of the organic functions are obstacles, because these organic functions are associated with energies and forces which are required in the evolution of life upon the Path. Alcohol in excess is an obstacle, for it is an enemy of the mind. Nevertheless, some of the Rosicrucian Orders have recommended the use of wine in moderation as good for the life of the physical body. It is pointed out, however, that alcohol in excess is distinctly detrimental.

Spiritualistic mediumship is also an obstacle. Those who frequent *seance* rooms and circles, and take part in necromancy of any kind by raising the psychic shells of the dead, are placing obstacles in their path of discipleship. That does not mean that all spiritualism is to be avoided; it may be necessary, at a certain point in evolution, to convince oneself *by any means* that there are unseen and invisible worlds with which consciousness may become familiar, and a study of spiritualistic phenomena may be useful; but, as it develops a negative attitude towards life, and as mediumship inevitably puts a man or a woman in a negative position, it is detrimental to the evolution of the highly individualized nature required for the struggle of life, and it is not advisable for a disciple to continue that line of investigation. The full use of all the faculties and all the senses is necessary. Hypnotic influence of any kind is bad, because that again encourages a negative attitude towards life and weakens the individuality. There are so many forces inimical to the best interests of humanity acting through human beings that it is necessary to be very positive, and to have a deep understanding of the principles of life if one is to avoid becoming a medium of these opposing forces. Christian Science, or, in fact, any other kind of science which closes the mind to truth by saying, "This is the final word on the subject," is also an obstacle.

To sum it up: "A sound mind in a sound body" is essential to success.

Two schools of occultism

As I have previously pointed out, there are, broadly speaking, two schools: the school of the Adepts and the school of the Masters, and it is possible to distinguish these schools in all occult literature. The school of the Adepts is particularly concerned with the development of the senses, of the psychic faculties, of clairvoyance, and of the astral body. The school of the Masters

deals mainly with the development of the mental powers, of the faculties of the imagination (which is the creative faculty *par excellence*), and of the thought-body, in which one may move as consciously and as freely as in the physical body.

Before becoming a disciple it is necessary, then, to consider to which school you will belong, whether you will concern yourself mainly with the acquisition of psychic faculties or the development of mental powers. The choice of school is very important, because it is difficult afterwards to change schools, especially as the pleasures of the psychic school often become more alluring than even the activities of the physical plane; they are more subtle.

Psychic degenerates

In fact, many degenerates develop strong psychic faculties because, having exhausted the pleasures to be obtained through the ordinary channels, they resort to other measures by which they may stimulate new sensations; although psychic these are none the less sensations, and do not lead to a knowledge of the functions of the mind. It is recommended, indeed, that no degenerate practice of any kind should be indulged in and no degenerate forms of sense expression; all relationships and functions should be perfectly natural; no artificial stimulation of these great powers and energies of life for the purpose of purely sensual gratification should be used. There must be obedience and allegiance to the Principles that you have set before yourself in your pledge.

The negative path

Some young disciples do not get far beyond a consideration of externals. Some, I know, concern themselves very largely with food, and they go no further. As I have already said, a healthy body is the first essential to success, and food should be considered from the point of view of health and strength, to suit the particular type of body that you happen to be using in this incarnation.

Vegetarians

But vegetarians, excellent people in many respects, may be fussy, ill-tempered, fanciful and negative. The fact is, for some bodies meat is absolutely essential for work in the Western world. The present physical body, and I say this subject to correction because I am not an expert, is herbivorous and carnivorous; the stomach is a meat-eating organ, and the teeth are two-thirds carnivorous. Sentimentality of any kind will not get over the facts. In large cities many men, even Adepts and Masters, find it necessary to eat meat. *Man needs an animal desire-body at present*, whatever he will need in the future, and the physical body is a natural animal. The animal body needs training, but it also needs care and nourishment to strengthen it, to enable it to carry us the whole journey. Therefore the disciple must learn to control and direct the animal with kindness, in order that it may take him where he will effectively. “No weakling can succeed.” *A very strong desire is necessary, and the most successful disciples usually have a powerful animal nature as a basis, and they learn to use it effectively for the purposes of the soul.* There can be no better instrument. This mastery is not obtained by pure asceticism; that is generally a negative path. The powers of the animal organism have to be clearly understood and used. Natural pleasures and healthy exercises are recommended; a close observation of every field of nature is one of the necessities. By such means the disciple is helped to overcome mediumistic tendencies.

Mediums

No high intelligence,” says Madame Blavatsky in a letter, “uses a trance-medium.” One criticism I have heard is that she was at one time herself a spiritualist, a fact which inspires some disciples with the idea that they should consult mediums, and thus get into touch with Adepts and Masters. This, however, is not the way to achieve the object the disciple has in view. Any voice that may be heard or any vision that may be seen must be very seriously questioned by the student. Everything one is told by unseen voices must be tested by one’s own powers of discrimination, judgement and common sense. I have known a few who have been led entirely astray by following such directions. The fact that the voice comes from unseen sources somehow strikes them, in their enthusiasm, as an evidence of its high quality and character, and, without question, they follow its bidding. If, however, you exercise discrimination, the time will arrive when you will know your true teacher.

First, you must take into consideration the environment in which you find yourself, the circumstances of your life, your family

and your age; whether you are rich or poor; whether you are educated or lacking in education; the particular nation to which you belong, the special town or city in which you live. All these things have to be carefully considered in deciding upon the steps you will take.

Where, then, and how are you to begin?

Obligations

Here is the place to begin: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation"; but begin gently. Formulate very precisely and clearly what you intend your obligation to be, and, having so formed it, keep your attention fixed upon it; let it be the Pole Star that you follow through the whole course of your life. Every day polarize your whole nature by regarding carefully your obligations. In that way Karmic attachments are resolved, and you finally become liberated. If you meet each day's Karma as it comes you are not "piling up Karma"; you are beginning to meet it day by day as you go forward. If you have made the first step, if you have taken an obligation to yourself, to your Higher Self, to your God in Heaven, to the Christ - whatever formula you use to crystallize for your mind that which to you is highest, - you will find yourself tested every day by that obligation, by that Principle.

Tests

If your obligation has been undertaken from the very depths of your soul, with the greatest possible sincerity, you will find yourself still more severely tested. Circumstances will arise to try you because of the polarity of your thought. These things do not happen by chance or accident. It is a law in operation; that you must always remember. The polarization of your thought to your ideal will change the circumstances of your life. You will find yourself, perhaps, often in uncomfortable conditions, in difficult situations; you will find yourself probably face to face with circumstances that are unpleasant; but you will have no greater reason for satisfaction than that, for it is a proof that you are being taken at your word. The person who is floating along the stream of life, taking things as they come without any appeal to any higher ideal, or any superior idea of life, is bound, at a certain point, to come against some circumstance, some experience which says in effect: "Halt! Where are you going? What are you doing? What are you here for? And therein you have perhaps the greatest of all evidences that man is not simple what he appears to be by superficial observation. He is a being of much greater complexity. He is a being of psychic, emotional and mental powers and of spiritual energies, and all these are moving constantly through his nature. Today he may give way to certain impulses which lead him downwards; tomorrow he may aspire to something loftier and more noble. Again, there is the position where he feels life at a dead level; nothing has special interest for him, nothing seems to have any strong attraction for him. From one another of these three positions he passes, alternating between one extreme and the other, and sometimes spending a little time between, or pausing to look at both. But if he remain long in the middle position where nothing appeals to him, where he takes very little interest in matters that do not immediately concern his personality, he is in the deadliest position of all, the place of the Laodiceans. And you know what is said of the Laodiceans! A man who by some strong impulse imposes upon his whole nature a certain fixed resolve may find himself entering this place, and plunging deeper and deeper into the expression of passionate energy. An artist I knew, who painted some of the most spiritual pictures perhaps ever painted by any artist, used to experience terrible "dark fortnights of the soul,;" out of which he emerged into the purest and most wonderful atmosphere, where visions of beauty appeared to his soul. Whatever position the disciple is in, this inevitable test is being made by his inner nature, trying him this way and that, to see what stuff he is made of.

The object

Because, remember, the aim is not to become an automaton; the object is the evolution of a self-conscious, self-poised being who, standing at the centre of his nature, will be able to look out on life from the centre, and direct his energies wisely in accordance with the plan which he now sees and partially comprehends. It is obvious that, if that position is to be attained, nothing but the most rigid discipline will ever achieve it. The discipline has to be self-imposed. And blessed indeed is the man or woman who begins it now.

Discipline

There is no better way in which to help on humanity in its struggles towards a brighter and more beautiful life than by imposing upon yourself a certain amount of discipline every day. And, as great artists could tell you, it has this curious effect: it makes you understand life much more intensely. The men and women who impose no discipline, who never experience an intensive mood of the soul, do not understand life; they do not enjoy it; they do not realize anything like its full possibilities. As it is by comparison that we are able to tell “this” from “that,” darkness from light, so only by carefully observing these moods of the soul by which we fasten ourselves into life, by noting their characteristics and their effects as we pass through them, shall we ever become Adepts or Masters. No wise being, no wisdom of any philosopher, no religious teacher will ever train you; you must impose the task upon yourself. They may give the rules, they may give expression to the laws of development, and lay down the principles so plainly that any one can understand them; but the result depends entirely on what you yourself do, on how you apply the principles, on how you impose this task upon yourself.

When you undertake this task of discipleship you frame your own rules; you do not take any printed rules framed by some one else, probably for entirely different conditions. Rules laid down for the East will not usually suit the disciple in the West; there the life, the climate, and all the other factors are quite different, and that is why Western occultism has always had a set of regulations different from that of Eastern occultism; they are alike as regards the object before them, but the Eastern rules suit Eastern disciples, and Western those in the West. There are some Eastern disciples in Western bodies, and *vice versa*. But you should form your regulations for yourself. Your nation, your family, your body, your relationships with others, the use of your senses and powers, all these will enter into the few simple ideals you will formulate. For no true disciple of the Lodge of Light ever neglects any of his obligations. If he does, he will be brought back to them again and again. Not by seeking to run away from obligations to family and friends, going perhaps, into monastic life, to India or to some secluded spot where you will be free from all sorts of troubles, temptations and obligations - not so will you find the Master. If you are sincere in your desire to enter the Path, circumstances will be so arranged by your own soul (not by any external influence) to bring you back again and again to face and meet your true obligations.

Relationships

You will find, probably, that other disciples interest you more, and are really nearer to you in many ways than blood-relatives, because the one is a physical, the other is an inner relationship. I do not mean that you will despise any relations; on the contrary, you will be encouraged in your inner life by your association with your co-disciples, so that you will be all the more likely to fulfill your functions properly, in every relation of life. If the disciple understand life properly he will consider himself here for a purpose. A husband and wife, realizing incompatibility, should overcome it by the same principle that has brought them together through the Karmic Law. At the same time, they may recognize other higher obligations; then there will grow up between them an understanding, and a deeper friendship will develop in that larger life of the Soul. And this, indeed, is what matters.

There should be obedience and allegiance to these fundamental principles; there should be no ill-feeling towards any other human being. You may criticize things in yourself; you have an equal right to criticize to yourself those same things in others, but that need not engender any ill-feeling. There should be no jealousy of others or of the other's work or position. Your powers, which will increase as you pursue the Path, should be used not merely to gratify desire, not to influence others nor to defeat your enemies and to promote yourself personally. The disciple must learn also that he has no enemies. Some people carry that idea out in a foolish way. They say to themselves in a sort of abstract way that they have no enemies; but at the first difficulty that arises they immediately desire revenge. Any attempt to use power to gratify desire for personal ends leads to a miscarriage of the birth of a new body which is being formed within (to use a physical analogy), because during the time you are undertaking this work you are building a body for these higher principles within yourself, you are forming a body by means of which you will enter consciously into the worlds invisible to physical light, and you will prove the existence of these worlds by means of this new body, which will function freely through all fields of consciousness. You must then work in the world without the desire to leave it until all your obligations to it are fully met.

One thing the disciple learns - that there is no need to spend any moments in regret. While you are spending time in repentance, you are strengthening your weaknesses by dwelling upon them instead of using each moment to advantage and going straight ahead. Never waste a moment about what you did yesterday or the day before. This *necessity for living in the present*

moment must be constantly emphasized. Live in each moment as it comes, as fully as you possibly can. Time to the soul is an entirely different thing from what it is to the ordinary man who lives externally. As some one has said, we hear time ticking only in ourselves. The important matter is that the way we spend the present moment prepares us effectively or disastrously for the following moment. "Regret nothing. Cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge."

Age

Some people think age is an obstacle. It does not matter what age you are physically; you may be sixty years young or eighty, it does not matter, or twenty years old. Age has nothing to do with it, except this: that the earlier you start the better success you are likely to make in the particular incarnation in which you begin, because the vital energies are at a higher point of efficiency, and you are more likely to pass through the struggle successfully. You will come, of course, to an incarnation where you will enter consciously upon the task, from the beginning of self-conscious life.

Obstacles instruct

All the obstacles you meet will have one object and one purpose: to teach you how to think and how to act. All difficulties will remain until they are properly met. Every difficulty has a definite place in the disciple's education, and when you realize this it should banish all fear. It does not matter what happens to you while you hold this attitude; if you lose your reputation, your place in society - if you have ever had a place, - if everything tumbles about you, your task is to stand undismayed. As one teacher very pregnantly says, you may put yourself in imagination into some of these positions, and just imagine how you would feel if everything were gone from you, if whatever little reputation you have amongst your friends, whatever little place you fill in society - if all that were gone, would you stand unafraid before His Will and not mind the destruction of a million Universes. I do not think any of us would. We have not yet reached that desired position. Nevertheless, that is the goal, that is the object; you must accomplish this in order to reach the position where, having nothing, you will realise that you have all. Then you will know that nothing that you can gather around you externally is of any permanent value, for no sooner have you got it than the sweet taste leaves it, because, being easy of access, it is no longer worth having; any treasure of life has to be hedged round with some sort of resistance. When everything is smooth and easy and we have all we wish without trouble, the true value of life diminishes. But when we have to fight, to struggle in order to attain, when we find the path difficult, values are readjusted; in fact, it is well known to students of psychology that lovers will create difficulties artificially in order to feel this resisting element. If it does not exist they will make it, because there must be some tension all the time in order to make life interesting.

Realizing, then, that difficulties are instructors, try to extract every possible ounce of experience from them. But this must not be done self-consciously, nor with the feeling that you are getting on better than others, becoming highly developed psychically and progressing finely. It is characteristic of all true disciples that they are very humble; in fact, no one can tell easily where they are, or even whether they are disciples or not, so skilfully do they conceal the fact. Whatever progress may be made is recognized not by any outward tokens, but by some inherent characteristic of the soul, which reveals itself when the personality is sincerely humble.

Nights and days

The manner of meeting all circumstances is of supreme importance. We know that Nature carries on her work in the dark during the winter, preparing for the results which will be seen in the spring and summer; and times that correspond to the seasons externally exist also in man. "The soul has nights and days in its own eternal ways." Often, during the dark night of the soul, the disciple who has attempted this self-imposed task of following the Path is very severely tested, and it is generally during this "dark fortnight" that he turns to the life in the senses. But if you should happen to take a step in that direction, do not let it disturb you; begin again; begin where you fell, and walk steadily on once more. You may have to work for years, or even to live in obscurity. "You are yourself the object of your search," the subject of your study; you are the obstacle to be overcome, the material to be worked upon. The result of your efforts will be shown upon yourself, upon your own character, and you represent now what you already have been.