

**Virtues for Educators:  
Extracts from the works of Dr Rudolf Steiner**



## Reverent Gratitude – Gratitude and Love – Respecting Freedom

From “The Spiritual Ground of Education”, pp. 52-57

Correctly speaking, all human feeling should function from a fundamental sense of **gratitude** that the cosmos has given us a birth and a place in the universe... In this sense, we should never be cut off from reverence and thankfulness for children. We need only one attitude to educate and nurture them correctly: an **attitude of reverence**, no more and no less... We feel reverence towards many things... And above all we should feel reverence towards children... Within this feeling, we find the most **important impulses of educational method**... Gratitude must permeate teachers of children up to the change of teeth [0 – 7 years]...

While children are between the change of teeth and puberty [7 – 14 years], all our teaching must be done out of **love** for teaching itself... It is not only important that teacher not only **love the children**; they must also **love teaching**, and love it with objectivity...

If we have received children in religious reverence, and if we have educated them in love up to the time of puberty [14 years], then after this we will be able to leave their spirit free and interact with them as equals. Our aim is not



to touch the spirit but let it awaken. When children reach puberty, we will attain our goal of giving them over to feely use their intellectual and spiritual powers if we **respect the [free] spirit...**

These must become the **three golden rules** in the art of education: they must imbue the whole **attitude of teachers** and the **whole impulse of their work**. The golden rules that must be embraced by their **whole being**, not as a theory, are these:

First, **reverent gratitude** toward the World for the child we contemplate every day;..

[Regarding phase 1 of child development]

Second, **gratitude** to the universe and **love** for what we have to do with the child;

[Regarding phase 2 of child development] and

Third, **respect for the child's freedom**, which we must not endanger, since it is this freedom that we must direct our teaching efforts, so that the child may one day stand at our side in freedom in the World.

[Regarding phase 3 of child development]

## Initiative – Interest – Truthfulness - Enthusiasm

From *Discussions with Teachers* (1919), *Closing Word*, pp. 180-82

Today I would like to conclude these discussions by pointing out something I want to lay upon your hearts: that I would like you to stick firmly to the following four principles.

First, teachers must make sure that they influence and work on their pupils, in a broader sense, by allowing the spirit to flow through their whole being as teachers, and also in the details of their work: how each word is spoken, and how each concept or feeling is developed. Teachers must be people of initiative. They must be filled with initiative. Teachers must never be careless or lazy; they must, at every moment, stand in full consciousness of what they do in the school and how they act toward the children. This is the first principle. ***The teacher must be a person of initiative in everything done, great and small.***

Second, my dear friends, we as teachers must take an interest in everything happening in the world and in whatever concerns humankind. All that is happening in the outside world and in human life must arouse our interest. It would be deplorable if we as teachers were to shut ourselves off from anything that might interest

human beings. We should take an interest in the affairs of the outside world, and we should also be able to enter into anything, great or small, that concerns every single child in our care. That is the second principle. ***The teacher should be one who is interested in the being of the whole world and of humanity.***

Third, ***the teacher must be one who never compromises in the heart and mind with what is untrue.*** The teacher must be true in the depths of being. Teachers must never compromise with untruth, because if they did, we would see how untruth would find its way through many channels into our teaching, especially in the way we present the subjects. Our teaching will only bear the stamp of truth when we ardently strive for truth in ourselves.

And now comes something more easily said than done, but it is, nevertheless, also a golden rule for the teacher's calling. ***The teacher must never get stale or grow sour [Universal Enthusiasm – RR].*** Cherish a mood of soul that is fresh and healthy! No getting stale and sour! This must be the teacher's endeavour.

And I know, my dear friends, that if during these two weeks you have properly received into your inner life what we were able to shed light on from the most diverse viewpoints, then indirectly, through the realms of feeling and will, what may still seem remote will come closer to your souls as you work with the children in the classroom. During these two weeks I have spoken only of what can enter directly into your practical teaching when you first



allow it to work properly within your own souls. But our Waldorf School, my dear friends, will depend on what you do within yourselves, and whether you really allow the things we have considered to become effective in your own souls.

Think of the many things I have tried to clarify in order to come to a psychological view of the human being, especially of the growing human being. Remember these things. And maybe there will be moments when you feel unsure about how or when to bring one thing or another into your teaching, or where to introduce it, but if you remember properly what has been presented during these two weeks, then thoughts will surely arise in you that will tell you what to do.

Of course many things should really be said many times, but **I do not want to make you into teaching machines, but into *free independent teachers***. Everything spoken of during the past two weeks was given to you in this same spirit. The time has been so short that, for the rest, I must simply appeal to the understanding and devotion you will bring to your work. Turn your thoughts again and again to all that has been said that can lead you to understand the human being, and especially the child. It will help you in all the many questions of method that may arise.

When you look back in memory to these discussions, then our thoughts will certainly meet again in all the various impulses that have come to life during this time. For myself, I can assure you that I will also be thinking back to these days, because right now this Waldorf School is indeed weighing heavily on the minds of those taking part in its beginning and organization. This Waldorf School must succeed; much depends on its success. Its success will bring a kind of proof of many things in the spiritual evolution of humankind that we must represent.

In conclusion, if you will allow me to speak personally for a moment, I would like to say: For me this Waldorf School will be a veritable child of concern. Again and again I will have to come back to this Waldorf School with anxious, caring thoughts. But when we keep in mind the deep seriousness of the situation, we can really work well together. Let us especially keep before us the thought which will truly fill our hearts and minds, that connected with the present day spiritual movement are also the spiritual powers that guide the cosmos. When we believe in these good spiritual powers they will inspire our lives and we will truly be able to teach.

## Will to Gratitude – Will to Love – Will to Duty

From Lectures Six and Seven: The Child's Changing Consciousness, pp. 124-153

*Questions of ethical and social education* are raised when we consider the relationship between growing children and their surroundings. We will consider these two issues today—even though briefly and superficially, due to the shortness of time. Once again, the kernel of the matter is knowing how to **adapt to the individuality of the growing child**. At the same time, you must remember that, as a teacher and educator, you are part of the **social setting, and that you personally bring the social environment and its ethical attitudes to the growing pupil**. Again, pedagogical principles and methods must be formed so that they offer every opportunity of reaching the child's true nature—one must learn to know the child's true nature according to what has been shown here briefly during the last few days. As always, much depends on *how* one's material is brought to the students during their various ages and stages.

Here we need to consider three human virtues—concerning, on the one hand, the child's own development, and on the other hand, what is seen in relation to society in general. **They are three fundamental virtues**. The first concerns everything that can live in ***will to gratitude***; the second, everything that can live in the ***will to love***; and



third, everything that can live in the ***will to duty***. Fundamentally, these are the three principal human virtues and, to a certain extent, **encompass all other virtues**.

Generally speaking, people are far too unaware of what, in this context, I would like to term gratitude or thankfulness. And yet gratitude is a virtue that, in order to play a proper role in the human soul must grow with the child. Gratitude is something that must already flow into the human being when the growth forces—working in the child in an inward direction— are liveliest, when they are at the peak of their shaping and moulding activities. Gratitude is something that has to be developed out of the bodily-religious relationship I described as the dominant feature in the child from birth until the change of teeth. At the same time, however, gratitude will develop very spontaneously during this first period of life, as long as the child is treated properly. **All that flows, with devotion and love, from a child's inner being toward whatever comes from the periphery through the parents or other educators—and everything expressed outwardly in the child's imitation—will be permeated with a natural mood of gratitude. We only have to act in ways that are worthy of the child's gratitude and it will flow toward us, especially during the first period of life.** This gratitude then develops further by flowing into the forces of growth that make the limbs grow, and that alter even the chemical composition of the blood and other bodily fluids. This gratitude lives in the physical body and must dwell in it, since it would not otherwise be anchored deeply enough.

It would be very incorrect to remind children constantly to be thankful for whatever comes from their surroundings. On the contrary, an atmosphere of gratitude should grow naturally in children through merely witnessing the gratitude that their elders feel as they receive what is freely given by their fellow human beings, and in how they express their gratitude. In this situation, one would also cultivate the habit of feeling grateful by allowing the child to imitate what is done in the surroundings. If a child says “thank you” very naturally—not in response to the urging of others, but simply by imitation—something has been done that will greatly benefit the child’s whole life. Out of this an all-embracing gratitude will develop toward the whole world.

The cultivation of this universal gratitude toward the world is of paramount importance. It does not always need to be in one’s consciousness, but may simply live in the background of the feeling life, so that, at the end of a strenuous day, one can experience gratitude, for example, when entering a beautiful meadow full of flowers. Such a subconscious feeling of gratitude may arise in us whenever we look at nature. It may be felt every morning when the Sun rises, when beholding any of nature’s phenomena. And if we only act properly in front of the children, a corresponding increase in gratitude will develop within them for all that comes to them from the people living around them, from the way they speak or smile, or the way such people treat them.



This universal mood of gratitude is the basis for a truly religious attitude; for it is not always recognized that this universal sense of gratitude, provided it takes hold of the whole human being during the first period of life, will engender something even further. In human life, love flows into everything if only the proper conditions present themselves for development. The possibility of a more intense experience of love, reaching the physical level, is given only during the second period of life between the change of teeth and puberty. But that first tender love, so deeply embodied in the inner being of the child, without as yet working outward—this tender blossom will become firmly rooted through the development of gratitude. Love, born out of the experience of gratitude during the first period of the child's life, is the love of God. One should realize that, just as one has to dig the roots of a plant into the soil in order to receive its blossom later on, one also has to plant gratitude into the soul of the child, because it is the root of the love of God. The love of God will develop out of universal gratitude, as the blossom develops from the root...

We have already seen that, **in the years between the child's change of teeth and the coming of puberty**, the development of a sense for the authority of the teacher is both natural and essential. **The second fundamental virtue, which is love, then grows from that when the child is in the process of also developing the physical basis of love. But one must see love in its true light**, for, because of the prevailing materialistic attitudes of our time, the concept of love has become very one-sided and narrow; and because a materialistic

outlook tends to see love only in terms of sexual love, it generally traces all manifestations of love back to a hidden sexuality. In an instance of what I called “amateurism squared” the day before yesterday, we find, if not in every case, that at least many psychologists trace human traits back to sexual origins, even if they have nothing whatsoever to do with sex. **To balance such an attitude, the teacher must have acquired at least some degree of appreciation for the universal nature of love;** for sexual love is not the only thing that begins to develop between the child’s second dentition and puberty, but also love in its fullest sense, love for everything in the world. Sexual love is only one aspect of love that develops at this time of life. At that age one can see how love of nature and love for fellow human beings awaken in the child, and the teacher needs to have a strong view of how sexual love represents only one facet, one single chapter in life’s book of love. If one realizes this, one will also know how to assign sexual love to its proper place in life. Today, for many people who look at life with theoretical eyes, sexual love has become a kind of Moloch who devours his own offspring, inasmuch as, if such views were true, sexual love would devour all other forms of love. The way love develops in the human soul is different from the way gratitude does. Gratitude has to grow with the growing human being, and this is why it has to be planted when the child’s growing forces are at their strongest. Love, on the other hand, has to *awaken*. The development of love really does resemble the process of awakening, and, like awakening, it has to remain more in the region of the soul. The gradual emergence of love is a slow awakening, until the final stage of this process has been reached. Observe for a moment what happens when one awakes in the morning. At first there is a dim awareness of vague



notions; perhaps first sensations begin to stir; slowly the eyelids struggle free of being closed; gradually the outer world aids one's awakening; and finally the moment arrives when that awakening passes into the physical body.

This is also how it is with the awakening of love—except that, in the child, this process takes about seven years. At first love begins to stir when sympathy is aroused for whatever is taught during the early days at school. If we begin to approach the child with the kind of imagery I have described, we can see how love especially comes to meet this activity. Everything has to be saturated with this love. At that stage, love has a profoundly soul-like and tender quality. If one compares it with the daily process of waking up, one would still be deeply asleep, or at least in a state of sleeping-dreaming. (Here I am referring to the child's condition, of course—the teacher must not be in a dream, although this appears to happen all too often!) This condition then yields to a stronger jolt into wakefulness. And in what I described yesterday and the day before about the ninth and tenth years—and especially in the time leading up to the twelfth year—love of nature awakens in the child. Only then do we see it truly emerging.

Before this stage, the child's relationship to nature is completely different. A child then has a great love for all that belongs to the fairy world of nature, a love that has to be nourished by a creative and pictorial approach. Love for the realities in nature awakens only later. At this point we are faced with a particularly difficult task. Into

everything connected with the curriculum at this time of life (causality, the study of lifeless matter, an understanding of historical interconnections, the beginnings of physics and chemistry) into all of this, the teacher must introduce—and here I am not joking, but speak very earnestly—the teacher must introduce an element of *grace*. In geometry or physics lessons, for example, there is every need for the teacher to allow real grace to enter into teaching. All lessons should be pervaded with an air of graciousness, and, above all, the subjects must never be allowed to become sour. So often, just during the ages from eleven and a half, or eleven and three-quarters, to fourteen or fifteen, work in these subjects suffers so much by becoming unpalatable and sour. What the pupils have to learn about the refraction and reflection of light or about the measurement of surface areas in a spherical calotte, is so often spoken of not with grace, but with an air of sourness...

Now you may wonder what teachers have to do to be capable of accomplishing their tasks as described. Here we have to consider something I would like to call the “social aspect” of the teaching profession, the importance of which is recognized far too little. Too often we encounter an image that a certain era (not ancient times, however) has associated with the teaching profession, whose members are not generally respected and honoured as they should be. Only when society looks upon teachers with the respect their calling deserves, only when it recognizes that the teachers stand at the forefront of bringing new impulses into our civilization—not just in speeches from a political platform—only then will teachers receive the moral support they need to do their work. Such an



attitude—or perhaps better still, such a sentiment—would pave the way toward acquiring a wider and more comprehensive view of life. This is what the teachers need; they also need to be fully integrated into life. They need more than just the proper qualifications in educational principles and methods, more than just special training for their various subjects; most of all teachers need something that will renew itself again and again: a view of life that pulsates in a living way through their souls. What they need is a deep understanding of life itself; they need far more than what can pass from their lips as they stand in front of their classes. All of this has to flow into the making of a teacher. Strictly speaking, the question of education should be part of the social question, and it must embrace not just the actual teaching schools, but also the inner development of the teaching faculty...

Just as the love of God is rooted in gratitude, so genuine moral impulses originate in love, as was described. For nothing else can be the basis for truly ethical virtue except a kind of love for humankind that does not allow us to pass our fellow human beings without bothering to know them, because we no longer have an eye for what lives in them—as happens so easily nowadays. The general love toward all people is the love that reaches out for human understanding everywhere. It is the love that awakens in the child in the time between the change of teeth and puberty, just as gratitude has grown between the child's birth and the loss of the first teeth. At school, we must do everything we can to awaken love...

Furthermore, we have seen that, with regard to the ethical life, the soul life of the child must also experience feelings of sympathy and antipathy toward what is good and evil. If one approaches a student at this age with a “thou shalt” attitude, proper development will be hindered in the years to come. On the other hand, when one instead moves the pre-adolescent child, through natural authority, to love the good and hate the evil, then during the time of sexual maturity, **from the inner being of the adolescent, the third fundamental virtue** develops, which is the ***sense of duty***. It is impossible to drill it into young people. It can only unfold as a part of natural development, based only on gratitude—in the sense described yesterday— and on the ability to love. If these two virtues have been developed properly, with sexual maturity the sense of duty will emerge, the experience of which is an essential part of life what belongs to the human soul and spirit realm has to develop according to its own laws and conditions, just as what belongs to the physical realm must obey physical laws. Just as an arm or a hand must be allowed to grow freely, according to the inner forces of growth, just as these must not be artificially controlled by, for example, being fixed into a rigid iron frame—although in certain places on Earth there is a custom of restricting the free growth of feet similar to the way we impede the free unfolding here of the child’s soul life—so must adolescents feel this new sense of duty arising freely from within. The young person will then integrate properly into society, and Goethe’s dictum will find its noblest fulfilment: ***“Duty is a love for what one demands of oneself.”*** Here again you see how love plays into everything, and how the sense of duty must be developed so



that one eventually comes to love it. In this way one integrates properly as a human being into society. And then, from the previous experience of right authority, the ability to support oneself by one's own strength will evolve.

## The Eight Virtues

Extract from “Guidance in Esoteric Training” by Rudolf Steiner





## Introduction

The student of the spiritual life must pay careful attention to certain activities in the life of soul which in the ordinary way are carried on carelessly and inattentively. There are eight such activities. It is naturally best to undertake only one exercise at a time, throughout a week or a fortnight, for example, then the second, and so on, then beginning over again. Meanwhile it is best for the eighth exercise to be carried out every day. True self-knowledge is then gradually achieved and any progress made is perceived. Then later on - beginning with Saturday - one exercise lasting for about five minutes may perhaps be added daily to the eighth so that the relevant exercise will occasionally fall on the same day. Thus: Saturday - Thoughts; Sunday - Resolves; Monday - Talking; Tuesday - Actions; Wednesday - Behaviour, and so on.

### 1) Right Opinion: Saturday

To pay attention to one's ideas, to think only significant thoughts, to learn little by little to separate in one's thoughts the essential from the nonessential, the eternal from the transitory, truth from mere opinion. In listening to the talk of one's fellow-men, to try and become quite still inwardly, foregoing all assent and still more, all unfavourable judgments (criticism, rejection), even in one's thoughts and feelings.

## 2) Right Judgment: Sunday

To determine on even the most insignificant matter only after fully reasoned deliberation. All unthinking behaviour, all meaningless actions, should be kept far away from the soul. One should always have well-weighed reasons for everything. And one should definitely abstain from doing anything for which there is no significant reason. Once one is convinced of the rightness of a decision, one must hold fast to it, with inner steadfastness. *This may be called right judgement*, having been formed independently of sympathies and antipathies.

## 3) Right Word: Monday

In respect of talking, only what has sense and meaning should come from the lips of one striving for higher development. All talking for the sake of talking -to kill time - is in this sense harmful. The usual kind of conversation, a disjointed medley of remarks, should be avoided. This does not mean shutting oneself off from intercourse with one's fellows; it is precisely then that talk should gradually be led to significance. One adopts a thoughtful attitude to every speech and answer taking all aspects into account. Never talk without cause - be gladly silent. One tries not to talk too much or too little. First listen quietly; then reflect on what has been said.



#### **4) Right Deed: Tuesday**

In relation to external actions, these should not be disturbing for our fellow-men. Where an occasion calls for action out of one's inner being, deliberate carefully how one can best meet the occasion - for the good of the whole, the lasting happiness of man, the eternal. Where one does things of one's own accord, out of one's own initiative: consider most thoroughly beforehand the effect of one's actions.

#### **5) Right Standpoint: Wednesday**

In respect of the ordering of life: to live in accordance with Nature and Spirit. Not to be swamped by the external trivialities of life. To avoid all that brings unrest and haste into life. One should hurry over nothing, but also not to be indolent. Individuals on the path of self-development should look on life as a means for working towards higher development and to behave accordingly.

#### **6) Right Habits - Human Endeavour: Thursday**

One should take care to do nothing that lies beyond one's powers - but also to leave nothing undone which lies within them. To look beyond the everyday, the momentary, and to set oneself aims and ideals connected with the highest duties of a human being. For instance, in the sense of the prescribed exercises, to try to develop oneself so

that afterwards one may be able all the more to help and advise one's fellow-men - though perhaps not in the immediate future.

### **7) Right Memory: Friday**

One endeavours to learn as much as possible from life. Nothing goes by us without giving us a chance to gain experiences that are useful for life. If one has done something wrongly or imperfectly, that becomes a motive for doing it rightly or more perfectly, later on. If one sees others doing something, one observes them with the like end in view (yet not coldly or heartlessly). And one does nothing without looking back to past experiences which can be of assistance in one's decisions and achievements. One can learn from everyone - even from children if one is attentive.

### **8) Right Examination: Each Day**

To turn one's attention inwards from time to time, even if only for five minutes daily at the same time. In so doing one should sink down into oneself, carefully take counsel with oneself, test and form one's principles of life, run through in thought one's knowledge - or lack of it - weigh up one's duties, think over the contents and true purpose of life, feel genuinely pained by one's own errors and imperfections. In a word: labour to discover the essential, the enduring, and earnestly aim at goals in accord with it: for instance, virtues to be acquired. One should not to fall



into the mistake of thinking that one has done something well, but to strive ever further towards the highest standards.

## The Six Virtues

Extract from “Guidance in Esoteric Training” by Rudolf Steiner





### 1) Clear Thinking or Concentration

The first condition is the cultivation of absolutely clear thinking. For this purpose a man must rid himself of the will-o'-the-wisps of thought, even if only for a very short time during the day – about five minutes (the longer, the better). He must become the ruler in his world of thought. He is not the ruler if external circumstances, occupation, some tradition or other, social relationships, even membership of a particular race, the daily round of life, certain activities and so forth, determine a thought and how he works it out. Therefore during this brief time, acting entirely out of his own free will, he must empty the soul of the ordinary, everyday course of thoughts and by his own initiative place one single thought at the centre of his soul. The thought need not be a particularly striking or interesting one. Indeed it will be all the better for what has to be attained in an occult respect if a thoroughly uninteresting and insignificant thought is chosen. Thinking is then impelled to act out of its own energy the essential thing here, whereas an interesting thought carries the thinking along with it. It is better if this exercise in thought control is undertaken with a pin rather than with Napoleon. The pupil says to himself: Now I start from this thought, and through my own inner initiative I associate with it everything that is pertinent to it. At the end of the period the thought should be just as colourful and living as it was at the beginning. This exercise is repeated day by day for at least a month; a new thought may be taken every day, or the same thought may be adhered to for several days. At the end of the exercise an endeavour is made to become fully conscious of that inner feeling of firmness and security which will soon be noticed by paying subtler attention to one's own soul; the exercise is then

brought to a conclusion by focusing the thinking upon the head and the middle of the spine (brain and spinal cord), as if the feeling of security were being poured into this part of the body.

## 2) Strengthening the Will

When this exercise has been practised for, say, one month, a second requirement should be added. We try to think of some action which in the ordinary course of life we should certainly not have performed. Then we make it a duty to perform this action every day. It will therefore be good to choose an action which can be performed every day and will occupy as long a period of time as possible. Again it is better to begin with some insignificant action which we have to force ourselves to perform; for example, to water at a fixed time every day a flower we have bought. After a certain time a second, similar act should be added to the first; later, a third, and so on, as many as are compatible with the carrying out of all other duties. This exercise, also, should last for one month. But as far as possible during this second month, too, the first exercise should continue, although it is a less paramount duty than in the first month. Nevertheless it must not be left unheeded, for otherwise it will quickly be noticed that the fruits of the first month are lost and the slovenliness of uncontrolled thinking begins again.

Care must be taken that once these fruits have been won, they are never again lost. If, through the second exercise, this initiative of action has been achieved, then, with subtle attentiveness, we become conscious of the feeling of an



inner impulse of activity in the soul; we pour this feeling into the body, letting it stream down from the head to a point just above the heart.

### 3) Equanimity

In the third month, life should be centred on a new exercise - the development of certain equanimity towards the fluctuations of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain; 'heights of jubilation' and 'depths of despair' should quite consciously be replaced by an equable mood. Care is taken that no pleasure shall carry us away, no sorrow plunge us into the depths, no experience lead to immoderate anger or vexation no expectation give rise to anxiety or fear, no situation disconcert us, and so on. There need be no fear that such an exercise will make life arid and unproductive; far rather will it quickly be noticed that the experiences to which this exercise is applied are replaced by purer qualities of soul. Above all, if subtle attentiveness is maintained, an inner tranquillity in the body will one day become noticeable; as in the two cases above, we pour this feeling into the body, letting it stream from the heart, towards the hands, the feet and, finally, the head.

This naturally cannot be done after each exercise, for here it is not a matter of one single exercise but of sustained attentiveness to the inner life of the soul. Once every day, at least, this inner tranquillity should be called up before

the soul and then the exercise of pouring it out from the heart should proceed. A connection with the exercises of the first and second months is maintained, as in the second month with the exercise of the first month.

#### 4) Positivity

In the fourth month, as a new exercise, what is sometimes called a 'positive attitude' to life should be cultivated. It consists in seeking always for the good, the praiseworthy the beautiful and the like, in all beings, all experiences, all things. This quality of soul is best characterized by a Persian legend concerning Christ Jesus. One day, as He was walking with His disciples, they saw a dead dog lying by the roadside in a state of advanced decomposition. All the disciples turned away from the disgusting sight; Christ Jesus alone did not move but looked thoughtfully at the corpse and said: 'What beautiful teeth the animal has!' Where the others had seen only the repulsive, the unpleasant, He looked for the beautiful. So must the esoteric pupil strive to seek for the positive in every phenomenon and in every being. He will soon notice that under the veil of something repugnant there is a hidden beauty, that even under the outer guise of a criminal there is a hidden good that under the mask of a lunatic the divine soul is somehow concealed. In a certain respect this exercise is connected with what is called 'abstention from criticism'. This is not to be understood in the sense of calling black white and white black. There is, however, a difference between a judgment which, proceeding merely from one's own personality, is coloured with the element of personal sympathy or antipathy, and an attitude which enters lovingly into the alien phenomenon or



being, always asking: How has it come to be like this or to act like this? Such an attitude will by its very nature be more set upon helping what is imperfect than upon simply finding fault and criticizing.

The objection that the very circumstances of their lives oblige many people to find fault and condemn is not valid here. For in such cases the circumstances are such that the person in question cannot go through a genuine occult training. There are indeed many circumstances in life which make occult schooling impossible, beyond a certain point. In such a case the person should not impatiently desire, in spite of everything, to make progress which is possible only under some conditions. He who consciously turns his mind, for one month, to the positive aspect of all his experiences will gradually notice a feeling creeping into him as if his skin were becoming porous on all sides, and as if his soul were opening wide to all kinds of secret and delicate processes in his environment which hitherto entirely escaped his notice. The important point is to combat a very prevalent lack of attentiveness to these subtle things. If it has once been noticed that the feeling described expresses itself in the soul as a kind of bliss, endeavours should be made in thought to guide this feeling to the heart and from there to let it stream into the eyes, and thence out into the space in front of and around oneself. It will be noticed that an intimate relationship to this surrounding space is thereby acquired. A man grows out of and beyond himself, as it were. He learns to regard a part of his environment as something that belongs to him. A great deal of concentration is necessary for this exercise, and, above all, recognition of the fact that all tumultuous feelings, all passions, all over-exuberant

emotions have an absolutely destructive effect upon the mood indicated. The exercises of the first months are repeated, as with the earlier months.

### 5) Openmindedness

In the fifth month, efforts should be made to develop the feeling of confronting every new experience with complete open-mindedness. The esoteric pupil must break entirely with the attitude which, in the face of something just heard or seen, exclaims: 'I never heard that, or I never saw that, before; I don't believe it - it's an illusion.' At every moment he must be ready to encounter and accept absolutely new experiences. What he has hitherto recognized as being in accordance with natural law, or what he has regarded as possible, should present no obstacle to the acceptance of a new truth. Although radically expressed, it is absolutely correct that if anyone were to come to the esoteric pupil and say, 'Since last night the steeple of such and such a church has been tilted right over', the esotericist should leave a loophole open for the contingency of his becoming convinced that his previous knowledge of natural law could somehow be augmented by such an apparently unprecedented fact. If he turns his attention, in the fifth month, to developing this attitude of mind, he will notice creeping into his soul a feeling as if something were becoming alive, astir, in the space referred to in connection with the exercise for the fourth month. This feeling is exceedingly delicate and subtle. Efforts must be made to be attentive to this delicate vibration in the environment and to let it stream, as it were, through all the five senses, especially through the eyes,



the ears and through the skin, in so far as the latter contains the sense of warmth. At this stage of esoteric development, less attention is paid to the impressions made by these stimuli on the other senses of taste, smell and touch. At this stage it is still not possible to distinguish the numerous bad influences which intermingle with the good influences in this sphere; the pupil therefore leaves this for a later stage.

#### **6) Harmonising the Virtues**

In the sixth month, endeavours should be made to repeat all the five exercises again, systematically and in regular alternation. In this way a beautiful equilibrium of soul will gradually develop. It will be noticed, especially, that previous dissatisfactions with certain phenomena and beings in the world completely disappear. A mood reconciling all experiences takes possession of the soul, a mood that is by no means one of indifference but, on the contrary, enables one for the first time to work in the world for its genuine progress and improvement. One comes to a tranquil understanding of things which were formerly quite closed to the soul. The very movements and gestures of a person change under the influence of such exercises, and if, one day, he can actually observe that the character of his handwriting has altered, then he may say to himself that he is just about to reach a first rung on the upward path.

Once again, two things must be stressed: First, the six exercises described paralyse the harmful influence other occult exercises can have, so that only what is beneficial remains. Secondly, these exercises alone ensure that efforts in meditation and concentration will have a positive result. The esotericist must not rest content with fulfilling, however conscientiously, the demands of conventional morality, for that kind of morality can be extremely egotistical, if a man says: I will be good in order that I may be thought good. The esotericist does not do what is good because he wants to be thought good, but because little by little he recognizes that the good alone brings evolution forward, and that evil, stupidity and ugliness place hindrances along its path.