

THE PORTICO

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Christ was tempted in the wilderness, and if thou wilt put on Him, thou must go through His whole progress or journey, even from His incarnation to His ascension. And though thou art not able, nor required to do that which He hath done; yet thou must enter wholly into His process, and therein die continually from the corruption of the soul. For the virgin Sophia espouseth not herself to the soul, except in this property which springeth up in the soul through the death of Christ, as a new plant standeth in heaven.

The Way To Christ, Jacob Boehme.

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“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it...”



First Steps in Occult Training

Paul Foster Case

PRACTICAL occultism is a method of self-training, a system of education, in the strict sense of that word, which means “drawing forth.” The powers to be brought into manifestation are already present in the inner life of the aspirant. His aim is to discover these hidden potencies, and to learn how best to employ them.

Thus it is that the great texts of Ageless Wisdom insist always that the fundamental lesson we all must learn is that there is no limit to the possibilities of the Spirit in man. The *Chaldean Oracles* tell us: “Explore the River of the Soul, whence, or in what order you have come, so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason.”

The *Chhandogyopanishad* declares: “That Self which is beyond sin, decay, death, sorrow; which requires no food nor drink; which is all accomplished desire, all fulfilled thought; should be looked for, should be inquired after. He gains access to all worlds, has all his desires fulfilled, who, having known this Self, realizes It full in himself and all.” And Lao-tze asks: “How else should I come to know the laws which govern all things, save thus, that I observe them in myself?”

By keeping in mind this fundamental principle that occult training is a technique for drawing forth powers which are already present in us, we may always distinguish true esotericism from its many counterfeits. Is something offered which demands blind obedience to authority? Does some organization pretend that it can communicate power to you, provided you take the required vows, and pay the inevitable fee (inevitable, even though it be disguised as a “love offering”)? You will gain much by rejecting such advances. **No teacher and no organization, can give you any power which is not already present in yourself.**

Teachers there must be, and for some kinds of esoteric training, organization seems to be indispensable. But the better a teacher knows his work, the better does he understand that his business is to evoke rather than to communicate. Many of us know that there are wheels within wheels of esoteric organization, but we know, too, that the real value of group work is to be found in the opportunity it offers for concerted expression of the power which centers itself in each member of the group-body.

In every city we find a certain number of those unfortunates whom a friend of mine calls “teacher addicts.” Make the circuit of Sunday lectures, and you will find many of the same faces at all the meetings. Seekers all, looking vainly for more light where it will never be found. Let some well-advertised speaker come to town, and they will all flock to hear him. Then they will sit at the feet of the next “world’s greatest,” and so on, *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. But somehow they never find what they are always hoping for. How can they, when they not only look in the wrong place, but also utterly misunderstand the fundamental point in occult training?

B.O.T.A. Headquarters Now Offers The Lessons In Spanish

To request the lessons in Spanish, or to request application information in Spanish, please contact the Office.

The most any teacher can do is to introduce you to your self, and show you a way to improve the wonderful opportunities offered by such acquaintance. If he is worth his salt, he won’t let you be a mere listener. For he will know that listening to lectures and reading books is not education. The only thing that will evoke our inner powers is *action*, and in the whole literature of Ageless Wisdom there is no truer dictum than Levi’s pithy statement: “We must act in order to be.”

Action, however, begins in the mind, and the first step toward the evocation of our hidden powers is the practice of concentration. You are only human if your impulse at this point is to skip the rest of this article, because it is unlikely that any reader of MORE LIGHT can have avoided some part of the voluminous

outpourings on this topic which have come from the presses during the last four or five decades.

But if you can resist that natural inclination long enough to read a little farther, perhaps you may find something in the rest of this article to justify your self-restraint. It may revive your interest if I say, first of all, that there is nothing particularly difficult about concentration, in spite of much that has been said and written to the contrary.

Certainly it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to think of one thing, to the exclusion of all others for any appreciable length of time. There may be people who can do it, just as there are people who can stand on their heads and juggle six knives. But that sort of thing is not what occultists mean by concentration.

What they have in mind is not quite so spectacular, but ever so much more useful. It is simply the knack of keeping one's attention upon one central idea, while at the same time letting the mind revolve, so to say, around this chosen center. This takes more or less practice, to be sure, but so does anything else worth doing. Practice is required, not because concentration is so difficult, but because for most of us it is so unaccustomed.

The main point to be observed is that one should select something upon which to concentrate. *It must be an act of intention*, and not a mere surrender to whatever happens for the moment to be most interesting. Take any familiar object, say a pencil. Do not examine it closely at first. Simply look at it, and then determine to bring to the surface of your consciousness all that you know about pencils. At the same time, keep the stream of ideas revolving around that particular pencil. You can do this easily enough by noticing whether the bits of knowledge about pencils which begin to rise from the depths of your inner consciousness are related to your pencil by similarity or whether they apply to some other kind of pencil.

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Thank you, The Office Staff

After a little while, you will have come, for the time, to the end of what you know about pencils. Then the next step is to devote a little time to the consideration of what you do not know, always with relation to this particular writing implement. You will find that there is a magical merit in this exercise. Few people seem to understand how useful it is for us to measure our ignorance. I shan't stop now to tell you just what the magic is, for I want you to have the fun of finding that out for yourself.

The third step is to pick up the pencil, and examine it as carefully as you can. This time you will be sure to see a number of details that escaped your notice at first. Some of these details will link themselves up with your stock of knowledge about pencils. Some of them will have to be grouped with your stock of ignorance on the same subject.

At this point, stop the exercise, and go about your usual affairs. But repeat the exercise many times each day, using a different object each time. Remember always to use an actual object during these first exercises. By so doing you will accustom yourself to the fundamentals of concentration, and you will have many a surprising mental adventure, so that you will find no difficulty whatever in maintaining your interest.

After about a week of this preliminary training, you may attempt purely mental concentration. Begin by making up your mind what you want, more than anything. If you already know, you are a very unusual person. Most people haven't any real object in life, and even when they suppose they have some definite aim, it often turns out, if they are given an opportunity like this for honest self-examination, that they are not so very clear as to what they really want, after all.

So take time enough to weigh the pros and cons. Take everything into consideration. You may have to use pencil and paper to write down several alluring prospects, and choose among them.

When you have made up your mind, treat the chosen objective just as you did the pencil. Let it bring up (and it will) all the knowledge you have stored away in your subconsciousness concerning it. Then let it make you aware of your ignorance.

Watch closely. It does not matter how many ideas come into your mind during the first part of this practice, so long as they are points of knowledge bearing on your chosen objective. Nor does it matter how many things come into your head during the second part of the work, so long as they are things that you do not know about that object. The point you have to watch is that your mind does not wander off to something unrelated to the central idea. So long as you keep your thoughts revolving around that, you are concentrating.

The third stage of this work consists in clarifying the details of your mental picture of your object. I find that I have assumed that you understand that a mental picture is necessary, and probably you do. But in case I am assuming too much, perhaps I should say that it is by no means enough to select some abstract term like "Health," or "Wisdom," or "Success," as your central point in mental concentration. You must have some sort of definite image to look at. You must see yourself as playing the part of a healthy human being. You must see yourself as behaving wisely. You must have definite, concrete images of the exact conditions that will embody success.

Every day of your life should include a period set apart, and kept religiously, for this higher practice in concentration. Every practice period should end with a deliberate effort to make some detail of your mental picture sharper and brighter in definition. You will find that this is always possible, and you will also find that your interest in the image makes concentration easy.

One other detail, in the space that remains. Be sure to think of your mental image as a present reality. Do not make the mistake of putting it into the future. This is a mistake because a mental image is just as real as a house or a tree. It is actually present while you are looking at it. Don't waste any time thinking about when it is going to become an externalized, actual condition of your life. Nothing on earth or in heaven can keep it from being externalized but your own mental activity. If you fear that it won't come to pass, it won't. If you forget it, or build some contrary image, then it will be dissipated before it materializes. But if you practice this exercise faithfully, you will discover for yourself that visualization is the secret of effective concentration, and such concentration is a truly magic power which can transform your existence into perfect external correspondence with your mental imagery.

Inspirational Thoughts on the Tarot

by Ann Davies

New Edition! A selection of Ann Davies' poetry has been added to the original material from Dr. Ann Davies' Tarot classes. These essays are designed to direct the aspirant to ever deeper insight into the real mystery of the Major Tarot Keys. With each new reading, the main seed-thoughts help the student to assimilate, in a self-conscious manner, the attributions of the Tarot Keys. Includes black & white illustrations of the Major Tarot Keys. Hardcover. \$15.00

Simplicity By Harriet B. Case

(Adytum News Notes, Vol.6 No.1, 1965)



Truth is simple. Therefore let us seek simple ways of service; simple forms of speech. In this age

of high tensions and pressures and the seemingly constant need for speed and excitement, many appear to have forgotten the joys of simple pleasures and simple living. We are inclined to let our lives get so complicated that there seems no time in which to have a few moments of quiet contemplation or relaxation. Yet just because of this stepped-up tempo of living, we need more than ever to provide time for these few moments of quiet.



There is a way by which we can achieve all the many things that have to be done during a busy day, and yet have a little time to ourselves towards the end of the day. It is this — and I have found that it works:

“Nothing is more simple than greatness: indeed, to be simple is to be great.”

—Emerson, *Literary Ethics*

Each morning before you start the day’s activities, particularly if it is to be a very busy day, recollect that you are an instrument for the ONE LIFE-POWER, truly a center of expression for the Primal Will to Good, the One Life, Mind and Love that works *through* you, that does the work and carries the responsibility. Then say:

“I am the instrument for carrying out your Will; please see to it that all that needs to be done this day will be done smoothly, harmoniously and perfectly, without the slightest tension or feeling of pressure, for Thou art all wise, all powerful, and, as I remember to remember throughout this day that **Thou** art the ever-present worker in and through me, the personality, all will be accomplished with plenty of time to spare.”

If you try holding these thoughts, this attitude in mind, I believe that it will work for you, too. We are so inclined to forget and think that it is the little personal self that accomplishes everything! True, we have to be good tools or instruments for God to use, but let Him direct and do the work.

“Simplicity of character is the natural result of profound thought.”

—Hazlitt

Simple goodness, expressed in all our activities and thoughts, sows seeds of love and brotherhood. We can serve humanity in no better way than this, to be an instrument for the forces of Light; to surrender to God, to obey the Divine Will. There is no limit to the rays of light that can pour through each one of us and

extend over the whole world. Aspire to be a “lantern” such as our beloved Hermit (Tarot Key 9) holds in his right hand. A “lantern” whose panels are of clear glass which let the pure rays of Divine Spirit shine forth unimpeded. Let us all try to be such bright lanterns, not the kind with metal sides which have but a few small holes punched in the panels and only let a few little peepholes of light shine out. Project love, simple kindness and good will. Actually, you need only to *feel* love and good will in your heart, and it will radiate to all. It is as simple as that.

When we really discipline ourselves and become aware of all the attributions assigned to each Tarot Key, Hebrew letter and Sephirah, we find that the training holds our consciousness in such a way that we can work within a disciplined set of associations instead of the unruly way our minds usually work. That is why it is really very important to put in that little bit of time it takes to familiarize ourselves with all the attributions we receive in the lesson work.

Ann Davies, Sunday Service, April 10, 1960

Would you like to be personally trained by Ann Davies?

Our beloved Soror Ann Davies had the foresight to have most of her Sunday Service messages recorded. Last year, four of those talks were made available to the

membership. The proceeds from that project continues to fund on-going tape preservation work.

Many Study Groups play Ann's Sunday Service tapes, but many members are without access to these groups. These tapes provide a wonderful opportunity to listen to the wisdom transmitted through her beautiful soul. Rarely is such Qabalistic insight and instruction made available.

Sunday Service Talks by Ann Davies - Four Lectures Set II

Set II, four selected Sunday Service Talks by Ann Davies is now available from Headquarters for \$16.00. There are also some copies of Set I still available, for those who missed the first offering.

SPECIAL EVENTS / RETREATS / CONCLAVES

SPECIAL QABALISTIC WEEKEND IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

May 16th and 17th. Activities will include Pronaos Initiation, the Pronaos healing ritual, Vibratory Attunement, a fireside chat with Reverend Aheda, Sunday Service and time to talk and socialize. Contact Rosalind Pierson, (614) 444-8716, pierson.2@osu.edu or Kittie Palm, (614) 268-5024, kapclam@aol.com for information.

SPECIAL QABALISTIC WEEKEND IN DENVER, COLORADO

May 22nd through May 24th. A Vibratory Attunement, the Pronaos ritual and a Tree of Life workshop are scheduled. Contact Karen Straight (303) 755-1614, kem@dnvr.uswest.net for information.

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL SPRING B.O.T.A. CONCLAVE AT
PHOENICIA PATHWORK CENTER, NEW YORK**

Friday, May 29th through Sunday, May 31st
Call Mark Robinson, (508) 897-7480 for information and reservations.

**WEST COAST ANNUAL RETREAT AT ASILOMAR, MONTEREY,
CALIFORNIA**

"The Cosmic Dance," Key 21. Friday, August 7th through Sunday, August 9th.
Contact Nancy Goble, (408) 993-0536, GNancy@aol.com or Marjhe Tannler, (760) 724-0512, Marjhe@aol.com for information.

SUMMER MIDWEST RETREAT IN MICHIGAN

Third weekend in August. Sponsored by the Michigan group. This retreat is in the planning stage. Contact Marge Taylor-Wehr (313) 271-0246 or Kittie Palm (614) 268-5024, kapclam@aol.com, for information.

The Baal Shem Tov said: "If you read the Torah, and you see the radiance of the letters, read them with love and fervor even if you

don't understand their meaning... God doesn't mind if you don't pronounce them correctly.

It is the same as a toddler asking his father for something. He may mumble and stammer, but his father takes delight in it anyway. And so it is with people. If you say the words of the Torah with love, then God loves you, even if you mispronounce them.”