



Main Exercise

**Important* –Please Print Out Before Reading–*

If at all possible also read away from strong WiFi transmitters etc, as the subject matter touched upon requires a certain amount of intuitive understanding which is not really possible when exposed to high levels of EMF radiation.

“Everything that is spoken in an esoteric lesson is brought to us directly from the Masters, and he who utters it is only an instrument of their intentions.”

In a humble and modest way we should feel gratified that we have been deemed worthy of taking part in the Esoteric School. It is not by chance that we arrived at this point. The fact that we sought it and were granted access to it should prove to us that we have already been striving in this direction over several lifetimes. The outer world can no longer fulfil us; we cannot be wholly absorbed by it. If we could have been we would not have sought the path that led us here.

First thing in the morning, immediately after waking, before any other impressions have passed through the soul, the pupil gives himself up to his meditation. He strives for complete inner stillness, which means that all attention is withdrawn from impressions coming from outside and from all memories of everyday life. He also endeavours to free the soul from all cares and anxieties, which are apt to oppress it particularly at this time. Then the meditation begins. In order to facilitate this inner stillness, the consciousness is first of all directed to a single idea, perhaps that of 'Rest', and then this idea is allowed to disappear from consciousness so that no image whatsoever remains in the soul; the content of the following seven lines is then allowed to live in the soul, to the exclusion of everything else. These seven lines must be held in the consciousness for five minutes. If other images intrude, the pupil keeps returning again to these seven lines, in profound contemplation:

In purest outpoured Light
Shimmers the Godhead of the World.
In purest Love towards all that is
Outpours the godhood of my soul.
I rest within the Godhead of the world;
There shall I find myself,
Within the Godhead of the world.

It is not recommended to do the breathing part of this exercise without supervision from someone who is qualified to give it. Focusing on the mantras without paying any attention to the breath is still affective.

After this has been practised for five minutes, the pupil goes on to the following. He takes a calm, strong breath; after the in-breathing he breathes out, just as calmly and strongly, so that there is no pause between the in-breathing and the out-breathing. Then he abstains from breathing for a brief period, endeavouring however to let the breath remain wholly outside the body. The following are the approximate periods to be observed. The time taken by the in-breathing is optional, to be adjusted in accordance with one's capacities. The out-breathing should take twice as long as the in-breathing, and the abstention from breathing three times as long as the in-breathing. If, for example, two seconds are needed for in-breathing, then four seconds are taken for the out-breathing, and six seconds for the abstention from breathing. This in-breathing, out-breathing, abstention from breathing is repeated four times. During the in-breathing and the out-breathing the mind is emptied of thought and the whole consciousness directed to the breathing. But during the first abstention from breathing the pupil concentrates on the point lying between and a little behind the eyebrows, at the root of the nose, inside the forepart of the brain, while he fills his consciousness exclusively with the words:

I am

During the second abstention from breathing he concentrates on a point inside the larynx, while he fills his consciousness exclusively with the image:

It thinks.

During the third abstention from breathing he concentrates on the two arms and hands. The hands are either held folded, or the right is laid over the left. At the same time he fills his consciousness exclusively with the image:

She feels.

During the fourth abstention from breathing he concentrates on the whole surface of the body; that is, he pictures his bodily self with the utmost possible clarity and fills his consciousness with the image:

He wills.

If these exercises in concentration are continued strenuously for several weeks, something will be felt at those points upon which the consciousness has been focused: at the root of the nose, in the larynx, a stream in the hands and arms and on the whole outer surface of the body.

During concentration upon the arms and hands the pupil will feel as if a force were driving the hands apart; he lets them go apart, following the line of the force, but he does not suggest this to himself. The feeling must come quite of itself.

In 'It thinks', the 'It' signifies the universal Cosmic Thinking which should live as impersonal power in our words. In 'She feels', the 'She' signifies the Cosmic Soul — it means that we should feel, not personally but impersonally, in the sense that the Cosmic Soul is impersonal. In 'He wills', the 'He' signifies God, within whose will we instate our whole being.

When the pupil has carried through these four breathing exercises, he fills his consciousness for a while with one single image in which he is entirely absorbed, so that during this time nothing else whatever is present in the soul.

This image is given by Rudolf Steiner differently to individual pupils depending on their personality. For example:

‘My Power’
or 'I in me'
or 'I will'
or 'I am steadfast'
or 'Quietness in the strength
Strength in the quietness'
or 'Warmth of soul entirely fills me'.

Then we pass on to complete absorption, for five minutes, in our own divine ideal. This exercise must be enacted with the utmost devotion and reverence. The whole meditation need not last longer than 15 minutes. In all the periods specified above, we do not go by the clock but by our feeling. Care is taken to adopt such a position of the body that the body itself cannot (because of fatigue, for instance) be a cause of distraction.

Building up the Spiritual Body
through Meditation
Berlin, 2 October 1906

In a humble and modest way we should feel gratified that we have been deemed worthy of taking part in the Esoteric School. It is not by chance that we arrived at this point. The fact that we sought it and were granted access to it should prove to us that we have already been

striving in this direction over several lifetimes. The outer world can no longer fulfil us; we cannot be wholly absorbed by it. If we could have been we would not have sought the path that led us here. The outer world represents the full flourishing of the Fifth Root Race; alongside this flourishing, the morning light of the Sixth Day, or the Sixth Root Race, is already dawning. This will be a far more spiritual one; the spiritual body will become far more developed. It will be the first flowering of what will come to full fruition in the Sixth Root Race. We who take part in the Esoteric School belong to the dawning light of the Sixth Day; we follow and serve the great Master who guides its progress. Our task is to create and give birth to this spiritual body out of ourselves. Our physical body is not our 'I'; we should not identify ourselves with it. We received it in the solid mineral form in which it now is, as a tool for accomplishing the tasks of the Fifth Root Race. We must form and take hold of it as a tool; our 'I' should be master of it. In earlier times our 'I' had a differently formed tool. The body of the Fourth Root Race, the Atlantean, had not yet experienced the separation of sun and rain; it moved through undulating mists. It was in many respects differently constituted—yet our 'I' was the same. Even more different were the bodies of the Lemurian race, particularly in the initial stages; they floated and hovered in a watery, airy element. The same 'I' was working upon them. Our physical body is born of the macrocosm. The outer world formed it; out of our physical body our 'I' must give birth to the spiritual body. Our spiritual body is named 'Atma'. Atma means 'breath'. By means of regulated breathing in meditation, we build up our spiritual body. We really breathe our 'I' in and out with every breath.

A. Physical organs, physical body, etheric body, astral body B. Spirit Self (Manas) Life Spirit (Buddhi) and Spirit Man (Atma)

This drawing can help us to understand what actually happens. Within our outer body, which the Gods have built up, we form our spiritual body. The 'I' streams into it with every in-breath and out again when we breathe out. When we regulate our breathing and concentrate it in various parts of our body, we provide our spiritual body with the forces that are necessary to build it up. The 'I' is in direct connection with the point of the forehead slightly above and behind the nose; thinking is connected with the larynx, feeling with the hands, willing with the feet and the whole lower frame of the body. If we let these forces stream through our body with the help of regulated breathing, we build up our spiritual body.

The Awakening of Man to
Self-consciousness
Berlin, 14 November 1906

In these studies, the exercises which those engaged in occult training have to carry out will be explained more closely. For one who is not practising these exercises, the explanations should be a preparation for the time when he too will have to carry them out. The great Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings guide us in our inner striving for knowledge.

An exercise known to many is this: one first concentrates on the point at the root of the nose, between the eyebrows, in the inner part of the head; then on the point in the interior of the larynx; then on the point, extended into a line, which stretches from the shoulders into the arms and hands; then on the more widely extended point which spreads over the whole

surface of the body. In the secret knowledge, these lines and surfaces are also spoken of as points. We will now learn to understand this exercise more fully.

For this, we must go far back in thought, to the Lemurian epoch. The earth's appearance was then altogether different. The rocks that are now solid then flowed like water. Air in the modern sense did not yet exist; the whole earth was enveloped in hot vapours. Many metals which are solid today were present then in gaseous form or flowed like water; the vaporous atmosphere was pervaded by currents of ether, as is the present-day atmosphere by currents of air. Man already lived on this earth. But he was a creature half fish, half bird, hovering or swimming as he moved along. At that time an important event took place in the process of human evolution—man developed a skin and thereby shut

himself off from the rest of the world as an independent being. Until then he had not been separate from his environment; the streaming currents of the whole world penetrated into him. Now he shut himself off behind his skin. The process of separation from the environment was brought about by a particular ether-stream.

After a certain time there was a further significant event. Man assumed the upright posture, thereby giving a definite direction to his whole striving and development. Before that time the position of his body was like that of the animal today. Only now could he develop his forelimbs into arms and hands as they now are, i.e. fit for work in the real sense. Only now did he begin to work as an independent being; only now was it possible for him to develop individual karma. No animal can do this. Only a being who walks and stands upright creates individual karma. A second, definite ether-stream brought about this transformation.

A third ether-stream resulted in a third important transformation. Only when man had assumed an upright posture could lungs develop in the form to be found only in man, and in connection with them the larynx formed itself out of delicate etheric substances. The gradual development of human speech was now possible.

Through a fourth ether-stream the organ lying between the eyebrows at the root of the nose was formed, and thereby man awoke for the first time to self-consciousness—to consciousness of self. Before then he had only a feeling of self.

If now one directs the attention firmly and forcefully to one—always one at a time—of these four points, the root of the nose, the larynx, the hands and arms, the whole bodily surface, combining with this exercise a particular word (which can be imparted only verbally, from teacher to pupil), then one enters into connection with the corresponding ether-stream which called forth the transformation in the human body. Occult training consists paramountly in this, that we become conscious of the processes that work below the level of consciousness on our body. We have to enter into conscious connection with the forces of the cosmos.

If the hands are crossed so that the right hand lies over the left, and one concentrates on the hands thus crossed in connection with a particular word, then, provided the exercise is performed often enough with the greatest possible energy and persistence, one will soon notice that the two hands strive apart and the arms spread out quite of themselves. It is the posture of the medieval saints.

This exercise, too, has its definite significance. Streams of ether are always circulating out of the cosmos through the human body. One such stream enters through the head, passes from there into the right foot, then into the left hand, then into the right hand, then into the left foot, and from there back to the head. If we think of a man standing in the position just described, with outstretched arms, then the streaming has the form of a pentagram. It would be bad for man if the stream did not enter into him through the head but through the feet. All evil influences enter the human body through the feet. The black magicians make use of this. This stream, however, circulates in man not only when he finds himself in this particular position but also whenever the hands are superimposed, or one leg is bent. There are five different ether vibrations through the human body. One of them also circulates in solid substance and is therefore called 'earthy', because it can permeate the solid earth as well.

These streams circulate all the time in man and bring him into connection with the entire cosmos.

The being of man is woven out of the spirit, we are born from out of the spirit, we have descended into matter, and flow back again to the spirit. The streams which were active in us during our descent into matter should now become conscious to us. We go back along the same path by which we have come, but consciously. There is no other true evolution. What we now kindle in ourselves through these exercises will be developed by humanity at large only in the Sixth Root Race. In spiritual science, a Root Race is called a Day of Creation. We are at the point where the Sixth Day of Creation is being prepared; we are in the dawn of the Sixth Day of Creation. The descent from the spirit, the life in matter and the return to the spirit are presented in three letters:

AUM...

All words from *Guidance in Esoteric Training* by Rudolf Steiner