

WHAT IS AN ESOTERIC SCHOOL?

By Alice A. Bailey

There are many so-called esoteric schools today. All of them are relatively modern and have come into existence during the past sixty years. I am not here referring to the ever-existing Esoteric School, which is present in every part of the world, having no name, represented by no exoteric organisation and having no recognised leaders. This one true School has eternally met the need of seekers who – down the ages – have demanded entrance to the Mysteries and have found admittance, after fulfilling the requirements. I refer to the numbers of mystical, metaphysical, Theosophical, Rosicrucian and occult orders which are everywhere to be found. These organisations are composed of groups of people with devoted spiritual intention, animated by great aspiration and gathered around some teacher and some body of teaching. The teacher supplies them with his personal interpretation of standard, occult information, emphasises the need for character-building and purity, indicates to them the necessity to tread the Path and (usually) takes the place of the ultimate and final authority.

This phase in the history of esotericism has been good, preparatory work. It has brought to the attention of the general public the nature of the secret doctrine, of the esoteric teaching and of the inner government of the world. The fact of the existence of the Masters of the Wisdom – as They work in the planetary Hierarchy under the direction of the Christ – has been widely presented, either in terms of orthodox Theosophy, of Hindu metaphysical speculation or under Christian terminology. Much knowledge has been imparted. The intricate processes of divine creation, and the consequent manifestation of God, bring much mental stimulation and mental unfoldment but frequently little real understanding. Esoteric schools are occupied with promoting the growth of understanding. Certain elementary rules, intended primarily for the purification of the emotional-desire nature have been usefully disseminated; the many planes, the creative fires and the differentiations of substance have been exhaustively discussed, as have been the various septenates which condition life, consciousness and form. *None of this is esoteric teaching.* Devotion to the Masters has been taught, but They have been inadequately presented. Those Masters are portrayed as peculiarly interested in the teacher of the group, and the personal friends of the teacher are frequently informed that the Master has accepted them into the inner ranks of His disciples. There is thus built up within these groups, practically without exception, a close corporation of devoted adherents to the teacher, these devotees can be depended upon to give unquestioning obedience to the teacher and to the commands of the Master, supposedly transmitted by the teacher, in violation of the occult law that no Master ever gives a command or expects obedience. The average esoteric group is today a closed organisation, exclusive in its membership, fostering an unwholesome sense of mystery and presenting only those half-truths which serve one purpose – to testify to the existence of the real.

It will be apparent, therefore, that no true esoteric school has yet come into existence. The emergence of these schools remains as yet a hope, but one which has reached the point where due preparation can be made for their appearance.

The above is not an indictment of much faithful though uninspired service. Students must recognise that the schools with which they are familiar are only preparatory in nature, full of faults, based on the weaknesses and the strength of the teacher who

founded them; they are, therefore, tainted by personality emphasis, demanded loyalties and misapplied and misinterpreted teaching. They have, however, been useful as signposts to the future.

The time has not been ripe for the manifestation of the true esoteric schools. Humanity has not been ready. Today, however, there are enough intelligent men and women to warrant the forming of the more advanced schools of training. These will lay the foundation of those future schools which will – under the Law of Evolution – make their appearance. Esoteric schools are no exception to the evolutionary process and ever appear in response to man's demand and when his mental development requires them. The next seventy years will see the founding of the new schools. Those now functioning can begin to clean house, relinquish non-essentials and isolate the truths which are really occult and thus vision clearly the goal of esoteric training. This they have not yet done. The discipline to which the neophyte in the future should subject himself must be understood and the right techniques imparted; all this will have to be shifted to a higher level than at present. The teaching must be divorced from its present theological trend and autocratic pronouncements. Of these dogmatic utterances, the many occult schools, the inner schools and the various esoteric sections have been disastrously guilty.

Teachers will later appear who will have a true understanding of the spiritual nature of authority. This will not be based upon claim-making and mystery but upon a life lived in accordance with the highest ideals, and upon the presentation of a teaching which will evoke both the respect and the intuitive response of the disciple. The teacher of the future will simply point the Way, tread the Way with the disciple, and emphasise the ancient rules but with their new interpretations. He will no longer stand (as he frequently does today) between the group and the light or between the aspirant and the Master.

These preparatory schools are already in process of forming and the starting of the *Arcane School* in 1923 was a part of this spiritual effort. From these proposed schools will emerge, early in the next century, the first of the true *Schools of Initiation*.

Up to date, the so-called esoteric schools have dealt with aspirants upon the *Path of Probation* or *of Purification*. The schools now forming, such as the *Arcane School*, are concerned with training disciples and preparing them to tread the *Path of Discipleship* and to come – at some later date – into direct contact with the Masters. The new schools which will appear in the next century will take disciples and prepare them to tread the *Path of Initiation*.

We have thus one graded, unified effort for which the Masters are responsible. The schools now forming to train disciples are intermediate in nature and are intended to bridge the gap between the exoteric schools of the past and the true schools which will later appear. These facts might be summarised as follows:

1. Esoteric Schools in the Past

These are the schools with which we are most familiar, such as the inner schools of the many Theosophical groups, the Rosicrucian orders and the countless mystical and metaphysical organisations. They are definitely exoteric in nature but are useful in challenging public interest. They convey much useful information about the three worlds of human evolution – the physical world, the world of the emotions and the mental world. They are definitely for neophytes upon the Path of Probation. They are concerned with the heart approach to God....

2. Esoteric Schools of the Present

These schools, now forming, have more esoteric knowledge; this is being correlated and applied. Much remains theoretical, but theory must ever precede practice. These schools will advance the teaching beyond the point reached in the earlier schools, carrying it out of the three worlds into the realm of the soul. They will deal with the world of occult values and will be mental in nature, laying the emphasis upon *knowing* God, and not just upon *feeling* after a sensed divinity. At their best, the old schools brought about the integration of the personality and made the essential dualism of the mystic factual. The new schools aim at a higher fusion – that between the integrated personality and the soul. They reveal that behind the dualism of the mystic (a necessary stage) there is the occult fact of identity with the divine.

3. Esoteric Schools In the Future

These schools will be truly esoteric for humanity will then be ready. The higher consciousness of the disciple will be evoked and trained. He will be taught to work consciously on spiritual levels and to act as a soul in the three worlds of human evolution, through the medium of a highly intelligent personality. Disciples will be prepared for initiation, and initiates will be trained to take the higher major initiations. Emphasis will be laid upon the right handling of energies and forces, upon wisdom as the result of applied knowledge and upon the work and plans of the Hierarchy. The intuition will be developed and a still higher fusion brought about – between the spiritual man and the universal One.

I would like to divide what I have to say about the schools into the following divisions:

- I. Some definitions of esotericism.
- II. How an esoteric school is formed.
- III. The fundamental truths taught in the new schools.

A study of these themes will help us to know what esoteric teaching is and aid us to work as esotericists, taking the needed training and learning to tread the WAY correctly. Leaders and teachers in the present so-called esoteric schools must face the facts – hard as they may be. If they are true and sincere, they will do so gladly and will adapt themselves to the need of the times; they will evaluate correctly their place upon the ladder of evolution and thus decide where their effort should be placed. Nothing can arrest the hierarchical plans as outlined above. Those who cannot face themselves and rate their work at its true value, will find their schools in the discard – and this can be seen happening everywhere today. Those who can realise the situation and can register the vision of the future will move forward to increased usefulness, to vital reconstruction and to greater service.

I. Some Definitions of Esotericism

The words “esoteric” and “occult” signify “that which is hidden”; they indicate that which lies behind the outer seeming and point to the causes which produce appearance and effects; they are concerned with the subtler world of energies and forces which all outer forms veil and hide. They deal with that which must be known before the initiate-

consciousness can be developed.

Emphasis in the past has been upon subjective but nevertheless material forces (hidden within the human being), and frequently upon the psychic powers, such as clairvoyance and clairaudience which man shares in common with the animals. Physical purity has been enormously emphasised in the old schools and concerns the cleansing of the forms through which the soul must manifest. This cleansing is not esoteric in nature and is no sign of esoteric or of spiritual unfoldment. It is only a most necessary preliminary stage; until this purification has been undertaken, more advanced work is not possible. The physical disciplines are needed and useful, and must find their place in all schools for beginners; by their means the neophyte establishes habits of purity and builds the type of body required by the disciple when he starts true esoteric work.

This elementary training enables the neophyte to shift his consciousness out of the tangible world of daily living into the subtler worlds of his personality forces. He becomes aware of the energies with which he must deal and dimly senses that which lies behind them – the soul in its own world, the Kingdom of God.

The new schools are occupied with more esoteric values. They train the disciple to work as a soul in the three worlds, and prepare him to work in a Master's group as a pledged disciple. Most of the schools, which belong to the old order, have ignored the stage of personality integration and of a trained knowledge of life in the three worlds in which the beginner should be instructed. Instead, they have held out to the beginner the tempting prospect of contact with a Master and a Master's group, and this before he was even a co-ordinated person, when he hardly merited the word "intelligent" and before he had any soul contact. Emphasis was, and is, laid upon devotion – devotion to the teacher at the center of the group, devotion to the truths enunciated by the teacher, devotion to the Master, plus a fixed determination to merit the title of "disciple" and so be able, some day, to say, "I know this Master or that." At the same time, the beginner is given no true idea of discipleship or its responsibilities. The new schools, now forming, convey very different ideas to their students and very different techniques of training.

1. An esoteric school is one in which the relation of the soul, the spiritual man, to the personality is taught. It is the major line of approach for the student, and soul contact becomes his first great endeavour. He comes to know himself and struggles to work as a conscious soul and not just as an active personality. He learns to control and direct his lower nature through a technical understanding of its constitution and to pour through it the light, love and power of the soul. Through alignment, concentration and meditation, he establishes a permanent contact with his inner spiritual being and is then well on the way to become a useful server of humanity.

2. An esoteric school is an extension into the physical outer world of the inner group or Ashram of a Master. Just as the individual disciple is taught to regard himself as a channel for the soul, and as an outpost of the consciousness of the Master, so the true esoteric school is the outpost of some subjective spiritual group or Ashram, conditioned and impressed by the Master, as the disciple is by his soul. Such a group is, therefore, in direct relationship to the Hierarchy.

3. A true esoteric school works on four levels of service and of experience. This enables the disciple to make a complete approach to humanity and to use all of his equipment. In the true spiritual schools, as approved and endorsed by the Masters, service to humanity is taught and not the need for the disciple to be in touch with a Master, as is

the case in the majority of esoteric schools of the old order. Contact with the Master is contingent upon the measure and the quality of the service rendered by the disciple to his fellowmen. This is a point oft overlooked by teachers, who lay the emphasis upon the personal attainment of the individual and upon individual perfection. The new schools, now forming, are preoccupied with training men to meet world need and to serve spiritually, upon the following four levels of conscious activity:

- a. That of the outer world. The disciple is taught to live normally, practically, effectively and spiritually in the everyday world. He is never a freak or a crank.
- b. That of the world of meaning. The disciple is taught the why and the wherefore of circumstances and happenings – both individual and universal. He is thus trained to act as an interpreter of events and to function as a light bearer.
- c. That of the soul in its own world. This makes the disciple a channel for divine love, for the nature of the soul is love. He heals and carries inspiration into the world.
- d. That of his Master's Ashram or group. He is taught to co-operate with the Hierarchical plan as it is gradually revealed to him and to arrive at the knowledge which will permit him to direct some of the energies producing world happenings. He thus carries out the purposes of the inner group with which he is affiliated. Under the inspiration of the Master and His band of working disciples and initiates, he brings to humanity definite knowledge about the Hierarchy.

4. An esoteric school trains the disciple in group work. He learns to relinquish personality plans in the interest of group purpose – ever directed to the service of humanity and the Hierarchy. He becomes merged in group activities and – losing none of his individualised and particularised identity – he is a dedicated contributor to the Plan, with no thought of the separated self-conditioning his thinking.

5. An esoteric school is not founded upon authority or on the demand of some teacher for recognition and obedience. It is not based on the claims of some usually mediocre person to be an initiate and, because of his status, authorised to speak with dogmatic emphasis. The only authority recognised is that of truth itself, intuitively perceived and then subjected to the mental analysis and interpretation of the disciple. The disciple who (working under some one of the Masters) starts an esoteric school has absolutely no authority, except that of a life lived as close to the truth as possible, plus the measure of truth which he can present to his group. The obedience developed in his group of students is that of recognising joint responsibility, united loyalty to group intention and purpose, as indicated by the group leader (suggested by him and not presented as a command). The presence of authoritative statements, emanating from the teacher of the group, or any demand upon his part for recognition, or for the unquestioning obedience and loyalty of his followers marks him out as a beginner and as simply an aspirant – well-meaning and with good intention. It indicates that he is *not* a disciple, charged with the work of the Hierarchy.

6. An esoteric group is one in which the rounded-out development of the disciple receives attention. Character-building and unselfish aspiration are regarded as necessarily present, but no great emphasis is laid upon the ordinary virtues, or upon purity in the outer life, or on kindness, good temper and freedom from self-assertion. These qualities are regarded as basic essentials and as present in some measure, but

their further development is regarded as the personal problem of the disciple and not that of the teacher and the group. Mental development is emphasised in order that the disciple may be intelligent, analytical (but not critical) and in possession of a rich, well-organised mental equipment. The head and the heart are regarded as of equal importance and as equally divine. It is with the states of consciousness of men everywhere, of all ranks, races and nations that the Hierarchy works and disciples are trained to work the same way, eventually themselves becoming Masters of the Wisdom. This they achieve by mastering all difficulties and obstacles by the power of their own souls. They thus release some Master, now active in the world, for higher and different work.

7. An esoteric school is, therefore, a medium through which the disciple's life-focus becomes that of the soul; neither the physical world, nor the emotional and mental worlds are to him the major sphere of his activities. They are simply his field of service, and his personality becomes that through which his soul serves. He learns to work entirely from spiritual levels, and his consciousness is stably centred in the soul and in his Master's Ashram. The esoteric school teaches him how to achieve this, how to make contact with his soul, how to live as a soul, how to recognise a Master and how to work in a Master's group. He learns the techniques whereby he can register impressions from the Master and be responsive to group intent and thus increasingly sensitive to the Plan with which his Master and the Ashram is pledged to co-operate. He is taught how to play his part in raising the consciousness of the race; this he does through a conscious, directed use of the trained mind, of his controlled emotional nature and his responsive brain. He becomes proficient in playing the difficult, dual role of the disciple. This is to live as a soul in the life of every day and to work consciously in relation to the Hierarchy. There are many other definitions of an esoteric school but I have chosen the simpler of them, and the ones which must be first grasped if right progress is to be made. Step by step the disciple is led forward along the Path until the time comes when he is ready for those great unfoldments of consciousness which we call "Initiations". He then begins consciously to tread the Path of Initiation with which the esoteric schools of the future will familiarise the general public.

It is with the effort to meet these seven requirements of all esoteric schools, that the *Arcane School* is occupied. It is not occupied with preparing disciples for initiation and never has been. It is attempting to train its students to make the preliminary contacts and to work as true servers in the world. There is no true esoteric school today which is giving training for initiation. Those who claim to do so are deceiving the public. Training in the life of discipleship, academically understood, can be given. Training in the life of the initiate has still to be ascertained individually, and through contacts in the world of spiritual being.

II. How an Esoteric School is Formed

An esoteric school is not formed because some Master orders a disciple to form one. The disciple who starts such a school of preparatory occultism does so entirely of his own volition. It is his definite, self-chosen task. He has been serving to the best of his ability in a Master's Ashram; he is acquainted with world need; he is keenly anxious to be of service and is conscious of learning all the time, and of the methods whereby he has been taught and led forward along the Path. He is, therefore, a conscious worker, well aware of his duty as a disciple, in touch with his soul and increasingly sensitive to the Master's impression. He does not usually plan to start an esoteric school; no definite and planned organisation takes shape in his mind. He is simply anxious to meet the

surrounding need. Owing to the fact that he is in touch with his soul and – in the case of more advanced disciples – in touch with the Master and the Ashram, his daily life becomes magnetic, radiatory and dynamic and, therefore, he attracts to him those whom he can help, gathering them around him. He becomes the *central point of life in a living organism and not the head of an organization*. Herein lies the difference between the work of a well-intentioned aspirant and the trained disciple. The world is full of organisations with some person at the head whose motives are usually sound but whose methods and approach to those he seeks to serve are those of the business world; he may build a helpful organisation but he does not found an esoteric school. A disciple becomes the centre of a vital, radiating group which grows and achieves its end because of the life at the centre, developing from within outward; it is the force of his life which makes it successful and not any system of advertising, or claim-making and is seldom, if ever, is it a commercial success.

People respond to the note sounded and to the truths taught, and the influence of the group steadily increases until the disciple finds himself responsible for a group of aspirants. According to the measure of his soul contact, his sensitive response to the Master's suggestions and the impression of the Ashram with which he is affiliated will be the strength and usefulness of the group with which he works. Little by little he will gather around him those who can help in the teaching, and upon the wisdom and the discrimination which he shows in his choice of helpers will largely depend the success of his service. He assumes no authority over the group or over his helpers, except the authority of greater knowledge, wisdom and light; this makes him an immovable point of power against which the lesser interpretations and methods break and drop away. He teaches certain unalterable occult principles to which the entire group is trained to adhere, but they will do so easily and without controversy. It is those very principles which have brought them into the work. He watches his helpers for signs of spiritual unfoldment and advances them to positions of responsibility as the evidences become apparent. All the time he lives among them as a learner and fellow student, treading the Way with those who must be taught. Humility is the keynote of the true esoteric leader, because humility indicates vision and a sense of proportion. These teach him that each step forward in the spiritual life reveals still more stages to be mastered. The difference between the trained disciple and the beginner that the latter has a little vision and is apt to think that the way is easier than it is. He then over-estimates himself. The disciple, however, sees a vast vision and knows how much has to be done before the vision becomes a reality.

Esoteric schools can be divided into different categories, dependent upon the point of development of the teacher. It is the subconscious realisation of this that has led the mediocre leader to attempt to push his work and attract attention to his effort by loud and noisy claim-making, by pretending familiarity with the Master and sometimes with the entire Hierarchy, and thus demanding recognition of himself. All this indicates the beginner who needs to learn that the true esoteric school is ever started by a disciple and that it is his attempt at service and not the field of expression of a Master. The disciple – and not the Master – is solely responsible for the success or failure of the school. The Masters are *not* responsible for the schools now in existence or in process of forming. They do not establish policies or determine issues. Just in so far as the disciple-leader is consciously and humbly in touch with the Master and His Ashram will the power of the inner group pour through the school; it will show itself as spiritual light and wisdom and will not take the form of concrete direction, commands and orders or the shifting of responsibility from the leader to the Master. The disciple makes his own decisions, trains his own helpers, enunciates his own policies, interprets the Ageless Wisdom

according to the light which is in him and supervises the training given to the students. The more advanced the disciple, the less will he speak of his Master and the more will he point the way to the Hierarchy; his emphasis will be upon individual responsibility and the basic occult principles,

We could divide the schools in the world today into three groups:

1. There are a large number of so-called esoteric schools which are *started by aspirants*. They want to help their fellow-men and are impelled thereto by a love of teaching, a measure of love for humanity and some personal ambition. Their methods are, in the last analysis, exoteric; they give training, based upon what is already known and given out, for they teach little that is new, no matter how they dress it up in grades and mystery. They use the standard books on occultism or compile their own textbooks from those already written, frequently choosing the spectacular and the unimportant details and omitting that which is spiritual and essential. They advertise their schools in some way or another, and frequently emphasise the commercial angle. They demand obedience and look with disfavour and criticism on other schools, teaching exclusive adherence to the leader and loyalty to that leader's interpretation of truth. They do useful work among the masses, familiarising them with the fact of the Masters and with the existence of the secret doctrine and present opportunity for spiritual development. They have a definite place in the plan of the Hierarchy but they are *not* esoteric schools and their leaders are not disciples; they are aspirants upon the Probationary Path and of no great advancement.

2. There are also a certain number of esoteric schools, *started by disciples*, who are learning, through their attempt to aid their group, how to teach and serve. These schools are few in number, compared to those in the first group, and are much smaller numerically, because the leader adheres more closely to the occult rules and endeavours to conform to the spiritual requirements. He tries to teach humbly and with no claim-making; he is aware that he is himself slowly arriving at soul knowledge, and that his contact with the Master is still very infrequent. He is usually academic and theological in his presentation of truth but not often personally authoritative. His influence and radiation is not yet very powerful but he is carefully watched by the Master because potentially he is an asset and can be trusted to learn – usually by his mistakes. He reaches a much smaller public than the first, noisy group but he gives a sounder training and grounds beginners in the fundamentals of the Ageless Wisdom. His work comes midway between the groups now forming and the old groups.

3. Then we now have the appearance of the newer esoteric schools. These are being *started by more advanced disciples*. This is necessarily so as the task is much harder, involving the striking of such a clear note that the distinction between the new and the old will emerge clearly, and certain new truths and interpretations will be given. This new and more advanced presentation will be founded on the old truths, but these will be differently interpreted and will evoke antagonism from the old schools. These more advanced disciples have a more potent radiation and a much wider influence and their work becomes world-wide in scope. It evokes not only antagonism and rejection from the older groups but it will evoke response from many in those groups who have outgrown the old ways and who have been waiting for the new approach to God and are ready for a more spiritual appeal. These then become focal points of spiritual activity within the old groups and in their environment. This leads to three happenings:

- a. The old groups reject those who respond to the newer esoteric teaching and force them out of their groups.
- b. The new schools begin to take shape by means of this rejection and in response to the teaching, proclaimed by the more powerful and more disinterested disciple.
- c. The general public becomes aware of the new movement and thus a widespread interest in those things which are esoteric and related to the Hierarchy emerges.

These disciples, entrusted with the difficult work of launching the new schools, are technically known as world disciples. Their influence penetrates in every direction, disrupting and disturbing the old schools and so releasing those who are ready for the newer teachings; creating new schools which are intermediate between the old and the future Schools of Initiation; making an impression upon the consciousness of men everywhere; widening the outlook of the general public and presenting humanity with new concepts and fresh opportunities. This is happening today. Enquirers have, therefore, to learn to distinguish between the work of a well-intentioned aspirant who founds a school of esotericism for beginners, the work of a disciple who is learning to be a teacher, and the work of world disciples who are breaking up the old ways and instituting new and more suitable methods of teaching occult truth. The *Arcane School* is a part of this latter world-wide effort.

There are also certain spurious schools, well-known and spectacular which attract the unintelligent and the curious; they have, fortunately, a very short cycle of influence. They do much temporary harm as they distort the teaching and give false ideas about the Masters and the Path, but their lasting power is practically nil. The other three types of schools are doing good work and meeting the need of those who respond to their note. The old schools are, however, dying out; those in the second group will be active for a long time, giving elementary instruction and training disciples in methods of work and how to serve. The last and newer type of school will go on increasing in power and will prepare the disciples of the New Age for the future Schools of Initiation.

III. The Truths Taught in the True Esoteric Schools

It should be noted that many of the truths, hitherto imparted under the term “esoteric,” have either not been so, or are now entirely exoteric. The esoteric truths of the past are the exoteric fundamental truths of the present. During the past one hundred years, the esoteric doctrines and the secret teaching of the Ageless Wisdom – given to the public often under the pledge of secrecy – have become public property. The nature of man as taught in the mystery schools of the past has – under other names – become recognisable as modern psychology. The mystery of the astral body, of the etheric body and the mental body are now dealt with in our universities, in our psychological courses, dealing with the vitality of the human being, his emotional nature and the mind. The belief in the Masters was a closely guarded secret; now They are discussed from public platforms in all our great cities. The way of meditation and its techniques were closely guarded subjects and the public was taught that such teachings were dangerous; today, this idea is exploded and scores of people throughout the world meditate, make alignment and arrive at soul contact and knowledge. The truth has also been veiled and hidden by a vast body of secondary teaching which has sidetracked the interest of the enquirer, and engrossed his attention through the importance attached to phenomena. Posture, the use of ancient formulas, words and mantrams, breathing exercises, mysterious hints as to the raising of the kundalini fires, the awakening of the centres

and other enticing aspects of secondary occultism have caused people to lose sight of the fact that much of the above, being in the realm of phenomena, is concerned with the physical body, its correct adjustment, its vitalisation and energising and that it deals with effects and not with the essential causes of the effects. All these phenomenal results will be demonstrated normally, safely and sanely as well as automatically when the inner man – emotional and mental – is en rapport with the spiritual world and is beginning to function as a spiritual being. This secondary approach to truth has done much harm to the cause of real occultism, and has properly disturbed the best minds in the spiritual field.

In the schools now forming, the emphasis is upon soul awareness, spiritual knowledge, and understanding of the higher forces, direct and first-hand knowledge of the spiritual Hierarchy which governs the life of our planet, a comprehension (progressively developed) of the divine nature and of the Plan which, in obedience to the will of God, is increasingly conditioning world affairs. The laws governing the individual, humanity and the kingdoms in nature are studied and the whole Science of Relations (as it is unfolded in our evolving world) becomes the practical interest of the disciple. As he establishes right relations with himself, with the world of spiritual being, in the world of human living and with all forms of divine life, the awakening of his own nature will *automatically* take place, his centres will become vital sources of spiritual power, and his entire constitution will swing into rhythmic activity and consequent usefulness. All this will happen, however, because of his correct adjustment to God and man, to his unfolding understanding of divine purpose and to his knowledge of the various scientific techniques and laws which condition all phenomena, man included.

I am anxious to make this clear. The *Arcane School* being one of the newer intermediate schools deals with the ordinary fundamentals of the secret doctrine but only as a foundation for the new unfolding teaching. Breathing exercises are only given after several years' work, and no emphasis is laid upon their importance because right breathing (esoterically understood) is not dependent upon control of the lungs and the breathing apparatus but upon correct orientation and the rhythmic adjustment of the life to the spiritual order and to circumstance.

The psychology of the inner man, as it conditions the centres in the vital body, is also studied; the emphasis, however, is upon the psychological aspect and not upon the centres; these will function correctly when the thinking is sound and the man is living successfully the dual life of the disciple: right relation to the world of souls and to the Hierarchy, and right relation to his fellow men in the life of everyday.

After a preliminary grounding in the ordinary fundamentals, and a period of ascertaining the measure of understanding possessed by the student, plus some basic instruction in the nature of meditation, the new schools will teach the following subjects:

1. *The Science of Impression.* The disciple is taught to be sensitive to “impressions” coming from his own soul and, later, from the Master and the Ashram. He is taught to interpret these impressions correctly by means of his trained and illumined mind; he learns to distinguish between that which comes from his own subconscious nature, that which is telepathically recorded as coming from the world of thought and from the minds of other men, and that which comes from the world of spiritual being.

2. *The Science of At-one-ment.* By means of this, the disciple is taught integration and co-ordination, contact and fusion between soul and personality and, later, direct relation between the highest spiritual aspect and his personal self. This leads in sequential process to the steady unfoldment of consciousness and prepares the student to profit from the teaching to be given in the Schools for Initiation. The nature of initiation, as an expression of great expansions of consciousness and as the result of self-directed integrations, is also studied.

3. *The Nature of the Hierarchy.* He learns that the Hierarchy can be directly contacted and known by those who undertake the necessary training and submit to discipline. This must be self-imposed and adapted to the nature and point of development of the individual disciple. The various grades in the Hierarchy are discussed, the nature of the initiations to be taken is taught, and the work of the *Christ*, as Head of the Hierarchy, is studied. Thus the disciple has a clear picture of the inner group which is his goal.

4. *The Science of Meditation.* This with its techniques, and its various stages (alignment, concentration, meditation, contemplation, illumination and inspiration) is gradually mastered and by its means the disciple is taught the right use of the mind, right control of thought and right interpretation of all spiritual phenomena. He learns the meaning of illumination with its seven stages, and begins (with increasing effectiveness) to live the inspired life of a Son of God.

5. *The Laws of the Spiritual World* are studied and the disciple learns to apply the laws to himself, to events, to the world and to humanity. These Laws include, among many others:

- a. The Law of Cause and Effect.
- b. The Law of Rebirth.
- c. The Law of Evolution.
- d. The Law of Health.

These laws concern the manifestation of the world of spiritual values and impulses through the medium of the world of material phenomena.

6. *The Plan*, of which the Hierarchy is the custodian and which underlies all planetary happenings, furthering the divine purpose, is brought to the attention of the students; its workings in the past, bringing humanity to its present point of development, is studied; the happenings of the present are interpreted in terms of God's plan and are investigated as a prelude to the future; the immediate step ahead is also deeply considered and the active participation of the student invoked. Later, when the disciple becomes an active part of the Hierarchy, he is familiar with the broad outlines of the divine purpose and can co-operate intelligently with the immediate task.

7. *The Energies and Forces*, which are the very substance of creation, have to be understood and eventually controlled. The disciple learns that all that is manifesting in and on our planet is nothing but an aggregation of forces, producing forms, and that all is movement and livingness. He begins by learning the nature of the forces which make him what he is, as a man; he then learns to bring in a higher energy, that of the soul, to control these forces. He studies the nature of the spirit, soul and matter, usually calling

them life, consciousness and form, or life, quality and appearance, and thus gains some insight into the nature of the divine Trinity and the electrical nature of all phenomena, including the human being.

8. *Esoteric Psychology* is also regarded as of major importance. This marks a shift of attention away from the more material presentation of the old schools of esotericism, with their emphasis upon planes, the material building processes and the constitution of the forms. In the new schools, the emphasis will be on the nature of the soul within the forms and upon that creating agent who works with and in the material world. The seven major types of people are studied; their characteristics are investigated, plus their relation to the seven groups into which the Hierarchy is divided and the seven great Rays or Energies (the emanations that the Bible calls “the seven spirits before the throne of God”). Thus the synthesis of all manifestation becomes apparent and the place of the part within the whole can be clearly seen.

There are many subsidiary studies about which the disciple must know something prior to entering the future Schools of Initiation but the above will indicate the general curriculum which will be undertaken in the newer schools. The *Arcane School* is attempting to give a general grounding in these basic fundamentals, so that the student can profit by the wealth of literature and teaching which the remainder of this century will produce.

The student has, first of all, to gain a general idea of the esoteric teaching; he will then know along which of the many lines he, as an individual, must go; he has to learn to apply the teaching in a practical way, transmuting theory into practice and demonstrating to himself the necessity and the possibility of his dwelling in the world of meaning. He will then recognise the relation of all events, individual, human and planetary, and the why and wherefore of all happenings. As he gains a knowledge of esoteric psychology and masters some of the techniques of the meditation process, he is enabled to place himself upon the correct rung text of the ladder of evolution; he knows then what is, for him, the next immediate step and his next goal for unfoldment; he knows also what he has to give in the service of humanity and whom he is able to help.

He begins to participate *consciously* in the great school of spiritual experience; in that school he eventually finds all his questions answered and his problems solved. He discovers that the major prerequisites for successful esoteric work are patience, persistent effort, vision and sound discriminative judgement. Given these, plus a sense of humour, an open mind and in no fanaticism, the disciple will have rapid progress upon the “Lighted Way,” as the Path is often called. Here you will find himself finally standing before the Door of Initiation upon which the words of Christ are inscribed, “Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.”