

15 ACTIVITY

15.1 General and Introductory

¹The most important activity is to direct attention to what is happening in outer reality and what is happening in inner reality, for that is the only way in which one can begin to do in a real sense. What people call “doing” is mechanical and automatic results of as mechanical and automatic bodily movement, sensory, emotional, and intellectual functions. The quality of attention is the most important factor, for the quality of all the rest depends on it.

²Unthinking people see activity as physical, visible, palpable only. But activity is also mental: reflection, solving of problems, planning, preparation, etc. Without a right, well-executed mental planning, physical work cannot be of the highest quality. In all esoteric work, the aspect of preparation is stressed. A particularly important effort is preceded, when possible, by a particularly long preparation, during which all participants direct their attention to all sides of the work to be done, which is considered begun, not when taking shape in the physical world, but at the moment when the idea was consciously formed for a definite, intended result. To a certain extent it is true that the longer the time of preparation, the greater the force of the result, just as a falling object hits the ground with a force that is greater the greater the height of the fall.

³Activity is not the same as tension of muscles or nerves. You can be intensely active physically as well as mentally and very calm and relaxed in your organism at the same time. Skill also includes the ability of economizing: not using more energy than required by the task at hand, just as you do not stretch other muscles than those needed by the work you are doing.

⁴Activity also is not-doing, intentional renunciation. Gautama Buddha was asked once how his teaching could be summed up in the most concise way. He answered: “Not to do evil, to do only good, to purify one’s mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”

⁵The true nirvana is hopelessly misunderstood. The prerequisite of universal expansion and emancipation from all involvation is to serve life, to enter a globe, a seven-globe, and ever greater global formations in cooperation with other selves. To seek knowledge and power for other purposes than to serve life results in renewed involvements in the ever coarser matter of ever lower worlds. When life is at its best it is work in inconceivable bliss in the service of the process of manifestation, without any thought of one’s self. Helping the primordial atoms, unconscious in the primordial manifestation, to acquire consciousness, self-consciousness, collective consciousness, omniscience, and omnipotence in the quickest possible way is the only path to the longed-for final goal: eternal rest. To continue to live after that is to offer the true “sacrifice”.

⁶Anyone who in a life of service shows that all the illusions of life (power, wealth, honour, etc.), which hamper and separate, have been annihilated for evermore, speeds quickly towards his anticipated goal.

⁷Perfected third selves, serving mankind and thus keeping their two lower triads, can be active in several different worlds at the same time, though not of course with full capacity. (This explains the doctrine of “the three bodies of the Buddha” taught in esoteric Buddhism.) It is part of esoteric training to try to do two things at the same time. The different kinds of consciousness can, when the coalescence is dissolved, work separately, mechanically and in a routine manner as “robots” sporadically inspected by the self.

⁸The first and seventh departmental types are particularly people of action for whom the path of service is the most expedient one.

15.2 Karma Yoga

¹Karma yoga can best be described as “the yoga of action”; knowledge, understanding, and insight put into a life of service. What of old has been called “karma yoga” ought properly to be called “dharma yoga”, the way of the fulfilment of duty. It ought to be made known that to serve self-forgetfully is the way to acquire all necessary knowledge.

²According to the planetary hierarchy, the serving attitude to life is the easiest, safest, quickest path to the fifth natural kingdom. All kingdoms capable of it have as their foremost task of life serving those at lower stages of development, so that they will be able to reach higher stages. Without such help there would be no evolution, or evolution would take tremendously longer time. “He who gives shall receive.” Those who serve mankind unselfishly are given more and more opportunities of doing so. Service itself develops all requisite qualities and abilities, liberates from emotional illusions and mental fictions.

³The karma yogi does not amass money, as the greedy do, just in order to will it away to more or less “charitable causes” when he can no longer enjoy his fortune. He does not despise wealth and power, however. On the contrary, he recognizes their importance as long as mankind is dominated by such illusions. He will use those power factors in order to serve evolution in the most efficient way.

⁴Karma yoga, then, is the yoga of action, action as expression of the will. Action includes everything that the individual sets about, every visible expression of thought and feeling. Thought and feeling that are not put into action become obstacles on the path. The example is the most powerful teaching.

⁵To the gnana yogi, knowledge is good and ignorance evil. To the bhakti yogi, love is good and hatred evil. To the karma yogi, freedom is good and bondage is evil. This is the basic attitude taken by the third, second, and first ray types, respectively.

⁶Everything makes up a unity. The seemingly isolated parts are all manifestations of the one, indivisible unity. Those who live in appearance see only the parts and think that they are independent selves, whereas those who live in reality know that they are parts of unity, are one with everything. The yogi strives after unity and thereby raises himself above good and evil and life’s perpetual changes.

⁷That power which we all take to be our will manifests itself to the yogi so strongly in the whole of his nature, when he follows the Law as far as he can see, that he understands that this is not his own power but something that has been put at his disposal and which will become his property when he enters unity. Thereby he becomes a tool for the deity and his will coincides with the will of destiny. Anyone who sees the divine in everything must recognize, love, and worship the presence of this divine will in himself and, in so doing, gives up all his own motives in favour of the will of unity in himself.

⁸This means that the yogi offers himself up as a sacrifice to the deity. In so doing, he does away with all thoughts of reward, all fear or apprehensions as to the results of action as well as every egoistic interest, even the satisfaction of having acted disinterestedly. He also refrains from every attempt at valuing his action, whether it was good or evil. Everything is sacrificed, yet the sacrifice is no self-effacement, not negative, but positive. It has nothing in common with the fatalist’s resignation, which easily will degenerate into quietism, not acting at all. The sacrifice embraces everything, every action, nay, every breath; everything becomes an offering to unity divine. He acts to make an outlet for the powers of the deity that flow through him. The result itself is an offering which is made perfect in the work being perfectly done. The proof that the yogi has sacrificed everything is his indifference (“divine indifference”) to whatever happens to him. He never asks what the result will be, whether happiness or misfortune, honour or disgrace, life or death.

⁹In the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which can be called the gospel of karma yoga, the necessity of action is given the strongest possible symbolic expression in the description of inner life as a

struggle between two armies drawn up and prepared for battle. The poem was a reaction against the tendency to slackness, idleness, quietism, a protest against indolence and passivity. This apathy has also been fostered by the superstition that one can “go in the way of karma” (rather like going in the way of the law of gravity).

¹⁰The yoga of action has always been regarded by the planetary hierarchy as the essential one, because insight that is not put into action becomes an obstacle in the future, according to the law of karma.

¹¹All activity is spiritual activity if it is done in the right spirit: to serve mankind and life. The least work that is needed for the functioning of life is necessary and, therefore, divine. The fact that services are different and in the eyes of men of different value is of no consequence here. Sweeping floors is as necessary as ruling the kingdom. The king who does not see this may be forced to learn how to sweep floors.

15.3 Dharma

¹The rishis taught the purposefulness of existence, taught that the purpose of life is the evolution of everything and that the goal of life is cosmic perfection. Of what they taught, dharma is perhaps what has best preserved its original rational content or reality content.

²Although the law of destiny and dharma are not quite synonymous terms, it is easier to understand the matter if you regard karma as the law of reaping and dharma as the law of destiny. It is wrong to consider both as the same law, especially also in the fatalistic sense.

³Dharma is the inmost nature of every individual, that which constitutes his true being. Dharma is what is given in the interdependent arrangements of things. It is the dharma of fire to burn. It is the dharma of the tree to take root, to grow, to put out leaves, flowers, and fruit. It is the dharma of animals to live in accordance with their individual characters and their inherent instinct's striving to fulfil their mission. Dharma is the meaning of life for every individual.

⁴Man's dharma is different at different stages of development, in different circumstances of life. Everybody has his special dharma, his problems of life to solve, his duties to perform. Man lives in a state of insecurity and uncertainty when he is not acting to the best of his ability, in accordance with his dharma. The dharma of mankind is humanity.

⁵We are partly free, partly not free. We become free to the extent that we have acquired knowledge of the Law and the ability to apply that knowledge. The lower down the scale of development we are, the less free we are. We become free from the lower by being absorbed in the higher. We shall only become entirely free when we have attained the highest divinity. And this we shall do by discovering and applying the Law, more and more in ever higher worlds.

⁶We think we are free when we are acting in accordance with our individual characters. But as long as we lack knowledge of the Law and the ability to apply it correctly, we shall make nothing but mistakes, which will lead us into the bondage of compulsion and obsession, and this will go on until we have seen our mistakes through experiencing them. We are not free when we rebel against our destiny, our dharma, the meaning or our incarnation, when we act against unity, when we are controlled by the fictions and illusions of our ignorance of life and the pertaining conceptions of right and wrong, as long as our individual character has not absorbed in itself that Law which we have come to know, and is applying it from then on.

⁷We do not achieve freedom through quietism, through omitting to act. No development will be brought about through inactivity, idleness, through begging the deity to do what it is our dharma to do. We free ourselves by acting, by taking a positive attitude to everything we meet with, by letting the divine powers act in us and through us, which they unflinchingly will do as soon as we remove the obstacles to their reception.

⁸Life puts everyone of us in the place that is best for us, which by no means always is the one we think best. If we do not understand this, but regard self-assumed duties, or those that

life lays on us, as a burden which we assume reluctantly and with a feeling of constraint, then we do not understand life and we lack the right positive attitude. If we have difficulty in accepting that we are overqualified for the work that life has allotted to us, that our capacity is not duly appreciated, that we are to go through life as seemingly insignificant nonentities, this only shows that we need to be freed from many qualities which, although perhaps desirable on lower levels, are most unsuitable on higher ones. Many necessary qualities we acquire in subordinate, insignificant positions and under trying conditions. We shall make an entirely different, a more useful contribution, if we have learned to allow the competence we have acquired to be a willing tool where destiny has placed us, if we have learned to accept being seeming nonentities, just tools. Honour and distinctions, like power and wealth, have unexpected possibilities of affecting the vibrations in our lower emotional molecular kinds, the regions of illusions and false values. By being willing tools of higher powers we acquire the prerequisites of becoming tools of still higher ones.

15.4 The Knowledge must be Put into Action

¹The ability to assimilate the knowledge is a special capacity; another as important faculty is to utilize the knowledge, to apply it in a purposive, expedient, and efficient manner. Many are content with their theoretical learning. It affords them clarity and thereby all they think they need. That is the mistake of most people.

²To develop does not only mean to acquire ever higher kinds of consciousness with the material energies that go with them, but also to utilize that consciousness and energy expediently. To live means to handle forces. Ideas are forces; and if they are not used by the self, they are used by the envelopes according to their inherent tendencies, and that is seldom to the advantage of the monad.

³Energy requires some outlet, and if the energy will not be used right, mistakes are unavoidable. Life is an experiment that gives experience. We can spare ourselves much unnecessary experience by applying the knowledge of the laws of life that exists. Thereby we can save ourselves many incarnations. The unlimited number of incarnations was what the initiates meant by “punishment in eternal hell”, misinterpreted as all the other esoteric symbolism. But how would ignorance be able to interpret correctly?

⁴Often man’s desire to understand the meaning of life and to clarify how to lead a rational life causes him to take an interest in the esoteric knowledge. After he has succeeded in finding the answers to these questions he is fully content to cultivate the first self’s egoistic interests. But if he thought a wee bit further, cared about his future incarnations, he would be wise in taking life more seriously. For anyone who wills for development needs to be awakened, and that can mean a rather unpleasant re-education, and a life that makes him look about for something different. Anyone who thinks that physical life is something worth striving for obviously has not had his eyes opened to what life really is. Else he could have learnt that by looking around in the world and ask himself, when seeing how most people live, whether he would like to be in their place. For it is quite possible for him to experience what he would give everything to be spared. There is no other hell than physical life. But anyone who has experienced that side of life certainly agrees with that 45-self who called the physical world “a real cold hell”. Others say, “a hot hell”.

⁵The planetary hierarchy needs helpers in its work to help mankind. Without co-workers in the physical world the hierarchy can achieve very little. The distress of mankind in all respects is enormous. The greatest obstacles to evolution are the prevalent lying ideologies that mislead, brutalize, and satanize mankind, engender the repulsive tendency (hatred), strengthen egoism and mania for possessions that deprive others of the necessities of life. If people were living in harmony with the laws of life, then there would be no want. Nature, too (the three lower natural kingdoms) would then live to serve a mankind that lived to serve

instead of exploiting nature for its own self-glory.

⁶We can all help by making our contributions in politics, social work, economics, science, etc. We must see to it that nobody will be in want or will lack the prospects of acquiring knowledge of reality and life and insight into the conditions of leading a happy life. Life would be paradise if all lived to serve. That is the level we must reach: to help and not exploit one another.

⁷Anyone who will not or cannot understand this and will not strive to realize this knowledge is not even an aspirant to discipleship. And that is the least which the planetary hierarchy demands of the individual, if he is to expect special consideration in the application of the law of destiny.

⁸The planetary hierarchy looks for co-workers in the worlds of man. There is a crying want of “labourers in the vineyard”, individuals willing and able to help the planetary hierarchy in its work to give mankind knowledge of reality, of life and of the Law, to solve the many problems of expedient life in the physical world as a precondition of consciousness development, the realization of the meaning of life. That shortage is the one to be made up, and those who do not wish to help in that task lack all the prerequisites of life in higher kingdoms, where life is service.

⁹Aspirants to discipleship who wish to participate in the planetary hierarchy’s work for mankind are encouraged to work, for it is through the very work that they develop, acquire the requisite qualities and abilities and become ever more competent co-workers. They learn through the old proven method of trial and error. It is by making mistakes that we learn, and the less experienced we are, the more mistakes we shall make. By elimination and constant improvement we become more and more competent co-workers in the process of evolution. We learn humility, grow ever more fit for service and instinctively conscious of what other people need and how we are to best meet their needs. Where the will to unity remains unaffected we have done our best.

¹⁰The aspirant to discipleship does not wait for the teacher to appear and tell him, now you are good enough. The learning he has gained in the esoteric literature enables him to give people the true knowledge and to free them from their illusions and fictions. He takes his small share in the common work wherever he can and in so doing shows that he is fit for greater tasks.

¹¹Everything which the individual is given for nothing for his own self-realization is aimed at making him an ever more efficient co-worker in the great cosmic evolution. Life in higher worlds is no selfish sluggard’s life (with such a life there will be no evolution) but a self-forgetful impersonal life of a 24-hour-a-day effort for the welfare of all.

15.5 The Disciple as a Worker

¹In order to be able to do something in the human kingdom the planetary hierarchy must, according to the Law (several laws), use human beings. In order to implement a certain plan the hierarchy needs co-workers whom it can inspire for the execution of the plan where such co-workers are necessary.

²Before the individual has acquired subjective causal consciousness the planetary hierarchy cannot use him as a tool in its work, and only such people can expect to be accepted as disciples. It is a grave error to think that the planetary hierarchy is especially interested in anyone who is not fit to work for the hierarchy in the physical world. Only he can be a fit tool who has acquired the twelve essential qualities. The hierarchy has no use for unfit tools (and all who think they are fit are such ones).

³The individual’s own development in order to enter the fifth natural kingdom does not interest the planetary hierarchy. They do not care about what a man knows or is able to do but what contribution he makes for evolution, how he realizes brotherhood. Until he qualifies in

that respect he is to pursue the ordinary path of development under the supervision of his Augoeides, who for the individual represents the Law with everything which that implies. The individual must, according to the law of self-realization, find the methods of development himself, and in this the evolutionary energies are at his disposal. Development goes on automatically in the great evolutionary process during millions of years and according to the law of self-realization.

⁴Before the disciple can be of any great use to the teacher, his etheric envelope must be entirely re-organized, so that it will be able to receive the vibrations from the causal envelope. The prerequisites for this are integration of the envelopes of incarnation, mental dominance, and knowledge of the method of re-organization. Thereupon the disciple can begin to learn about the energies that pour in, their origins and expedient application.

⁵When science has discovered and recognized the existence of the physical etheric envelope, the esoteric knowledge of the relations between the centres of the etheric envelope, the nervous and glandular systems of the organism will be allowed for publication. That will bring about a total revolution in medical thinking.

⁶The disciple never works alone at the implementation of a hierarchic plan. Before this will be possible, he must have joined a permanent group of disciples with a common consciousness. Within this group, criticism is precluded and full harmony prevails.

⁷The planetary hierarchy works with causes. The disciples in the worlds of man are enmeshed in the effects of these causes hidden to them and cannot therefore judge them right. Not until the disciple has achieved a constant contact with his causal consciousness will he be able to liberate himself from the illusions and fictions and discover the causes of events. It is the very ability to see the causes that makes prevision possible, the “prevision of the future”.

⁸“Service” is activity in accordance with the laws of unity, development, and freedom. All three laws are engaged. Service is an expression of the unity of all beings. Service aims at the development of consciousness in all beings. Service does not imply the forcing of one’s opinion on others but appeals to their possibilities of apprehending facts and relations. This activity in accordance with the laws of life brings ideas with widened perspectives to the worker. In service you find the way to develop most quickly. Anyone who in his egoism keeps the knowledge to himself, stagnates or becomes the victim of fictions. There are untold kinds of service (political, social, scientific, cultural, etc., in addition of course always individual service when opportunities present themselves and the seeker or asker is not unworthy). The essential thing is that the activity intends to benefit the whole.

⁹The disciple exists not for himself, but for others. He errs if he thinks that the deeper insight he gains by serving is for his own development. It is intended to make him a more able worker in the service of the planetary hierarchy. The insight he experiences is in accordance with the temporary plan for the consciousness development of mankind and thus is limited to some certain field.

¹⁰The disciple need not seek after opportunities to serve. They present themselves and are often very obvious; they exist in his immediate surroundings. Anyone who wants to is able to discover the needs that exist everywhere. Everybody is to serve in the way in which he can best serve. Imitation is always abortive. In any case service is not done on the orders of any authority whatever. “Spiritual leaders” who issue orders and commands are in error.

¹¹The disciple who in a new incarnation is again accepted as a disciple receives information about the plans of the hierarchy concerning the immediate future. The plan is presented in such a manner that he gains insight into that part of the plan which the department he belongs to is estimated to be able to implement, as well as into the contribution which he himself thinks he will be able to take on him. Thus he is not charged with a task, but must assess his own possibilities himself. Never is he exhorted to any work whatever for the hierarchy. Wishes, prescriptions are unthinkable as from any authority whatever in higher kingdoms, for

that would conflict with the law of freedom. It is quite another thing that anyone who wants to gain something for his own part (attain a higher stage) must observe the prerequisites.

¹²It would be completely abortive to think that the disciple is to be robotized in order to become a suitable tool for the planetary hierarchy. A more apposite analogy is that of an ambassador sent out by his government on a most demanding and delicate mission.

¹³It is no easy work that the disciple takes on him. He receives no directions, no advice. The only assistance he can count on is that the requisite energies are placed at his disposal to the extent that he understands how to use them expediently. It will be his business to see what he is able to do with his qualifications, where he can make his contribution, how he will best adapt it to the prevalent conditions. He must not shirk responsibility. He must not force his view on others, just dispassionately account for his view on the matter. A fanatic is unsuitable as a disciple. He must consider other people's stages of development, possibilities of understanding. All this he will learn through daily experience in all kinds of relationships.

¹⁴Knowledge is necessary. But it is practically worthless if the consciousness there is in knowledge does not also manifest its energy aspect.

¹⁵Everybody has his particular difficulties, his own problems to solve in the one right way. They come up again and again until they have been solved correctly. They are the only ways in which his unique individual character can develop. The ignorance of life, complaining of difficulties, does not see their function and necessity.

¹⁶Our difficulties show us our ignorance and our impotence, but also the way we must go to find that knowledge and power which will solve our problems. It is not enough to understand, but we must use the energy there is in understanding.

¹⁷Many difficulties arise because we do not use the energy of our knowledge. All consciousness expressions are simultaneously energy expressions. And if the energies are not released into action, then they must get other outlets, and that will as a rule be detrimental to ourselves in some respect or other. That is one of the reasons why the esoteric knowledge must be kept secret from those who do not know how to put it into action.

¹⁸Those who are not attached to the planetary hierarchy as disciples and aspirants are supervised by the planetary organization, which sees to it that the Law has its course and that everybody will reap what he has sown. It is by his work for mankind and for the lower kingdoms that the individual develops his consciousness and receives help to become an ever more capable co-worker in the service of evolution.

15.6 Self-Activation

¹There are many strange conceptions people have formed of god's will. The Christians pray to god that he should do everything. It is true that the whole cosmos is the work of monads who have attained the seven highest cosmic worlds (1-7), and certainly the energies and consciousness needed by life pour down through all the worlds. But ignorance does not know that the cosmos exists in order to afford the monads opportunities to acquire consciousness and, as their final goal, omniscience. The monads receive everything they need from higher kingdoms. But it is their business to assimilate through their own work whatever life grants to them. The organism digests food but we must supply the organism with food. Ideas are given to us for nothing. But we must assimilate the ideas through our own work. We are given everything we need for our development. But this development is the result of self-initiated consciousness activity according to the laws of self-realization and self-activation.

²Since the meaning of life is the consciousness development of all monads, the central motive of all individuals in the worlds of higher kingdoms is to serve this purpose. For anyone who has understood this, all those conceptions fall away which people have formed of the "will of god" during millions of years and which religious emotional imagination has constructed in the longing need for religious activity. It would be an easy task to fill entire

libraries with all the literature that during millennia has been produced on these subjects.

³At the present stage of mankind's development, emotionality is the dynamic force that realizes what reason comprehends to be expedient. Emotion is the impelling force. Many people comprehend what ought to be done but let the matter rest there, since they do not "turn on" the impelling force of emotion. The intelligentsia is largely content with passively receiving the knowledge without applying it in life. The fault is with our present system of education, which neglects the culture of emotional activity. The mystics remain dreamers. They are content with being absorbed in devotion and expend their energy in imaginative excesses, not understanding that the energy of attraction must find expression in physical life. Self-realization shows in action. God does not need any prayers. He needs workers who execute his purposes in the physical world. Not to use the knowledge, not to apply it in the right manner, is to misuse it. To receive knowledge is to be offered opportunities to serve, and anyone who does not seize these opportunities has no prospects of getting any offers in the future. It is a "grace" to be able to serve.

⁴Not merely preaching the message of peace but also living the peace they preach.

⁵The worker in the vineyard allows others to enjoy the harvest and the honour of its quality. For him it is enough that the harvest is the best.

⁶You strive to become strong, able, wise, glad, happy, to develop, etc. in order that the world be such. You are carried or you carry, you press down or you lift up.

⁷You may serve life in many ways, mainly by fulfilling your duty.

⁸It is a mistake to neglect exoteric duties for esoteric ones, lower duties for self-assumed higher ones. On the other hand, the individual is wise in not assuming new duties that encroach on his work for self-realization.

⁹Just as you cannot be an expert in all spheres, cannot perform all kinds of work, so you cannot be "perfect" in all respects. The main thing is that the work you do contribute, be it professional work or "spare time work" for "the welfare of all", is done as best you can. Perfectionism of any kind is a waste of time.

¹⁰Adaptation to people or to circumstances increases our fitness for life and our capacity for service. This need not in the least imply that you compromise, only that you give up self-assertion.

¹¹In the matter of service, being the esoterician's path to the insights and abilities of higher worlds, the rule applies saying that you serve with your best abilities and not by doing such things as others could do equally well if not better. Too great emphasis has been laid on material help, which as a rule is no help at all. The only true help is the aid to self-help. Other kinds of help mostly equal bolstering up vice, rather promote the welfare receiver attitude, laziness, dissatisfaction, diffidence, and lack of enterprise. You do not help others by becoming a hindrance to yourself.

¹²We help others with their problems by analysing the matter with them until the problems solve themselves in the uncertain people.

¹³You may hear that, since service is a condition of consciousness development, it is in the egoistic interest of the individual to be able to serve. Those who so presume have no idea of what service means. Very often it is of such a nature that, if there is anything of egoism left in the individual, "he cannot stand it" but gives up.

¹⁴Of course there are "idealists" also at the stages of civilization and culture. However, they lack that foundation of the knowledge of reality which guarantees the constancy and irrefutability of the pertaining ideas. Life-ignorant "juvenile idealism", which soon volatilizes, is a sufficient illustration of that fact. Unshakable ideality belongs at the stage of ideality in the world of Platonic ideas. It is true of all ideas, however, that at lower stages the individual does not have the latent fund of life experience necessary to realize ideals belonging at a higher stage of development.

15.7 *Four Faculties for the Work of the Group*

¹Four faculties principally distinguish the kind of work to be performed by the group of disciples. These faculties should, therefore, characterize also the disciples to be selected for training: 1) sensitivity to higher impressions, 2) impersonality, 3) incipient causal consciousness, and 4) mental polarization. Idealistic aspiration, unselfishness, and will to serve are not mentioned in this connection. This is not because these faculties are supposed to be unimportant, but, on the contrary, that they are fundamental, so that they must be found as essential qualifications in all esotericians.

²*Sensitivity to higher impressions.* Here “sensitivity” does not mean that introversion, impressionability, and fragility, not to say touchiness, which is commonly seen in a certain category of “spiritual-minded people”, who are thin-skinned, self-centred, self-loving, and always on the defensive against a surrounding world that scares them. What is meant is, on the contrary, that faculty by which you may widen your own perception into awareness of increasing possibilities for contact with other people, grasping the quality of your relationships with them, and quickly reading their needs in order to serve them, not with what you want to give them, but with what they need. It is a matter of physical, emotional, and mental attention and the ability to observe consciousness expressions of all three kinds. This faculty of sensitivity has nothing in common with the hypersensitivity of one’s own false personality, such as it may manifest itself in dejection, self-pity, the feeling of being attacked and thus the need of defending oneself, negative imaginings about being the victim of other people’s slights and wrongdoings, or being misunderstood, discontent with the conditions of one’s life, injured pride and vanity, and so on in seeming infinitude. These faults and failings are important only in so far as they affect the group and reduce its efficiency. In such cases, the individual must make efforts, with attention and understanding, not to let such things find expression in the inner life of the group. The sensitivity dealt with here thus is a kind of wakefulness in relation to other people and presupposes a living interest in them and their needs.

³*Impersonality* is a faculty that well-developed personalities find it particularly hard to acquire. Many cherished ideas, many hard-won qualities, many carefully nurtured righteousnesses, many powerfully formulated opinions militate against impersonality. The stronger the personality, the weaker the impersonality. However, personality is the synthetic consciousness of the envelopes of incarnation, a functional consciousness that is more or less in conflict with awakening self-consciousness in the causal envelope. The fiction of personality consciousness is connected with the belief that there is an enduring “self” in what is mostly the constant interaction of fleeting functions. It is counteracted by the understanding that the only permanent self of man is the monad’s impersonal self-consciousness in its causal envelope. The illusions of personality consciousness include pride of “one’s own” contribution and desire for the gratitude, recognition, awards, admiration, attention of others – as many hindrances to the work and life of the group. There is a close relation between impersonality and non-identification. The condition of impersonality is promoted, its quality is nurtured by a deeper understanding of our almost total dependence on our elder brethren in evolution, Augoeides and our teachers in the planetary hierarchy. “If it is my own, it is not up to much. If it is worth much, it is not my own.”

⁴*Incipient causal consciousness* can come about only as the result of long and unceasing practice according to school methods and unselfish service. Thus it has nothing in common with that which new age people call “intuition” and which are emotional impulses with a faint mental content. Incipient causal consciousness manifests itself in, among other things, direct understanding of reality ideas and as direct rejection of unreality ideas (fictions); quick response to real needs of other people, which is a quality of the heart centre in connection with the unity centre of the causal envelope; right use of qualitative type energies for creative service in the physical world; understanding of the time factor, perception of the cyclic pro-

cess of time and the different qualities of different time periods, all of it resulting in the practical ability to wait for the right opportunity (this includes understanding of the great significance of preparation in all esoteric work). The whole of this development is necessarily slow, and so it requires great patience.

⁵*Mental polarization* means to live with reflection (ponderingly, meditatively) and also to control emotions. Increasingly, emotions, desires and illusions, are brought under the control of mentality, mentality as being controlled in its turn by causal consciousness. Emotions, which generally are self-centred and personal, are superseded by realizations of universality and impersonality. The emotional envelope increasingly becomes only a clear mirror of essentiality, personal wishes are superseded by aspiration to unity promoting the whole. All these desirable qualities, abilities, and states are produced through mental polarization, self-observation, self-remembrance, and meditative attitude. Nothing of this is something new for the disciples, for it has been said over and over again in all basic esoteric instruction. But it remains to put it into practice as well.

15.8 *The Twelve Virtues of Group Activity*

¹Understanding of the twelve essential qualities has, up to now, been too much characterized by the average aspirant's (the "psychician's") tendency to individualism and occupation with his own separate "self". However, both aspirantship and discipleship are not, as has been emphasized many times, individual conditions, but group activity, group life. Not alone, but with your group you enter the fifth natural kingdom; not in isolated, passive observation, but in efficient group work, group activity, you will perfect the qualities. Now and increasingly in the future, the twelve essential qualities will be understood as the twelve virtues of group activity, group life. Below a few intimations are given about these twelve. It has been considered expedient not to make a detailed description of all twelve, but to leave it to those who understand this to complete the presentation.

²*Trust in life* means trust, not in life in a general sense, but in the most conscious part of life, those beings who are consciously one with unity: Augoeides, the planetary hierarchy, and the ever higher divine collectives. This trust in our elder brethren in evolution affords us security, safety, assurance, lightheartedness, hope, trust in Law, courage. It affords us the realization that there is no failure, since our elder brethren once walked the same way as we are now walking, made the same mistakes as we make, yet reached the goal. It affords us the understanding that everything is planned for the best, since perfect wisdom and love govern all higher worlds and kingdoms. Trust in the Great Ones affords us freedom from fear, anxiety, envy, and despair.

³Where group activity in particular is concerned, this means that members have confidence in that plan which the Great Ones have made for the development of all life, for the evolution of mankind. Having this confidence they see that it is a vain undertaking to make one's own separate and separative plans; that what this implies for the group is the necessity of perceiving the plan of the planetary hierarchy as clearly as possible and the attempt at realizing that little portion of it which falls within the competence of the group.

⁴The departmental energies, rays, that especially carry this confidence are the first and the seventh. The qualitative expressions of the first ray are courage, power, endurance, honesty, reliability, the power of the group to stand alone, to influence conditions rather than people, to liberate itself from emotional illusions. The qualitative expressions of the seventh ray are ability to act, organizing ability, methodic work, exactitude, and orderliness.

⁵*Trust in self* means the group's self-determination, self-criticism, frankness, determination to win, self-control, balance, ability to decide for itself what is good and right independently of the valuations of the surrounding world and without slavery to the common authorities of mass "thinking". The departmental energy that carries the group in this respect is the fourth.

Its keyword, “harmony through conflict”, indicates that the necessary balance in expression is a result of development achieved during a long and hard battle between the higher that the group is to become and the lower that it was. When finally the group has attained the balanced active self-expression it strived for, it has found the path of virtue between the two extremes of self-assertion and resignation. The group does not force itself and its views on others, and does not allow others to force themselves and their views on the group.

⁶*Trust in law* means the group’s sense of duty, honesty, straightforwardness, and endurance, with a simultaneous observation of moderation, striking the golden mean. This also includes freedom from stubbornness, self-will, and fanaticism. Trust in circumstances and people, in your own first self, in its power and knowledge, is an evidence of life-ignorance. That trust lacks that firm basis in reality which only trust in the laws of life can afford. The second self is so pervaded by the lawfulness of existence that he has become, as it were, a manifestation of the Law by entering unity. The will to unity is at the same time the will to law, the law of unity, “divine love”, which the first self must acquire in order to become a second self. This is true of the group as well as of its individual members. The second ray is the particular carrier of the trust in law, which demonstrates that this ray has the closest connection to the will to unity, wisdom, and the heart centre.

⁷*Joy in life* is joy in work, for only a life of work and service is a life worth living. At least that is how all those who have entered the kingdoms of unity look upon it. “When life is at its best, it is work and toil.” It is in the work and service for the good of all that the hierarchies in the worlds of unity have their happiness, joy, and bliss. The group has this experience, this insight, “scaled down”, and finds in it a source of power and optimism that liberates it from imagined suffering, bitterness, grief, inhibitions, moralism and idealism that destroy joy, dissatisfaction, and self-torture. The rays that carry this are the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth. The fourth ray in its lower quality represents conflict, but in its higher quality a balanced expression and a striving towards the art of living. The better energies of the fifth ray promote common sense, thoroughness, and exactness. The qualitative expressions of the sixth ray are dedication and reliability. In their harmonious cooperation these rays afford competence, efficiency, and endurance in work.

⁸*Purposefulness* means the group’s energy, power, efficiency, positivity, firmness, unshakableness, unyieldingness, courage, staying power, as well as the group’s freedom from thoughtlessness and self-defeat. The ray energies that carry this are the first, third, and seventh. In its higher and better expressions, the first ray affords power, courage, and determination in the being concentrated on essentials, always considering the goal. The third ray enables the group to look at problems and tasks from many sides, liberating it from narrow-mindedness and fanaticism. The qualitative energies of the seventh ray afford the capacity for realization in the physical world, the understanding of the necessity of action.

⁹*Wisdom* is the group’s common knowledge, insight, understanding based on experience, its common sense and power of judgement demonstrated in action, its humility and freedom from dogmatism, moralism, and pride. The carrying ray is the fifth, which in the qualitative sense implies the striving for knowledge, insight, and understanding.

¹⁰*Unity* is the group’s attraction, love, goodness, and compassion both internally, between members, and externally, to other groups. Included here are respect, tact, delicacy, consideration, service, patience, and tolerance, as well as freedom from hatred, vengeance, malice, moralism, tactlessness, and contempt. The carrying rays are the second and the sixth, which in harmonious balance afford a dedicated aspiration to love and understanding of all, sincerity and earnest in the realization of unity.