

The Spiritual Path

EVERY HUMAN is a free agent. Each has free choice. He can revel in unbridled passion; he can elect to live, as do the majority, by drawing to himself indiscriminate amounts of both high and low desire substance—or he can follow the spiritual path.

Since the time of Atlantis, when he received the link of mind, man has had the opportunity to focus the powers of spirit. But unfortunately he used it for gratifying his desire nature. Mind is a creative agent. Wherever it is focused, there will its powers manifest. Early humanity proved this to be true when, by closing his mind to spirit and opening it to sensual desire, man became adept in evil magic that eventually destroyed the entire Atlantean civilization, including the very continent itself.

God is Spirit, eternal, all good. He can be reached and known through spiritual attainment. Man was created in the image and likeness of God. But by linking his mind with desire instead of uniting it with spirit, he fell from his high estate. He may rise again, however, by following the teachings of wisdom and striving against evil—the existence of which has been permitted that man may exercise free will and thus cultivate discrimination. Sorrow, pain and evil are part of a beneficent plan, the ultimate goal of which is perfection.

Inherently, man is a free, intelligent being. That he may become fully conscious of his divine creative power, he must learn to discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil, and exercise his indwelling Godhood by right choices. His present heritage of disease, poverty, and death is the result of his having violated cosmic law. As he brings his life into conformity with that law he will rise above these limitations.

It is no longer considered an indication of spirituality to be weak and ailing, to be poverty-stricken or miserable. “All that the Father hath is mine,” declared the Christ, and in these words He revealed the plenitude that is man’s when he lives true to Divine Law.

While fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, it is also the chief deterrent to an aspirant’s ability to serve on the inner planes as a conscious Invisible Helper.

We have all known fear in some form. Fear is a powerful negative emotion that acts adversely on the entire human organism. Fear has a primeval origin. “Fear came into the world with the dawn of life, and man, as well as every other living creature, has inherited it down through all the ages of existence,” writes the psychologist Stanley G. Hall.

“The brain of man is divided into two parts, the old and the new, the cerebellum and the cerebrum. The latter, the seat of intellect, is the new brain. The former, the cerebellum, is the old brain. Here are stored all of man’s primitive and animal instincts, of which fear is one. Fear paralyzes the



Ink and water color, c. 1805. William Blake. National Galleries of Scotland

The Finger of God Writing

Moses prostrates in dread before the fiery formulation of the Law.

intellect and awakens and unleashes all the dormant powers of the old brain, which explains why it is not possible to tell what a person may do when he is thoroughly frightened. This accounts for the animal-like action under fear—sometimes, in excesses, he becomes insane and sometimes even dies.”

While their desire natures were strong and their minds were weak, men could only be governed by fear. The Ten Commandments was their foremost manual of religion, whose keynote was expressed in the motto “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” for

separateness from which evil can come. Contemplation of positive qualities of character, together with a persistent cultivation of confidence and courage, will ultimately lead to the conquest of all fear.

Soul attributes of faith and love are represented by John and Peter, the two foremost disciples. The noblest healing recorded in the New Testament is accomplished in their presence. Cultivation of faith and love is of the utmost importance. If we persist in our efforts to develop these virtues in the face of fear and discouragement, the day will come when we will know beyond all question that “perfect love casts out fear,” and reveals the secret door opening upon liberation.

Conscience may be defined as the voice of the soul; and soul is the product of evolution, the fruitage of an ego’s journey assimilating experience through many incarnations. Primitive man was virtually void of conscience. The growth of conscience is continuous from incarnation to incarnation. The older and richer the soul development of an individual, the clearer the voice of conscience and the more readily he listens and acts upon its guidance. Knowing this, occultists look with compassion rather than censure on younger and less evolved individuals.

Conscience is acquired through suffering incident to purgatorial

the word fear, as used in the Bible, also implies awe. By this time, however, humanity should have completed the religious fear cycle but many have not done so.

Fear is the chief deterrent to an aspirant’s ability to serve on the inner planes as a conscious Invisible Helper. Not infrequently it bars entrance to the place or person most in need of help, and tends to draw a serving ego back into its body. In treading the upward path, every spirit must pass through the lowest regions of the desire world (Purgatory), where human and subhuman spirits of the most undesirable nature are congregated to await cleansing and correction prior to liberation. They include the earthbound, the suicides whose natural term of life has not yet expired, and elementals of various types. Only the fearless can enter this realm and remain immune to all its influences.

Fear arises from a false sense of separateness. To the degree that we realize our essential unity with God—of whom we are a part and in whom we literally live, and move and have our being—are we free from fear. Being one in consciousness with God (good) identifies us with the whole, thus leaving nothing in

processes following physical death. The deeper the impress of sin, the more severe must be the cleansing measures. Hence, the stronger and clearer will be the conscience related thereto; and the more insistent will be its warning voice when, in future lives, the individual is tempted to repeat the wrongdoing. For this reason, St. Paul declared that "the greater the sinner the greater the saint."

Mind is the most important servant of spirit. When man learns to disengage it from the shackles of desire and to unite it wholly with the spirit, then will he have the key to the Kingdom and will realize the fulfillment of the Master's promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give to you."

It was by the power of His name (mind linked with spirit) that the disciples were able to accomplish so-called miracles. For this reason Paul taught his followers that the first step toward

spiritual development is the Christing of the mind: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

The brain-based mind is a comparatively recent acquisition and, when highly trained, tends toward egotism. It is prone to be puffed up in its own conceit. When it becomes wedded to spirit, the mind will not be materially constrained and will demonstrate powers far beyond anything known to academic logicians.

The supreme evolutionary task of humanity is the spiritualization or Christing of the mind. When this occurs the mind will reflect the eternal spirit instead of the transitory outer world as at present. As a consequence, cosmic wisdom will irradiate human consciousness and man will be not mere man, but superman.

The intellect represents the chief development of the conscious mind; memory, of the subconscious; intuition, of the superconscious. Intuition is the voice of the superconscious or spiritualized mind.

This faculty is being developed increasingly as mind becomes a more perfect channel for the working of spirit. Intuition is sometimes referred to as the voice of the soul, and also as man's sixth sense. This faculty will come into full expression during the Aquarian Age.

The deepest esoteric instructions are never given either by word or in writing, but are projected mentally by the Great Ones and are received in the silence by intuitional perceptions of the neophyte who is sufficiently sensitized to make the contact. The subconscious mind or memory correlates with the inner forces of the earth and may be said to relate to earth life cycles of the immediate past and

present. The conscious mind correlates with the moon and is related to present earth experience only. The superconscious mind correlates with the sun and produces the spiritual illumination known as Initiation, which

gives the ability to read the cosmic records dealing with the past, present, and future.

There is a definite path of evolution for the mind and another for the soul; nevertheless, the two lines develop simultaneously and harmoniously. The more completely the mind becomes a channel for the expression of spirit, the more soulful the individual becomes. Though a person study every book dealing with spiritual subjects, knowledge as such will but mentally stimulate him. Knowledge in itself never produces soul growth. While a developed mentality is necessary to soul growth, it is not of itself sufficient.

When we live a life of loving service to others, we attract into our vital body a glorious flaming golden ether of the nature of the Christ force. This is the spiritualized light ether. Though we already possess a nucleus of it through the love that flows out in service, we can attract such an abundance from the aura of the Cosmic Christ that it is as if we breathed a golden atmosphere pouring down

We can attract such an abundance of light ether from the aura of the Cosmic Christ that it is as if we breathed a golden atmosphere pouring down from cosmic space.

from cosmic space. Within this fiery ether a celestial blue aura appears which does not usually show outside the physical body except in great saints and initiates. With these it may be seen in the form of a blue sun shining around and through the human figure at its center. This is the spiritualized reflecting ether, the ether reflecting the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

The mind plays a most important part in the evolution of the soul since it is the link between spirit and body. This link enables the spirit to work in the three-fold body and extract essence for the three-fold soul. This soul work, therefore, can only be accomplished through the mind. It is for this reason that many occult textbooks refer to the mind as "The Path," and it also accounts for Paul's statement that "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life everlasting."

STEPS OF PREPARATION

That the mind may become a channel for spirit and nothing but spirit necessitates prolonged and careful training. In this connection the Rosicrucian School enumerates seven steps of special importance.

Concentration is fundamental and therefore first. Concentration is a strictly mental exercise which aims to make the mind one-pointed, to shut out all outer distractions at will and to hold the mind firmly fixed upon the subject under consideration. The arduous practice required causes many students to abandon further effort in mental discipline.

Consequently, *persistence* of effort is the next requisite. This is a quality sadly lacking in the majority of aspirants, despite the fact that without it nothing of real value in any line of endeavor can be accomplished. Mastery of any subject can be achieved only by continued patience and effort.

The third quality necessary for development is *discrimination*. Absence of this mental attitude has led to more disillusionment and failure on the path than any other. Its cultivation is of paramount importance, and yet the majority of occult students pay but little heed to its attainment. Perhaps the most fitting definition of discrimination is to be found in the ancient occult admonition: Learn to

know the false from the true, the real from the unreal, the ephemeral from the eternal.

The first three steps in self-development are mental in nature; they are tools by which the work-

Adoration is the final step by which the student gains at-one-ment with the subject under consideration. Adoration can lift the spirit to the very throne of God.

man changes the rough ashlar (of the mind) into the Master's perfect cube.

The four higher steps belong to the realm of spirit and are developed after the mind has been thoroughly disciplined. The first of these is *devotion*, which centers in the heart. Mind and spirit can be united only by way of the heart, when the necessary devotion has been awakened.

Meditation is the chief means of further renewing of the mind. This is a spiritual process and supercedes the mental activity of concentration. Here, less mental effort is required as the mind has now been trained to obey the slightest impulse of spirit. Through concentration one comes into contact with the form aspect of matter; meditation transcends form to arrive at the soul of things.

Contemplation is a step beyond meditation. Here mind and heart are *en rapport*. Nothing relative to a subject is concealed. Past, present, and future are as an open book.

Adoration is the final step by which the student gains at-one-ment with the subject under consideration. In fact, adoration can lift the spirit to the very throne of God

These four higher steps are attainable only after the student has learned to rise in consciousness to specific degrees of development. In adoration, an entire octave of consciousness is spanned, and Christed consciousness, the ultimate goal of human evolution, is attained. As each person progresses through the successive grades in life's school of evolution, he learns his lessons via one of

two cosmic streams of consciousness—that of the head and of the heart. Increasingly, however, he must balance the two. This is an arduous task, requiring many lives for its completion. Nevertheless, much may be accomplished in a single incarnation if the student is willing to devote himself to the fulfillment of exalted ideals.

The mind is a comparatively recent acquisition of the ego, whose juvenile pride may tend toward arrogance and conceit. These are characteristics that distinguish a young, inexperienced soul from an “old” soul ripe in wisdom. Reason is the principal faculty to be evolved during the present fifth race cycle. It is evident that in this era man’s mind is in the ascendant and his heart has been relegated to a subsidiary status.

When the aspirant begins to live the spiritual life in earnest, the spinal essence gradually awakens and ascends toward the head. If the individual is temperamentally a mental type, this force will be predominantly positive in the brain and negative in the heart. If, on the other hand, he is a mystical or emotional type, the reverse will be true: positive polarity in the heart, negative in the head. The positive center represents the dynamic force of either mind or heart and works to the detriment of the opposite function. Thus, when a person who is centered mentally begins occult study, he is apt to cultivate intellectual power at the expense of his devotional nature, unless a special effort is made to



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

Return of the Prodigal Son

For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found—Luke 15.

counterbalance this tendency.

The mind is separative, divisional, and disruptive in its working. Many who have followed the mental path to the exclusion of the heart path become coldly analytical, unable to discover the soul wisdom which animated them for a moment at the beginning of their quest. They become disillusioned and may turn back to materialistic pursuits. Those who follow the heart path exclusively all too often lack persistence, steadfastness, and discrimination to pilot themselves along higher reaches of the path. So they too may turn back to the ways of the world in discouragement, sometimes in despair.

The safe way is to work toward effecting a true balance between the two. The mentalist must learn to still his mind and listen to the dictates of his heart. The mystic must learn to control his emotions and heed the voice of clear reason. As this procedure is followed, spiritual currents ascending in the body will effect a balance of power between heart and head, and further development of the weaker of the two will become easier to accomplish.

God is the first and Eternal Flame. Virgin Spirits (our present humanity) are sparks of that flame. The purpose of repeated cycles of rebirth is to fan these sparks until they become like unto their parent flame. After being so long engrossed in the illusion of matter, the spirit’s memory of its celestial origin has become dim. Through suffering and sorrow it rends the veil of illusion and discovers its inherent divinity: then commences the long and arduous journey back to

its heavenly home. Once the spirit is fully awakened no obstacle can long impede its progress. The parable of the prodigal son becomes an actual spiritual experience. Weary of having so long partaken of husks with the swine (living entirely in the outer or objective world), the “spark” returns home, where reunion with the father occasions great rejoicing, as recounted in the parable—a parable that is applicable not only to a single individual but to the human race as a whole.

Every activity of man sets its impress upon the psychic envelope of the earth. This applies to thought, the spoken word, and the physical deed. If these activities are constructive, their emanations are absorbed by, and become a component part of, the world soul. If, on the contrary, these activities are negative and destructive, their emanations become dark and sinister currents that remain in the astral realms until the ego responsible for their creation accomplishes the task of liquidation.

It is only as we realize the full import of the preceding statement that we begin to understand the real meaning of transmutation and its far-reaching significance in relation to our well-being. We are individually responsible for the reaction upon earth of our every thought, word, and deed. Biblically, this truth is given in Matthew’s Gospel: “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

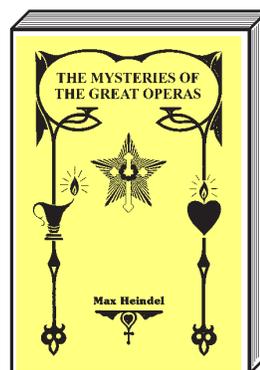
The transmutative power within man centers in the forces of imagination, inspiration, and intuition. It is by the constructive use of the image-building faculty united with the breath of intuition through the voice (power) of spirit that the miracle of transmutation may be effected—a miracle which clears our karmic sheet and thus immeasurably accelerates our spiritual evolution.

Endowed with these powers, we make gradual progress along the spiritual path. We learn to transform evil into good, hatred into love, darkness into light. Transmutation is the wonder key that opens the door to at-one-ment with that Light which is the Light of the world. Through transmutation we reach that height that is the supreme goal of earthly life: To “WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP ONE WITH ANOTHER.” □

—Barbara Joiner

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176 Pages. Indexed. Paper. Published by
 The Rosicrucian Fellowship.