

THE SACRED CORD MEDITATIONS

By the same author.

FIRST STEPS IN RITUAL

THE FORGOTTEN MAGE (Ed.)

HIGHWAYS OF THE MIND

INNER LANDSCAPES

PRACTICAL MAGIC AND THE WESTERN MYSTERY

TRADITION (Ed.)

THE RITUAL MAGIC WORKBOOK

THE SERVANTS OF THE LIGHT TAROT

THE SHINING PATHS

**THE SACRED
CORD
MEDITATIONS**

by

DOLores ASHCROFT-NOWICKI

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To
Elizabeth Anderton & John Fox
dear friends, staunch supporters and overloaded supervisors.
Thank you both.

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INTRODUCTION

The Making of the Sacred Cord

One hot summer's day in 1975 in the English county of Hampshire, I was talking with a much loved friend and teacher, W.E. Butler. We had already exhausted the most pressing topics and were now thinking in terms of tea and homemade cake in the garden of his Tudor cottage, 'Little Thatches'. For a while we sat and drowsed in the sun, in a silent but happy companionship. Then Ernest suddenly roused himself and asked if I had ever heard of the Atlantean Sacred Cord and the meditations that went with it. After rifling through my memory I admitted that I had not, whereupon he set out before my suddenly attentive mind a series of mental experiences and exercises symbolized by a simple pattern of beads in varying colours and sizes, knotted onto a silken cord. For the next hour or so I went through a dizzying mental maelstrom as I tried to assimilate the ancient teaching that was being passed to me. It was part of Ernest Butler's teaching expertise that he could and did talk about quite mundane things for most of the afternoon and then, within a short space of time, pass on an amazing amount of knowledge in a precise and coherent fashion that enabled one to take it in and retain it long afterwards.

He explained that the basic idea had been "passed to him by his teacher many years before but he had never actually used it as a teaching tool, for it was fragmented and needed piecing together with additional work. But, he went on to say, he thought it might be useful for future use within the curriculum of the Servants of the Light

School. I returned to my Channel Island home that evening with a hastily-scrawled pattern of the Cord and beads and a lot of equally hasty notes. The next day I filed them away against a time when I could work out a more comprehensive approach to the whole thing. However, the damage had been done ... in those few short hours I had been drawn so deeply into the pattern of the beads that, unknowingly, I had worked, far too quickly and with too much involvement, some thirds of the Cord. The result was to cause upheaval in my life, both personal and spiritual. In the next ten years I was forced, like some weird hot-house plant, to grow in many new ways, most of them uncomfortable.

At the time I did not connect my experiences with the Sacred Cord and the events that overtook me. In the way that things do in occult work, new challenges and new responsibilities took over my life and the notes filed away faded from my memory for many years. Until 1986 in fact.

In that year I was searching through some old files, looking for a particular lecture to use on an overseas lecture tour. Suddenly I came across a file marked 'The Atlantean Sacred Meditation Cord'. Then the memories came flooding back. I forgot about the lecture and instead settled down on the floor next to the filing cabinet to read through the hastily-written notes and look at the sketched pattern of the beads. It brought back vivid memories of that afternoon more than ten years before, recalling the warmth and pleasure we always found in the company of Cheiron, our pet name for Ernest and one that he accepted as his own.

I took the notes with me on the tour and spent every spare moment reading them and going through the exercises, albeit warily as, by this time, I had recognized that much of the turmoil of the past few years had had its origin in my hasty use of the Cord. Gradually I was able to expand the notes into a more coherent and usable form. It also dawned on me that this was an extremely potent magical tool, one that had to be used with great self-discipline in order to get the best use of its powers. Psychologically speaking, it would put pressure on each and every personality flaw it came across, forcing the user to face up to them and acknowledge their presence and the need to deal with them on all levels. Magically, it presented the user with a pathway that spanned aeons of incarnations and gave both hope and a reason for whatever would be encountered in those still to be lived.

The next step was to try it out on experienced students with a lot of occult training behind them before allowing those with less ability to attempt its seemingly simple patterns. For the next two years I used

it in those workshops where I could find a mixture of student types with varying lengths of training time. The results, especially from those people well used to looking inward and assessing their personality structures, were very encouraging. We soon learned that the Cord held traps for the unwary, while for those who attempted to use it along the lines of 'instant coffee', it had a very hard clout indeed. But, used with respect and caution, it opened many important doors. Once into its pattern, it held the feel of being incredibly ancient, yet it could also provide a viewpoint for both the present incarnation and the future. We also learned that it could be used on different levels with very different results, and that it could induce images in the mind that could be too stimulating for those who were over-emotional in character. Those using prescribed drugs of a tranquillizing nature sometimes found their introspective images too strong to cope with comfortably, but on the other hand, they found that use of the Cord without the drug soon dispensed with the root cause of their problem sometimes equally uncomfortably! People used to drinking large amounts of tea and coffee often felt unnaturally energetic, even taking into account the effect of the caffeine. In short, it became obvious that work on the Sacred Cord sometimes affected one on the physical level and this had to be taken into consideration when doing the exercises.

To counteract this, I devised a series of mood-inducing exercises to be used along with the Cord. They dampen down the over-stimulating effect and have worked very well. It must be remembered that, originally, the Cord was devised for the use of Temple trainees and initiates who spent their lives, all day and every day, within the Temple atmosphere away from the kinds of stress we, in the twentieth century, have to endure. We are not as strong emotionally and spiritually as they were and we must approach the Cord with caution.

It must be fully understood that the Sacred Meditation Cord is a major magical implement and that the exercises connected with it constitute advanced mental and spiritual teaching. While the keeping of records is advised in all occult undertakings, where the Sacred Cord is concerned, it is of vital importance in order to keep track of exactly where you are on the journey between the first white bead of the Primal Spark and its counterpart at the other end of the Cord.

The ideal length of time taken to go right through the Cord varies from person to person and this must be taken into account if it is used as a group exercise rather than solo work. On average allow a week to work with each and every bead, with a week's breathing space bet-

ween each path and between each set of beads and its Overhead. This means some forty-odd weeks. You may find that certain beads need much more than a week's work to get the most out of them and the images they invoke. If so, make your mind up to a full year of using, learning from, and growing with your Sacred Cord. That may seem a long time but the amount of information you will acquire during that period will make it seem very short when you look back. Your notebook will make interesting reading in a few years time, for you will be able to see then the growth in yourself stemming from the self-knowledge gained in one short year.

Let us turn now to the actual Cord itself. It is termed 'The *Atlantean* Sacred Meditation Cord', and the information passed to my teacher long ago stated that it was described in this way to account for both its great age and its widespread usage (though in many different forms) among those people whose lands now border the Atlantic. In point of fact, its use in one form or another is worldwide. In my own notes it is described as an aid to memory both past and present and a method to still and concentrate the mind upon the subject of each bead. Its making was one of the first tasks given to those entering the temples of the ancient world and since then its form and usage has spread far and wide through many lands. It is used in many different traditions and faiths, though not always for the same purpose. The Greek Koumboloi are used nowadays more to still the spirit and give restless fingers a means of expression than as a way to span the incarnate ages of man. Likewise the beads used by the Buddhist monks are not quite the same in form or use as is the rosary of the devout Roman Catholic, though the latter, with its spaced pattern of beads, equates most nearly with the Sacred Cord.

Almost every faith has at some time or another used the idea of a string of beads or knots as a basis for prayer or contemplation. The same idea has been used to send secret messages over long distances. The Quipu of the Aztecs was a series of intricately-knotted strings dangling from a piece of material or a small wooden stick and carried by a runner. Its secret language was known only to those in high authority and that secret is now lost to us forever.

The earliest mention I can find of a 'rosary' in Europe states that a 'small string of beads' was found with the body of the Abbess Gertrude (629-659), a cousin of Charlemagne, when her tomb was opened. Others hold that it was St Dominic who brought it into use, having been instructed in its making by the Virgin Mary in a vision. However, strings of prayer beads had been in use in other parts of the world since time immemorial. Early Hindu statues of the God Shiva

and his Shakti, or consort, sometimes known in one of her many aspects as Kali, the Goddess of Death, show the couple with cords of prayer beads many centuries old. So too Kuan-Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Love and Mercy, similar in status and influence to the Christian concept of Mary, often carries in her hand a string of jade or ivory beads. An ancient Hindu name for a circle of sacred beads is *japamala* or rose chaplet. More ancient still is the name *akshamala*, a necklace of berries or 'eyes'. A Muslim rosary is called *tasbeih* or reciter and has ninety-nine beads, one for each of the one hundred names of God, and one large bead for the hundredth name which is never spoken. Almost always the word 'rosary' in whatever language is synonymous with the meaning of The Rose Garden or a Ring of Roses. We, in England, may think back to the nursery rhyme, *Ring-a-Ring-o'-Roses*, with its doomladen message of the Plague, perhaps also remembering the frantic prayers for deliverance from the dread disease that would have been murmured to the click of the sacred beads.

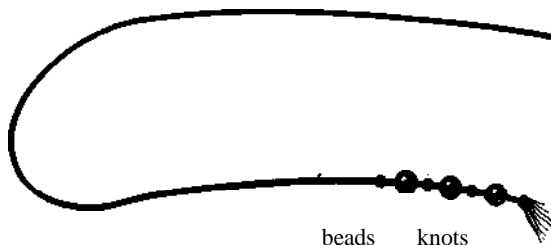
Although any shape can and has been used to make sacred cords of all kinds, the form most often used is the spherical, repeating that most common of forms in nature and indeed throughout the universe, again and again. It tells us that we will return to the beginning once more but on a higher arc. This is the message behind all prayer beads and meditation cords. They mark the passing of time, the number of tasks, the living of many lives and the unending dance of the spiral that takes us further and further into our inner secret selves to search for and find the Secret of the Rose.

So what then does *our* rosary, the ancient meditation cord, have as a meaning? To discover that we must take it step by step and bead by bead. There are six different colours on the Sacred Cord, white, gold, green, blue, red and just one black. There is a reason for the colours, just as there is a reason for the sets of numbers. Each set is a 'Path' with a significance of its own and tasks to explain and fulfil its teachings. The number of Paths is seven, a sacred number in its own right and one with much occult significance contained in it. What we may well have here in our hands is the first rosary/prayer cord of all, the primal template from which all the others derive their shape, meaning and function, which is to turn the heart, mind and soul inwards on that ancient and timeless journey to the centre of being.

So now let us begin that journey with the first step.

THE MAKING OF THE SACRED CORD

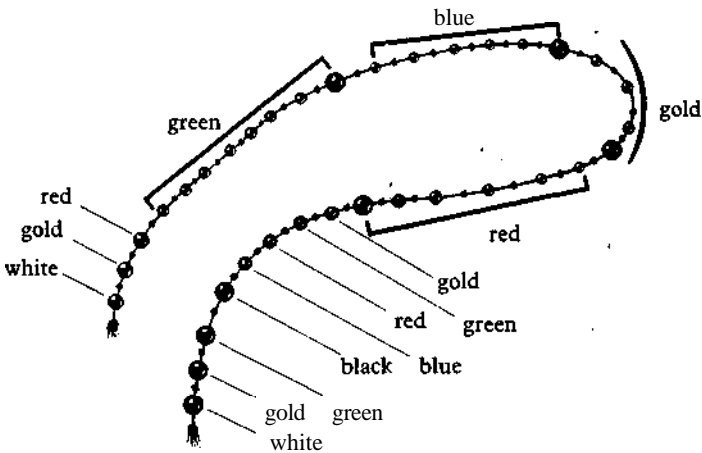
When making the Cord you must knot the three beads of the First Path into place first and go on from there. Do not work from the other end. Each bead must be securely knotted into place allowing a space between each one so that they can be moved a little when in use.



The beads themselves may be of any kind, wooden, plastic, glass or other material. Old necklaces broken up will yield some lovely beads in vivid colours. Make sure that each set, or path, of beads is of the same kind, with a larger one as the 'Overhead' to complete the set. It can disturb the mental rhythm if the fingers encounter a bead in a totally different shape or colour within the same set. The shades of those colours must be your own choice, as is the finished length of the Cord itself. For demonstration purposes in workshops and lectures I use a fairly long Cord with large wooden beads that can be easily seen. (See the photo on the cover of this book.) For personal use a smaller one will be much better. Use a strong but silky thread or cord. Nylon is good, for, with constant use, anything of lesser strength will soon wear out, fray and break and you may lose the beads. This may not seem too big a disaster but, if you are halfway through, the beads already used will have been magnetized by use and to maintain the thread of communication you will have to return to the beginning. The knot should be large enough to prevent the beads from slipping, so allow for this when buying the cord. It is a good idea to obtain the beads first and lay them out in sequence and calculate how much cord you will need. Nylon cord can be bought in many colours and thicknesses, but remember, although white looks nice at first, with frequent handling it will soon get dirty, so look for a dark green, blue, or rust, even black - anything that will highlight the brilliant colours of the beads themselves.

The beads you will need for the Cord are as follows:

First Path	1 large white	Sixth Path	1 small gold
	1 large gold		1 small green
	1 large red		1 small red
Second Path	7 small green		1 small blue
	1 large green		1 large black
Third Path	5 small blue	Seventh Path	1 large green
	1 large blue		1 large gold
Fourth Path	3 small gold		1 large white
	1 large gold		
Fifth Path	5 small red		
	1 large red		



Place the beads in a bag or a clean piece of linen and for some days carry them about with you in a pocket (not in a purse where they will come into contact with mundane objects), and sleep with them under your pillow. This attunes them to your own vibrations and will make them easier to work with when the time comes. Buy a notebook large enough to last you approximately a year, strongly bound so it will not fall apart after a few weeks of use. Once you have the beads and the cord and you have magnetized them you can start the actual making of the Sacred Cord. This in itself is both an exercise and a meditation and should not be hurried over. Set aside at least one and a half hours in which to complete the whole Cord, more if you can spare it. It should be done within one session and not left over until the next day. Make sure you will not be interrupted by family or by the phone. If you are fond of music play something you particularly like

as an unobtrusive background, but be careful what you choose as the influence will seep into the beads. You may be fond of Heavy Metal, reggae, or Bruce Springsteen, but it will not do too much for your Sacred Cord when you come to use it!

Wash your hands thoroughly (in fact, always wash your hands before using the Cord), and sprinkle a little salt into the water as an added cleanser, then lay out your beads in order on a clean white cloth. If you wish, you may add a decorative tassel or ornament of some kind to either end of the Cord, making it into something rare and beautiful to look at and hold, as well as work with in the spiritual sense. Take some time to look at and think about each bead. Admire it. Think of the reason why you chose it, or its colour. Look at the whole row of them and enjoy the way they look. Touch them. Feel their shape and surface texture. You may, for reasons of your own, have chosen faceted beads rather than round ones. If so, think of the shape and ask yourself why it appealed to you.

Make a secure knot just above the tassel or end of the Cord and then slide on the first white/crystal bead (allow a play of about three-quarters of an inch, then make a second knot of sufficient size to keep the bead in place). This first bead symbolizes the Primal Spark of your being. Contemplate this for a few minutes, just holding it in your hand. Now take a large gold bead and thread it on to the Cord and, when it is tight up against the last knot, allow the same amount of leeway and make another knot. This bead represents your Individuality, the oversoul that collects everything experienced during each incarnation throughout the long evolutionary journey. Hold it in your hand and think about this.

Now for the third bead, a large, red one. Put it into place and knot as before. This is the symbol of the Personality you wear now, at this moment. It is the sum total of all the personalities you have used up until this time. There will be others to come during the aeon-long space of time as you search for the ultimate self, but this is here and now. These beads make up the First Path.

Time to begin to thread the Second Path, which is a multiple of seven. Allow a space of at least two inches and make a secure knot, then slide on the first of the small green beads. Now you have a choice. You may slide on *all* the small green beads and give a space of three inches to allow you to hold each bead separately and then knot the Cord, or you can make a knot in between each small bead with half an inch play between each one. Try to make the distances as even as you can for, as with all magical tools, the Cord should be

made to the very best of your ability. No doubt you will make other Sacred Cords in the future, perhaps as gifts for another person, or smaller ones for you to carry around with you during the day. Each one will be better than the one before it and each one will carry in its making the experiences and the knowledge gained by making and using the others.

Each one of these small green beads symbolizes seven aspects of your present life. As each Path has a chapter to itself, the definitions of each set of seven will be gone into later. For the moment, simply hold them in your hands and think of the power of the number seven and whatever you can bring to mind about that number. Make a knot about one and a half inches away from the last small bead and add the large green bead and knot it into place. This bead is the culmination of the seven smaller ones. It holds The Mystery of Seven. This Mystery will be seen differently by each person but it will also expand the mind into new ways of thinking and understanding.

Each large bead holds the sum total of the smaller ones of the same colour. This large green bead ends the Second Path. Take a little time to look at what you have done so far. Put your mind on hold and allow thoughts and images to form. When they do, push them gently into the cord, *not* the beads. At this point you should understand that the most important part of this magical tool is the *Cord*, for it is the link that touches each bead separately, yet binds them into a whole. The Cord is the carrier of experience and understanding that flows continuously through each life as it seeks its divine self at the end of time.

It is time to form the Third Path. As before, allow some inches between the colours and slide on the five small blue beads, either all together or knotting them separately. Like the green beads that precede them, each one holds a multiple of mental exercises and meditations that you must accomplish. Unlike the green beads, these will test your psychic abilities and force you to look deeper into your inner self than perhaps you have ever done before. The experiences will not always be enjoyable but you will grow through them. Hold them in your hand and again allow your abstract thoughts to fill the Cord with images and ideas. Then slide the large blue bead into place and secure it. This large bead holds The Wisdom of Five, again a number of great significance and one that will open up new ways of thinking when meditated upon. It will hold not only its own wisdom but the wisdom you will gain by working through its smaller counterparts.

The Fourth Path is golden in colour. Put three small gold beads into place and hold them in your hand. By now you will have learned that each Path gets progressively more difficult to deal with. The Sacred Cord was never meant to be a plaything but an aid to overcoming blocks in the far memory, for balancing out experiences and traumas and strengthening the mind, body and soul of the Seeker.

In the three small gold beads and the large gold Overhead you will find yourself facing those things you have so far refused to face, either in this life or a former one. You must conquer them ... eventually. Your understanding of the Sacred Cord will not be over after just one journey, though it lessens. Think in terms of repeating this journey at intervals for the rest of your life as new experiences are undergone and new ways are opened to you. In the future you may need to return to a particular Path or even a certain bead to straighten something out. You may decide some time to go into 'retreat' and withdraw for a few days or weeks and go over the whole bead in an intensive scouring of the soul. Once it is made, the Sacred Cord will become an integral part of you, your life, and your eternal search for the divine self. Hold the Cord in your hand and fill it with whatever the mind offers to you.

The Fifth Path consists of five small red beads and their larger Overhead, the sum total of their teaching. You will learn a lot from this Path, not always to your liking, but you will learn and, hopefully, understand and take action. With the Overhead will come an at-one-ness with all things on this planet but the price paid for such knowledge will be the sharing, not only of joy and union, but also of pain and a terrible knowledge of what has been done by your life-wave.

The Sixth Path holds four small beads of different colours, gold, green, red and blue, with one large black bead, the only one of that colour on the Sacred Cord. Each of these colours corresponds to an element and your links with that element. As always, the larger bead collects the totality of what you undergo and correlates it with what you have learned from the Paths taken before.

The last Path is the Seventh Path and it repeats the First Path with one exception. Instead of a red bead there is a large green bead. This symbolizes Balance and in particular the Balance of Power Within. The large gold bead that follows it is Awareness. After just one round of the Sacred Cord your awareness of its influence upon you and your environment will have been greatly enhanced, but not to the

fullest extent. It will need at least three full rounds of the Cord before you can hold this particular bead and *know* its real meaning.

The last bead of all is white, like the first, and again, it represents the Primal Spark, but this time touched by the knowledge of its own divinity. In holding it you will, if you have followed the journey correctly, begin faintly to understand your destiny as a Primal Spark. You may even begin to understand those words in the context of the creation of the universe.

Now you can add the final touch, a decoration or tassel to match the other end of the Sacred Cord. It is complete. Hold it in your hands and let the beads slide through your fingers. While you do, remember the importance of the Cord itself. In time, you will also discover the meaning of the decorations you have placed at each end! Make a small bag of silk, or from a piece of chamois leather, in which to keep your Cord safe and clean. If you prefer, you may place it wrapped in silk in a wooden box. Don't start to work with the Cord right away. Wait until you know instinctively that it is the right time to do so. Try to make it at the beginning of a new tide or season, perhaps a birthday or the New Year, anything that indicates a new start. Make certain that you work *each day*, and allow one week for each bead, with a week in between each Path and between each set of small beads and its larger Overhead for assimilation and the recording of your notes, realizations and experiences.

Try not to miss more than a day or you will lose the value of continuity. If you feel you cannot do this, it is better to wait until a time when you can spare the mere fifteen minutes minimum needed rather than work through the Cord in a haphazard fashion. Without the commitment it will not work as well and indeed, the exercises may affect you adversely.

Always wash your hands before using the Sacred Cord as traces of influence from things touched throughout the day can linger on your hands and, in time, will affect the beads. Do not allow other people to touch your Sacred Cord. It is yours and yours alone. Show them how to make their own or make one for them, but yours must never be touched by another, no matter how close the relationship. They are intimately related to your spiritual growth, hence the name Sacred Cord. You may like to make a smaller version to carry around with you during the day, perhaps to use simply to remind you of the bead/path you are currently working on. Such a Cord is not as important and may be handled by others, but the one you use to work with remains for you and you alone.

There is one final instruction before you start your journey to the other side of time, the short ritual to cleanse the place of working and to protect you while you extend your existence to the subtle planes. Collect a bottle of pure water. It would be nice from a sacred well or from a natural stream or spring. Charge it by placing a hand over it and mentally filling it with light channelled through your arm and hand from the heart centre and say, 'Be cleansed, thou Creature of Water! There is cast out from thee all that is impure and harmful. Be thou blessed is the name of that which created thee.'

Now procure some sea salt/rock salt and charge it in the same way and with the same invocation altering only the word 'water', changing it to 'Creature of Earth'. Tip a small teaspoon of salt into a small glass of water and with it draw an equal armed cross before and behind the chair you are using and on either side. Now touch your forehead with the mixture of salt and water and make the summoning prayer.

'I invoke the Guardians of the Soul to watch to my right side and to my left side, before me and behind me, above and below me that I may work within the sphere of light and to the greater understanding of my spirit.'

You may now work undisturbed by anything from the other levels and within a sphere of light that will keep you spiritually safe. You do not need to wear a robe unless you wish to do so, but privacy is something you must have to work successfully. Take the phone off the hook and warn the family not to disturb you. Use a firm but comfortable chair and, if possible, a small footstool to lift the legs in order to prevent cramp in the muscles. Clothing should not be tight or restrictive in any way. Keep to the minimum of fifteen minutes and absolute maximum of thirty minutes. This is ample time for your meditations. Good luck!

THE FIRST PATH

The Primal Spark; The Individuality; The Personality

THE PRIMAL SPARK

The large bead symbolizing the Primal Spark is white, for white contains all colours in their variations, as you can see when you hold a crystal up to the sunlight. This First Path of the Sacred Cord begins the seeking of the self and the object of that search is to make you fully conscious of yourself as a multi-being that bestrides time and space. Forget the tiny life-span granted to each of our incarnate personalities. That is, at the moment, all that the physical body can bear, containing as it does the power and beauty that is the sum total to date of our experiences as a Primal Spark. Concentrate instead upon the aeons-long training of that Spark, and try to understand that it is the thread of divine fire that links each finite personality with its infinite godhood and, when it finally achieves that godhood, it leaps free of the need for physical incarnation. What lies ahead then we can only surmise.

Basically, the life-wave we know collectively as mankind has been a part of creation since the very beginning. Then it was held in the mind of the multiple-entity we call God/Goddess as an idea, a future design to be brought into manifestation when the moment was right. To enable that idea to fulfil the plans the entity had for it, the design had to be energized by the divine fire energy of the creator's own 'body' in fact. This brought about the primal sacrificial communion, the symbolic sharing of the body and the blood, the bread and the

wine or, in this case, the energy and the image. It is this age-old mystery of communion that gives humanity its claim to divinity as the 'Children of the Gods'. Without this infusion of the sacred substance, there is no spark, no will, no love, no power to create in our own image. With it there is eventual, inevitable godhood and also the eventual responsibility for the creation of a future universe and its life forms.

Each and every Primal Spark, as it descends from its point of creation to the lowest level it is capable of reaching, gathers about itself the substance native to each level. Some Sparks travel more quickly and some more slowly through certain levels, tuning them to certain reactions. This makes them specially responsive to other Sparks with the same kind of reaction. Because each new personality reflects to a greater or lesser extent its Primal Spark type, this reaction is the basis of the 'soul-mate' feeling we get when meeting some people for the first time.

The object of the Primal Spark is the search for individualization within the whole. At the beginning it is just one of an infinite number with no sense of self, only of the desire to search for ... something, as yet unknowable, yet desirable. Through long weary ages, in life after life, it grows and learns through the combined efforts of the individuality and the many personalities used as physical vehicles. Gradually it becomes aware of itself and its purpose. This is the true Grail search, the prize here being the Grail of the divine self filled with the wine of understanding and wisdom matured through countless ages. The Sacred Cord is the story of that search. Its exercises are designed to mirror the trials and tribulations, the joys and sorrows, the peaks and the troughs of the journey, preparing the soul beforehand for the real thing. Even in occult training, forewarned is forearmed.

THE INDIVIDUALITY

The large gold bead stands for the Individuality, gold because that exactly describes it. It is pure, beautiful, and devastatingly honest. Justice personified, in fact. It can be equated with the higher self, the holy guardian angel, the pure psyche, the scales of justice. The substance of the primal self is too tenuous to reach all the way down to the physical level and so it needs a kind of deputy to carry its influence further. That deputy is the Individuality and, to carry the analogy a little further, the deputy is a 'Star Child'.

The Primal Spark and the Individuality are linked together and always in communication. Unfortunately, the same is not true for the Individuality and the personalities, at least not until the latter start to get their act together on the physical level. There are rare times when all the communication lines between the three main parties are cleared for action and then you get the miracle cures, the unexplainable ability to heal others with a simple touch (in such cases the personality is soon burned out by the constant drawing down of extremely Kgh spiritual energies), the visionary saints and the martyrs. You can get a very good idea about the interlinking that is possible between the extensions of the Primal Spark by reading Max Freedom Long's book, *The Secret Science behind Miracles*.

The work of the Individuality is to search for the perfect personality to mirror the Primal Spark. In the meantime, it records in the minutest detail, the progress of each incarnation and, at death, records and stores the best experiences of that life and uses the knowledge gained to better equip the next incarnation. Again and again, as each life is lived, understood and endured, the Individuality at the time of death sifts through its memories searching for the pearls and setting them aside. It is the Individuality that judges and decides what shall be repaid, what endured again, what shall be rewarded and enhanced. In the symbols of ancient Egypt, it is Ma'at, the Goddess of Truth, and the means by which it decides what to keep and what to reprocess are the Scales of Anubis.

With each incarnation another step towards perfection is taken and, inevitably, there will come a time when the last personality is born, lives and dies. Its essence is then drawn up and judged by the impartial mind of the Individuality and, when it is realized that the perfect vessel has been achieved, the higher self knows it is time to withdraw completely from the physical level. There is no longer any need for an earthly incarnation. The Grail, having physically manifested on earth, is now withdrawn to the higher levels to continue its work and training there.

From its new position the individuality is in full communication With its Primal Spark and the progress is much quicker, but there is still a long way to go before the ultimate goal is reached. It is at this stage that the evolved soul undertakes tasks that will bring it in touch with the personalities of those who are still seeking the way, who still need to incarnate in human form. As guides, helpers, and contacts, they help others and, in helping, they learn even more themselves. The aim is still the same, the complete individualization within theoneness of creation, but now upon a much higher arc.

When this goal is achieved by *all* life forms within this universe, it will once more bring together every last piece of the creator-entity's energy mass. 'We' and 'it' will form a perfect *whole*. The ancient legends tell us of the tearing apart and re-forming of the divine sacrifice over and over again. Osiris cut into pieces by his brother, Set; Orpheus and Pentheus torn apart by crazed Bacchantes; Hypatia set upon and rent by the very people she had taught to revere life. Look carefully at every myth and legend that tells of dismemberment, for it is a memory from the beginning of time. Even the breaking of bread and taking of wine at The Last Supper was just such an acknowledgement of the ancient sacrifice of the creator. When finally there is a perfect at-one-ness, it will have come about through the physical experiences and the full understanding of those experiences of every life-form around us. In addition to this, we will also have a full knowledge of the godhead itself through the Primal Spark. The prodigals will have found the way home. The three beads with which we are concerned upon this First Path hold the beginnings of all this.

THE PERSONALITY

The large red bead is the symbol of your present personality, the latest in a long line of prototypes, each of them learning one or more lessons in every lifetime. Never dismiss the personality as being of no importance. Personalities are also a part of the primal energy that ensouled your divine spark in the beginning of time. Remember that in all things, 'That which is above is mirrored in that which is below.' Just as the entity that created our life-wave ensouled our primal selves with its own multiple-energy force, sacrificing itself to stamp life with its own pattern, so each Spark implants a minute part of itself into each and every personality that belongs to it. It knows that in the end it will repeat the great pattern and bring the essence of all the personalities together. It is this implant that is symbolized by the sacred cord. The beads are important, it is true, but the most important thing of all is the actual cord for, like the DNA structure, it carries the ancient primal pattern of life.

This then is the First Path of the Sacred Cord, a trinity, a threesome as befits the idea of 'That which is not, That which is, and That which shall be.' From the purity of the white bead we pass to the mental state of the gold bead and onward to the physical state of the red. This first set of beads tallies with the Qabalistic name of

Eheieh, the point of manifestation.

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So you have made your Sacred Cord and you have learned something about the First Path and its three beads. Now it is time to start work. I have already said that the Cord is to be regarded as advanced work so I will assume that you intend to work as directed, slowly and carefully, aiming to extract as much experience and knowledge as possible from the weeks ahead. Those who disregard the instructions will also learn a valuable lesson, the virtue of obedience!

Although it is true that much knowledge may be extracted from the world memory and from instruction given by inner plane contacts and teachers, nothing succeeds like preparation. This being so, make the first week of actual work one of gathering data by reading and making notes. You will already have bought a strongly-bound notebook large enough to take a whole year's work, so now draw on the first page the pattern of your Sacred Cord. Colour it and sign it, then on the next page, write the date, the words, 'The First Path', and underneath 'Notes'.

During this first week fill your mind with as much information as you can find concerning the Primal Spark, the Individuality, and the Personality. What you learn now can be used to prime the pump of the mind when you start on the actual meditations. *The Cosmic Doctrine* by Dion Fortune is the best source book, published by the Aquarian Press. I also suggest *An Outline of Metaphysics* by L. Furze Morrish. It may be out of print now but a good library will be able to get it for you. My own copy is a war-time edition with no date. Try *Nature's Finer Forces* by Rama Prasad, published by the Society of Metaphysicians, 1986. Add *The Rose Garden Game* by Eithne Wilkins, published by Gollancz, 1969. A book that will help you all the way through the working of the Cord is *The Silent Path* by M. Eastcott, published by Rider, 1983. Make any notes that you think will be helpful under separate headings. Do not meditate on what you read, simply absorb and note it down.

FIRST PATH. FIRST WEEK. THE PRIMAL SPARK

Choose a time when you are not too tired, but relaxed and warm. Select a firm but comfortable chair. Do *not* work the Cord lying down. You will simply drift off to sleep. You will already have prepared the space, cleansed and protected it. You are now ready to

begin. With the rest of the Cord lying in your lap or wound about your wrist, take hold of the first white bead. Hold it in your hand, finger the bead and let its surface become real to your sense of touch. Note how it warms to the heat of your hand. Heat is a form of vibration/sound and this is a connection to the idea of another form of vibration, the primal word of creation, your creation along with all your life-wave. Allow your mind to slip gently into the detached state of deep meditation. In your past or present studies you may be using an active type of meditation or, again, a passive state. In this work you must try to combine both in a new form of introspective analysis. Keep the mind fixed on the data needed for the white bead but, at the same time, allow that data to present you with images, feelings, ideas, and new knowledge.

As you go deeper into the meditation the feel of the bead becomes an anchor point keeping you linked with the real world, yet, at the same time, it offers a thread out on to the higher planes. There is a sensation of being much lighter, of rushing forward into something new and infinitely exciting. The journey has begun!

Let an image of the primal void arise in your mind's eye. See it as a blackness filled with delicate swirls of multi-coloured energy patterns. Watch the changing shapes and mixtures of colours. Sometimes it almost disappears altogether, then it returns and resumes its dance, let the patterns change as they will, for something is evolving deep within the void. If something catches your eye hold the image, contemplate it, study it and take a mental note, then allow it to pass on. You are watching the unfolding of a universe, a universe of which you were and still are, and always will be, a part. Somewhere within those changing patterns there is a point of some substance that will become *you* in the far future.

You see the pattern take shape and sort itself out into levels, planes, layers and dimensions. Keep watching and waiting. Allow mental images to pass through your mind, take mental notes all the time about your images, feelings and emotions. Soon the energy will have formed itself into a recognizable form and this will be the image of the primal entity, the creative source of all things. Deep within its structure is a pattern of form, spirit and mind. When the time is right, the primal entity will impress the Primal Sparks, its own 'children', with this same pattern, thus making them 'in its own image'. This is enough for the first day. Withdraw from the inner image and gradually return to your own time and place. Always allow yourself a full five minutes to come back to full consciousness. Take note of your surroundings and make sure all five senses are working

correctly. Have something to eat and drink and then write down your notes before they fade from your mind.

On the second day, taking the same white bead in your hand, allow the image to form and watch it carefully. You will soon see a pin-point light that begins to pulsate as you watch it. Identify with it. Know that this tiny pin-prick of light within the great pattern is the ensouled Primal Spark from which your present personality takes its sense of being. There is a threadlike connection between you and it which can never be broken. Contemplate this point of light and allow ideas, thoughts and images to arise concerning it. Now withdraw from the subtle levels as before, slowly and carefully and, when you have closed down firmly, take time to write your notes.

On the third day make contact with the Primal Spark by means of a thread of light that emerges from it and flows towards you, establishing the other end in your own heart centre via the white bead held firmly in your hand. This is the Sacred Cord of the spirit that links you always until the ending of this universe. Through it you are always in touch with your primal self. This is so for everyone but only a few are fully aware of it and can use it. Meditate upon the Cord of light and seek to understand its function as a link that keeps the flame of divinity in the human heart throughout the ages. This is enough for now. Return to normal consciousness, close down and record what you have seen or understood concerning the threadlike link between you and the Spark.

On the fourth day, begin as always with the image of the Primal Pattern and the point of light that is your divine self. Now the thread is much stronger and pulsates with light. Be aware that the link holds much information about your origins at the beginning of time. You will see that the Cord begins to establish a combination of colours in which one or two predominate. These are the basic colours of the divine aura and will tend to occur most often throughout your many incarnations on the physical level. The pulsations will also give out a musical note, the prime note of your being. See if you can detect it and keep it in your memory. As the note is sounded its colour will glow more strongly in the linking cord between your Primal Spark and yourself. Close down firmly and end the session, not forgetting the notes.

Now comes the fifth day. Take the bead in "hand and allow the usual images to form and, for a minute or so, contemplate it and the thread of light. Keep in mind the symbolism of the white bead and draw down through the link thread information about origin as a divine spark and its influence on you in this incarnation. Call up the

images of the ensouling of your life-wave by the great entity and watch as they flare into being as each one is pierced by the primal fire of self-knowledge. It is a moment of creation akin to the conception of a child, and indeed that too is a primal image imprinted upon all forms of life. Think on this and any other images, patterns and realizations that may come to you through the medium of the thread. Close down and record your work.

On the sixth day run through everything that you have seen, noted or understood about the primal image, then go one step further and try to contact your Primal Spark by means of the Cord. Do not make too strong an effort, just let your mental contact be light and gentle. Feel your mind touch travel back up the thread and then wait to see if the offer of contact is taken up. Do not expect it to be anything more than a faint throb or mental flutter, for the distance in time and space is so great your human mind cannot fathom it. Just be aware of your Spark and let it be aware of you and, most important, aware of your attention and interest. It will then understand that you have reached a point in your evolvment where you can become aware of its existence. In return it will take a greater and closer interest in you as its latest and most promising physical incarnation. Now draw back, close down and write up your notes.

On the last day just read over your notes and add to them if you have anything further on which to comment.

Keep each meditation to a minimum of fifteen minutes and a maximum of twenty or twenty-five, that is ample time. If you see or sense patterns, images or forms, draw in the notebook. Try to keep your records as comprehensive as possible and, if you have further thoughts the next day on anything at all, no matter how trivial, note them down as soon as possible. On the seventh day add a short summary of the week's work.

FIRST PATH. SECOND WEEK. THE INDIVIDUALITY

Take the gold bead in your hand and allow it to warm up. As before, feel its texture and shape with your fingers and think about its symbolism. You will notice with all the beads that, as they warm to your body heat, they feel more 'alive'. As you contemplate the bead allow your mind to shift levels. The primal pattern is now well-defined and unwavering and you can see that the untold number of Sparks have all now acquired a fine thread that flows downward and disappears into a fine mist as they reach the lower levels. You understand that

each thread is attached to a living thing, but now it is time to turn your full attention to your own thread of communication.

The pattern vanishes and only your Primal Spark can be seen. The thread is stronger and thicker and is now coloured gold. Keep looking steadily and you will see the gradual formation of the Individuality. The end of the thread grows thicker still and becomes a sphere of translucent golden light. Held within it, as it were in suspension, you can see faintly a myriad of brilliant pin-points of lights moving and swaying as if taking part in some intricate dance of life. Each one is the essence of a past incarnation that you have lived, experienced and endured, personalities that have lived and died and added to the strengths and weaknesses of your present personality. These life essences have been retained by the Individuality for future use in the making of the perfect incarnation in the future. The information contained within them is available to you for study along with the knowledge and experience they have gained in the past. The 'people' they once were are no longer important, only what those people experienced and understood is of value now.

From the golden bead of the Individuality the thread of the primal pattern extends downwards again. It is along this thread that all information will pass, in both directions from you as you learn, up to the golden bead and, eventually, to the Primal Spark itself, and of course, from the Spark right down through the levels to your present personality. It will not be an easy task, nor will you have full access to the past knowledge of the self, but you will be able to tap into it for information the Individuality thinks will be useful in your life.

See the end of the thread before you now and feel it connect with you astrally and, more faintly, physically, either in the heart centre or with the three head centres of wisdom, understanding and communication, i.e. head, pineal and throat centres. Connection brings clear vision and you will find you can now look into the golden sphere more clearly and feel the closeness of the link between you. This is your higher self, your guardian of personal memories. Contemplate it quietly, allow it to present you with images and ideas, and note these down mentally for later recording. This is enough for today. Close down the inner sight and gradually return to full consciousness. Write down what you have seen as soon as possible.

For the next five days begin each session with the image of the golden sphere of the Individuality filled with the dancing essence of past lives. Each day through the medium of the connecting thread summon just one of those essences and allow it to show you the highlights of its former existence. Watch carefully and do not allow

yourself in any way to anticipate events. Neither must you *ever* attempt to influence them in any way in order to change the outcome. This is the past. It has been this way for good or bad reasons and you are shown this in order to understand it more fully. You are not here to watch TV, you are here to learn and understand about yourself. Note the good and bad points of each life and see if they relate to your character in this life. It is highly unlikely that you have been a saint — more often than not you will find yourself cringing as one of your past essences struts and capers on the stage of life and makes a complete fool of itself! However, it is not always so and you will often find that you have had lives of quiet happiness, rest periods that comfort the spirit as it struggles upwards. Do not be alarmed if you are shown mostly the most traumatic points of each life. It is a fact that they are the *learning* times and so are remembered most vividly.

Be careful of emotional involvement as you watch. Aim for a 'detached onlooker' kind of attention. If you let your present personality be drawn into the emotion of certain scenes then you will end up depressed and unable to continue with the Sacred Cord work. If you find yourself getting drawn into things, close down and allow a day to lapse before returning, but return to the same life essence, do not leave it unresolved.

At the end of each session, bless the essence you have been working with and allow it to return to the golden sphere, then record your thoughts on what has been shown to you. Remember that because you are in a physical body, that body will exert some influence on what you see. Allow for distortion of presentation and do not take everything to have been exactly as shown. If anything seems to have special importance underline it in your notes. Add later thoughts as needed. On the seventh day do no work, just read over the week's work and write a short summary to round it off.

FIRST PATH. THIRD WEEK. THE PERSONALITY

Hold the red bead in your hand and let it warm up. This bead represents you as you are now, at this moment. As such, you are the sum total of all the former lives now held within the sphere of the Individuality. See yourself as a traveller in time and space on the long road to divinity. This road will ultimately lead you back to the Primal Spark, but with a difference, for that primal self will then welcome you back as a much loved and vital part of itself. (See one of the inner and higher meanings of the story of the Prodigal Son.) It is a part that

will have endured the learning experience of physical matter throughout a long and weary span of time in order that the original pattern may be made whole and complete — as above, so below.

On this first day begin with building the primal pattern as with the first bead, then the thread leading to the Individuality and the golden sphere. Now, in the mind's eye, build the thread that flows downwards to the physical self and becomes joined to it. It pulses with golden light and for a moment simply enjoy the feeling of strength and well-being that is pouring into you from the higher levels. Now, quietly and deliberately starting with the present year, go back over your present life bit by bit. You have six days in which to skim the main events of this life and to match them against what you have already gleaned from the white and gold beads. It may well be that you will recognize certain types of mistakes that the self seems to make over and over again. If so, this is the time to acknowledge them and try to break the vicious circle of habit. At other times you may recognize people or places. Just make a mental note and record the fact. Do not go into it too deeply, you do not want to stir things up ... merely observe and note. Do not dwell too long on the events unless one seems to hold a particular importance for you in this life. Look on it as a slowly-passing parade with certain parts pausing briefly to allow you to evaluate their worth in experience and learning potential.

Note where you may have lost touch with values and beliefs, hopes and fears that were important in your formative years. 'The child is father to the man', says the proverb and in this kind of work that saying holds a lot of wisdom. You may recall things you intended to do, but which circumstances prevented happening. You will find at the end of the week that you have an overall picture of your life up to this moment, one that will enable you to take stock of your present situation and plan for the future. On a more sombre note, it is this bead that is of most importance when the time comes to leave this life. By using it then you will impress the main experiences of this personality on the essence that will soon be withdrawn into the golden sphere of the Individuality.

As before, on the seventh day read over the week's notes and write a short summary. In addition, because you have now completed the First Path, read over the notes for the three weeks of working and, if needed, add a final footnote. You now have before you a week of rest in which to think over what you have learned on the First Path. You do not need to meditate on it unless you wish to do so. It is enough to recall what you understood from the last bead, for you will need that

knowledge on the paths to come.

Do no more than you are asked to do. The working of the Sacred Cord is not to be taken lightly. Its effect on the slowly-evolving soul can be dramatic and occasionally drastic. Taking your time is proof of wisdom already acquired. Keep your notes handy and refer to them often. They will gradually grow into a magical diary that spans the centuries; one to be preserved for those who will follow you.

THE SECOND PATH

The Seven Weaknesses; The Seven Abilities; The Seven Disciplines; The Seven Questions; The Seven Understandings; The Seven Problems; The Seven Rejoicings; The Mystery of Seven

SECOND PATH. FIRST WEEK.

THE SEVEN WEAKNESSES

The Second Path uses green beads, for that is the colour of growth and it is through this path that you are offered the opportunity to grow by facing the truth about yourself. The pattern grows in sevens and each bead needs to be undertaken with honesty and steadfastness. Once you start you cannot stop, for even if you do stop, the green beads of the Sacred Cord will not stop manifesting their attributes in your life.

Use the same approach, the warm quiet room, the privacy, the gentle slip into meditation and, of course, the same protection ritual before each session as with the First Path. Now take up the first small green bead and allow its texture and shape to become fully real to you. Warm it in your hand and call to mind the lesson of this first green bead which is: Delve deeply into your inner self and search out Seven Weaknesses in your nature that you need to overcome.

Take your time and do not be afraid to root them out and admit to them. You are the only one who will know about them or who will read the list in your notebook. You can afford to be totally honest with yourself with this first of the green beads. Don't be hasty, you will probably find that you can come up with a lot more than seven! I did! In the event of this happening, simply go over the list, then select the seven you think really need some attention. Don't waste

time getting depressed about them, just get them out into the open where you can see them clearly and they won't look quite so bad as they do in the half darkness of a fearful mind.

Choose one weakness on which to work on the first day. Look at it in detail. See if you can trace it back to a time when it first manifested and if there was a reason for its appearance. Don't go looking for a scapegoat. Weaknesses are there because we allow them space, we give them permission to exist, and we can deny them existence. So look carefully at the first of the seven, admit to it fully, then ask yourself if you can do anything about it. Ask yourself if you really *want* to do anything about it. Some people *like* their weaknesses. One thing you will quickly learn about work on the Sacred Cord is that it demands nothing of you, even honesty. If you are not honest the forces you let loose inside yourself will bring their own justice. If you admit to a weakness but intend to do nothing about it, fair enough, but once you have acknowledged that weakness, it will not go away. You cannot push it back into the mental cupboard again for it will keep popping up whenever you least expect it. So look at this first green bead and the weakness it symbolizes and see if it can, at the very least, be minimized. Time to return to normal consciousness and make your notes, and choose the weakness to be scrutinized tomorrow.

Take up the first green bead and use it to guide your mind into the inner silence of meditation. Think about the bead and what it stands for. Look at the weaknesses from every angle. Does it impinge on your work, your home, your family, as well as yourself? Try to see it with fresh eyes, or as if it was part of a stranger. How would you advise someone to overcome this weakness? Imagine you are a Samaritan and someone has come to you for advice. What would you tell them? See if it is caused by certain situations or moods. If so, can you avoid setting off the alarm? Can you install a trigger mechanism that will warn you when the weakness is near to the surface? Don't worry if by the end of the week you seem to have made little progress, simply acknowledging its existence is a big step forward. You cannot expect to cure all weaknesses in just one week. But you have alerted your higher self and it will act as a watchdog from now on. You have set the wheels in motion — time will do the rest.

Use the first green bead to symbolize one weakness each day for the rest of the week. Do not take on more than one or you will overload yourself. Note down each weakness, its cause, its cure, if any, and how you feel about it at the end of the session and again at the end of the week. Work your way through it all slowly. If one is particularly

heavy, you might like to observe it for an extra day. If so, make a note to that effect. At the end of the week read through all your notes and contemplate on what you have learned about yourself, your weaknesses and your ability to deal with them. When you have done this write a short summary on the week's work.

SECOND PATH. SECOND WEEK. THE SEVEN ABILITIES

The second week brings a new batch of headaches! Take hold of the second green bead and concentrate on it as you change levels of consciousness and move into the higher levels. This bead asks you to look within and find Seven Abilities that you are not using as fully as possible. No matter how small a talent it might be in your opinion, look at it closely and see if it can be used to greater advantage in either your work, your daily life or to teach to your children and/or friends. We all have abilities but often do not realize the fact. Sometimes we have a talent that was squashed in youth, and, told it was of no importance, we may have left it to lie unused since our early years. Now is the time to dig them all out and dust them off.

Abilities come in all shapes, sizes and types. Some have verbal skills, some have clever hands, some can cook the lightest of pastry and others burn water. Some people simply have the ability to cheer others up and make them feel good. No matter how small, line up seven of these and pick the first one. Look at it, try to remember how long it has been since you last used it, or someone last appreciated it. Look back and recall the time when you first thought of it as a talent, when you first said to yourself, 'I'm good at ...'. In fact, how long is it since you told yourself you were good at anything, praised yourself for work well done? Try it sometime.

Now in your mind's eye begin to use that ability. First of all just watch yourself doing it, painting, sewing, singing, making a rug, taking a photo ... whatever. See yourself taking great care in what you are doing. Now change the viewpoint and actually *do it* on the inner levels. Try to call up all the sensory perception you can and get it detailed. When you have done that, look, listen, touch, smell or taste the result. If it's a painting, see it finished, if it's an elaborate iced cake, smell it and taste it. If it's a garment you have made, put it on. Enjoy your skill and praise yourself. Now begin to withdraw and close down. Make notes as usual.

In the following days repeat this exercise using a different skill each

day and going into it in as much detail as you can. Ask yourself if certain talents run in the family? Would it be something you could teach others? How can you use the talents you have to enrich your life? How can you improve your ability? On the last day choose one of your abilities and make yourself a promise that you will use it on the physical level to make a special gift, even if that gift is very small. When the gift is made, give it to someone who has made life more pleasant for you during the year — a shop assistant who has always been courteous and obliging, a tradesman who has been extra helpful, a neighbour who has been on hand when you needed him or her. Make up your notes each day and write a short precis at the end of the week.

SECOND PATH. THIRD WEEK. THE SEVEN DISCIPLINES

Nobody enjoys the third week! Take a deep breath and the third green bead in your hand and think of Seven Disciplines you could apply to yourself and to your everyday life that would be beneficial. Like getting up an hour earlier and walking to work, not throwing things at next door's dog when it digs up your begonias, sticking to a course of study right the way through ... Can you find within yourself the energy and the determination to apply discipline to yourself, or, at the very least, to attempt to do so? As I have said, no-one likes the third path. But it does help to highlight those areas that need to be looked at if you are to make your life easier in the long run.

Take one discipline each day and look at it thoroughly. See why you are so lax in this department and how much or how little effort it would need to set it right. Work out how much benefit you would get from changing, if any. Make up a short pathworking in which you achieve the impossible and gain the benefit. Make sure that you understand just how applying it would help you and those around you. It may indeed be something quite small, like rolling your socks together instead of planting them in two entirely different places, a small thing, yes, but one that nine out of ten women find the most irritating thing about husbands and lovers.

Disciplines, unlike weaknesses, demand "a lot of hard work to apply. A weakness can be happily explained away, admitted to, or even exploited if you are mean enough, but the very word 'discipline' holds the ring of terror for some people. Don't make life too difficult for yourself and attempt to take on all seven at once. Just look at the

list as you work through them during the week and choose one or maybe two to work on in the future. Who knows, you may find it easier than you thought — a lot will depend on the kind of discipline you need. The summary on this week's work could prove interesting reading in the next twelve months.

SECOND PATH. FOURTH WEEK. THE SEVEN QUESTIONS

The fourth week and the fourth green bead looms ahead. Hold it in your hand and find Seven Questions to ask. You do not need to seek the answers. Simply find the questions and meditate on them, then let them move out onto the inner levels to seek the answers to themselves. In time the answers will find their way back to you, many by roundabout and devious ways, but they will come. This week you will learn to ask questions and you will acquire the patience to let them go and to wait for the answers to return. You may think that finding seven questions will present no problems, but, as always when you try to pin something down it will evade you. How deep or how searching should a question be; should it refer to your work, your life, or your studies? You may come up with several dozen questions, in which case you must whittle them down to the required seven. But be careful... 'What is the meaning of life?' is not a real question — of itself life has no meaning, it is what is learned in the living of that life that has meaning.

Choose one question each day and look at it from all angles. Why is it important to you? Is it a question you have asked before? Does it have a mundane answer or is it one that will demand drastic measures to uncover an answer? It may be a simple thing that has always puzzled you, in which case it is time you set about getting to the root of it. Sometimes the questions that crop up may seem trivial but they reflect a hidden desire to know something on a higher level. From the age of eight I have had an overwhelming desire to discover the identity of the Unknown Soldier. I have thought about it on and off for most of my life. He must have had a family, friends, a name. Have those left behind ever wondered if it could have been their Tom, Joe or William? I have built a dozen different synopses in my mind and have even written several chapters of a book about it. It may be that on another level there is a reason why this is so important to me, yet I shied away from asking the question when I was working on the Cord myself. At odd moments in my life I have had faint im-

ages of First World War trenches and a soft Welsh voice singing snatches of *David of the White Rock*, a voice that is abruptly silenced. This image is then followed by one of a vast, empty hall with several rows of wooden coffins, each draped with a flag. On one lies a single flower. I have an uneasy feeling that I could go down that line of silence and name every man sleeping there. Everyone, that is, except the one bearing the flower.

We all have such questions that we puzzle over from time to time and if they are recognized, placed under scrutiny and then allowed to go forth and seek the answers to themselves they will, in the fullness of time, return bearing gifts of knowledge. Try to understand why each question is so important to you. You may well find a clue in your own life or character. Once you have summarized this week's work, keep a lookout for those answers. They can arrive in many varied and strange ways and always unexpectedly, so you must be alert to catch them. If and when you do get an answer, write it down in your notebook alongside the original question.

SECOND PATH. FIFTH WEEK. THE SEVEN UNDERSTANDINGS

You are now five weeks into the second path and it is time for the fifth green bead. As you hold it, go deeply into your mind and search out Seven Understandings. This means seven times when you have suddenly realized the perfect truth of something, when it has become totally real to you as never before. We all say, 'Yes, I understand', time and again, but do we really understand? To know something or someone so well that we can say that and mean it is rare. We have all said to someone in despair, 'Oh, I know how you feel', but we cannot truthfully say that unless we have experienced the same situation, pain, sorrow or despair. This is what is being asked of you now. Have you *ever* been able to say to someone in perfect truth, 'I understand.' Or have you suddenly seen the truth of something and said to yourself, 'Ah, *now* I understand'?

The lesson this bead holds is never to regret anything that happens to you, no matter how painful, sad, or dreadful. No matter how demanding, good, bad, or indifferent. Learn from such times, store up the feelings, the fears, hurts, and the sense of betrayal in a separate part of your mind. Sometime, somewhere, you will meet a person going through the same kind of agony. Search through your memory and find the link. Then you can sit down beside them and say, 'I

understand, I have been there and experienced the same kind of thing, but look, I got through it and so will you.'

Such times offer a great step forward for the soul, for it has learned to apply what it has experienced and understood for the good of others, for those who have yet to find that there is learning in sorrow.

In looking back and searching out such times, even if you cannot find seven of them, hold in mind that the Cords are timeless, and you will make up the number soon enough. Search each one carefully and, keeping yourself detached from the emotion of the moment, go through it again and again looking for the lessons it contains. If you so wish, and if you cannot find enough in this incarnation, ask for that information from within the golden sphere of the Individuality. If you touch something that is emotionally painful, leave it and return to normal consciousness, then next day, select a different understanding.

SECOND PATH. SIXTH WEEK. THE SEVEN PROBLEMS

Now for the sixth bead. Holding it, turn your mind to Seven Problems that face you at this moment. Big or small, important or not, search them out and note them down. Each day pick out one and look at it from square one, taking it to bits and finding out why it is a problem and how it can be solved. There is one thing you will soon find out — many of those problems are not yours, they belong by right to other people and you have just taken them on. For example, I thought I had a problem with students who would not obey a simple rule, i.e., put their name, address, lesson number and tutor's name on a piece of paper and fix it securely to their lessons. I used to spend a lot of time and effort and stamps sending unmarked lessons around to tutors asking if they knew the writing. (No name and address on the envelope either.) Then I recognized that this was not my problem, it was theirs. If they cannot obey a simple rule, then their unmarked lessons are placed aside until such time as they write and complain that they have had no comments from their tutor. An untidy son/daughter who leaves a bedroom looking like a tip and their clothes all over the house is not the problem of the overworked mother. Two weeks sleeping in an unchanged, unmade bed and no clean clothes will work wonders. I know. No clean underwear, no ironed shirts, having to go out looking like the lazy slob they are will bring most to a real understanding of the word, self-reliance! You

have enough without shouldering other people's problems — be generous, give them back!

When it comes to your own problems, start looking at them from different angles. There is always a solution, the trouble is sometimes it is almost as bad as the problem itself. But, make the first move and you will find it gets easier as you go along. Look at the first one and find seven ways to solve it — the more comic or absurd they are the better — then gradually you will find other ideas will pop up and some will even look viable. Suddenly an obvious solution will be placed in front of of you. But first you have to start the ball rolling, and you do this by using the most unlikely ways of dealing with the problem.

Is your boss the problem? How about getting him picked up by a flying saucer, turned into a frog? Feed him a shrinking pill and put him in a gerbil cage. By the way, is the boss really your problem, or are *you* his problem? You can get rid of a lot of steam this way and take the edge off difficult situations.

By dealing with problems in this way you make them clearer to the inner sight and you get a laugh out of them and make yourself feel better. By using funny solutions you build mental pictures, and they are the key into the subconscious mind where all solutions come from. By making pictures you get straight to the heart of the matter. On the other hand, don't expect instant results all the time, but you will be surprised at the way things will solve themselves.

By working on one each day you allow the mind to change and look at different problems and seek different ways of getting rid of them. It is the variety that helps, for the subconscious hates to be bored and delights in new pictures for its amusement. Often the solving of one problem will lead to a solution for another. Lateral thinking is a strange phenomenon, but it works. The most important thing of all is to look at each problem and find out if it is really yours or one you have accepted from someone else. This often cuts the number of problems by half. Don't be soft, let other people deal with their problems. How can they learn and grow otherwise? In the week-end summary make a note of any answers that may have come up, and which problems have been solved later on, but make a note of the dates.

You must realize that by looking at things in this way you get to know them thoroughly, and something known is far less likely to worry and oppress you than something not fully understood and feared.

**SECOND PATH. SEVENTH WEEK.
THE SEVEN REJOICINGS**

The seventh week and the last of the small green beads ends on a happy and uplifting note. With the bead held firmly in your hand, seek out Seven Reasons to Rejoice in your life. Choose just seven out of what may be many more than that. Sort them out, list them. Look at them from every angle as you did with the problems. It works as well with joy as it does with sorrow. Go into your joys and learn to understand why they are joys and where they come from. Who is responsible for gifting you with such joys? Look at those people and steep yourself in the memory of their love and affection and their warmth of heart. Each day for a whole week fill yourself on all levels with the wonder of joy.

You may find yourself reacting to all this during the day, becoming more emotional. If so, do not restrain it too tightly. Try to remain detached during the meditations, looking at the Seven Reasons to Rejoice from the point of view of the Individuality. It is a time of cleansing after seven weeks of searching into areas you may never have touched before. You are ending on a high note, one that will give you strength and hope as you move further along the Sacred Cord, ready to face whatever it may show you.

Take one special joy each day and look at it, understand why it is joyful and ask yourself if you can give the same kind of joy back to the world. Store up your feelings and let them flow out to others during the day as you move among people. Let them flow upward through the thread between you and the three symbols of the First Path. Such moments are benedictions. Treasure them. Your notes will act as memory stores.

Rest now for a week, you have worked hard on this path and need to gather your forces before the next one. Read your notes for this path and add whatever you feel is needed. You do not need to meditate, unless you feel you want to do this. You may like to prepare for the next path by reading J.H. Brennan's book, *Reincarnation: Five Keys to Past Lives*, in the Aquarian Press 'Paths to Inner Power' series (reissued as *Understanding Reincarnation* in late 1990).

**SECOND PATH. EIGHTH WEEK.
THE MYSTERY OF SEVEN**

Now it is time for the Overhead of the Second Path, the large green

bead. Take it and hold it in your hand. Within this bead lie all the questions and answers of the preceding green beads. There is a mystery to be found within the mystical number of seven. There are the seven greatest sorrows and the seven greatest joys, the seven greatest mysteries and the seven greatest fears. There are many more but they are always different for each man and woman who works through the length of the Sacred Cord. I have but few instructions to give you. The path you tread must be your own — remember that the greatest mystery of all lies within you as a human being. Within you alone lies the answer to the Mystery of Seven. A week is far too short to seek it out, but you can make a beginning and go on from there.

With what you have learned from the small beads you should have a head start on unravelling the large bead. Start with the mystery of what you are, male or female, then find the mystery of the male within the female and vice versa. Look for the mystery that makes you *you*, the mystery of the ego. Look for the mystery of your personal totem form, call it to you in dreams and learn the mystery of shape shifting. Did you know that both your Primal Spark and your Individuality have a secret name? That is a mystery, see if you can find out what they are.

Make notes at the end of each session and at the end of the week read them and add a short summary on anything you may have discovered about the endless mysteries within the large green bead. You might prepare at the beginning of the week by looking up something about the power of the number seven. There are many good books on numerology and they can give many good clues to the inner mystery of the large bead.

Rest for a week before starting the third path for it will test you on the inner levels as the second path has tested you on the earth levels. Record the thoughts you are gathering, remember that everything you learn, all the power you are gathering, all the wisdom you are beginning to understand is passing into the beads and the Cord. By the end of your journey it will have become a repository of power from your far past right up to the present moment. You can update it by taking the journey of the Sacred Cord every three years or so.

THE THIRD PATH

The Five Births; The Five Names; The Five Loves; The Five Debts; The Five Deaths; The Wisdom of Five

The colour of the Third Path is blue, the colour of wisdom acquired through experience, endurance and understanding. It is the colour of those who are willing to use the stored knowledge of the Individuality to relive the joys and sorrows of past lives in order to teach the power of endurance to others. Blue, green and violet are the colours of those destined to teach, though often mixed with other personal auric colours. Blue for the teachers of wisdom, green for those who teach the power of creative thought, and violet for those who purely and simply teach love.

Five is the number of this path, a number often equated with Mars and destruction. But it can also be seen as that number which is halfway to the completion of ten. In the context of this path the destructive powers of five are used to cut away and separate that which is no longer needed from that which is still useful. It is a judge of what has been done in the past, an adjudicator of the root cause of ancient wrongs, but always an inevitably just to the nth degree. It is also a doorway into the past, not for pleasure or gratification, but for the purpose of learning from what has been done, both good and bad. Five is also the number of courage and courage is an integral part of the Third Path.

By now the routine should be second nature to you, perhaps too much so, as things performed daily often pall after a time. Therefore this is a good time to retrace our steps and make certain everything is as good as we can make it. Review the settling-in procedure of cleans-

ing and the protection ritual. You may have become sloppy in its execution, so take the time to watch carefully as you go through the sequence and tighten up the whole procedure if it is necessary. Now move into the meditation level and once you are comfortably relaxed you may begin.

THIRD PATH. FIRST WEEK. THE FIVE BIRTHS

Take hold of the first blue bead and let your mind skim quickly through those Paths and beads you have already encountered. See once more the pattern of the Primal Sparks before they start the long journey across time. See the golden sphere of the Individuality filled with the dancing essences of past earthly lives. You will be drawing heavily on these essences during the next path. Think of the red bead and your present self. Reflect that this work on the Sacred Cord is speeding up its learning processes and taking you that much nearer to the ultimate goal. Pass quickly through the green beads, running over their meanings in your mind, and wonder at how much new knowledge you have learned from them and how much power it has put into the beads themselves. Now concentrate on the bead in your hand. Wisdom of the kind you are now seeking can only be gained through the application of memory, far memory.

Look down at the bead and in your mind's eye see it grow translucent like a crystal but still faintly blue. The mind passes through as if through a doorway into the dimension of memory. Recall the first gold bead and link its power now, filtering that power through the blue bead in your hand. Using the combined power, seek out from the past Five Births you have undergone in the past. Bring to mind the first one, watching through the crystal of the blue bead as if through a window in time.

Keep detached from the emotion of the event or you will be quickly drained of emotional strength. *Do not go into the physical experience of the birth.* If you feel a pull towards it, resist. If the pull continues and becomes too strong then close down firmly and end the meditation. Try again the next day, eventually you will build up a resistance. Observe as much as you can, if possible note the time of day — is it early morning, noon, or evening? There may be something around that will give you an idea of the station into which you have been born, and perhaps something that may indicate what time of year it is, flowers, food, fruit, etc. Lastly look at your mother and try to remember her features. Perhaps if they are represented

strongly enough through the memory link you may see/recognize any others who might be present. Watch the birth until the first cry of the child you were is heard, then let the image gradually fade and return to normal consciousness. Take more care than usual to close down firmly after each session with the blue beads. Failure to do so may cause lassitude and vague fears/panic attacks, perhaps the emergence of random memories from the past at less than convenient moments. Try to record your findings as soon as you return.

Go through one birth memory each day for five days. If you find the experience too draining, work through one every other day but note that fact in your diary, for it is essential to keep your dates organized. Do not on any account take the memory further than you are instructed. You are asked to observe the births only, so apply the virtue of obedience and your learning will go that much more quickly. Note the smallest detail, everything is important. On the sixth day review what you have seen, remembering that your faculty of far memory has been channelled through the thread via the Individuality. On the seventh day read all the notes and add a summary. If there has been anything that was particularly clear, try checking it out via history books, maps, etc. If anything tallies note it down in full, it may be something you can check out via actual documents, letters, paintings and similar things.

THIRD PATH. SECOND WEEK. THE FIVE NAMES

The second blue bead takes the idea further and asks that you recall Five Names that you have borne in the past. These may or may not be connected with the births already recalled. When remembering them try to link names and faces via the essences within the Individuality. If your imagery gives a full-length figure, note the costume and make a sketch of it in your notebook. Try to get the full name if possible, though that is rarer than some might think. If the name seems familiar, try to probe just a bit further, but always go through the link with the original essence for that acts as a protection from the full force of the memories' emotional pull. You must learn never to allow too much to flow through from the past at one time. It drains the present personality and in extreme cases can cause a mix up whereby the older personality seeks to live again on the physical level through the medium of the present personality.

The training of the far memory is an essential part of high occult training, but it should never be used simply as a pleasure jaunt, or to

impress others or even just to satisfy your curiosity. There must always be a sound reason for it. The past is past and should be allowed to remain there. There is far too much glamour attached to 'regression', as it is now called, and digging into the past can give a 'trip' every bit as bad as any of the mind-bending drugs. Certainly it can cause severe emotional damage.

Concentrate on following up just one name each day and on the sixth day read over your notes and decide if there is anything worth following up at a later date. On the seventh day read over the week's notes and write a summary. Make a note of each name and as much extra information as you have been able to gather.

THIRD PATH. THIRD WEEK. THE FIVE LOVES

Now we come to the third blue bead. Allow it to warm in your hand and link up with the Individuality. Delve into the golden lights that are encapsulated within the sphere and recall memories of Five Loved Ones from past incarnations. Again a warning about emotion — keep detached. Let both names and faces drift towards you from the golden sphere and down through the linking thread and into your mind, building up into clear images on the mental screen.

Try to recall what each face was to you — mother, father, husband, wife, child, lover. If a name emerges with the face then note it down along with any other information available. You may experience the phenomenon of the same face appearing each day. If this persists beyond the third day then allow a day to elapse before trying again. If it still comes up there is a good reason for it — delve deeper, *but gently*. The surface memories may feel good but the deeper ones, those causing the recurrence of the image, may be anything but pleasant. If you push too hard you may uncover something you would rather have left sleeping. Having said this, it is very possible that some of the faces may not be loved ones but others who, for one reason or another may have a claim on you. Bless them, but gently pass them to one side and wait awhile, then summon up the image you require.

It is more than likely you will find this bead difficult to handle, especially if you are sensitive to emotion. However, you can learn a great deal from it if you are willing to take things slowly. If you feel the need, take a day off from this work in the middle of the week; if not, then on the sixth day review faces, names, relationships, etc. On the seventh read notes and add the summary.

THIRD PATH. FOURTH WEEK. THE FIVE DEBTS

The fourth blue bead is very demanding but vital to your growth as a future initiate and adept. Through the medium of the blue bead in your hand summon from the golden sphere the knowledge of Five Debts you have incurred in the past and be prepared to pay them, if not now then in the future. You are *not* being asked to call up any overpowering karmic debts. You are being asked to search for, acknowledge responsibility for and offer adjustment for five of the smaller debts we all incur as we move from life to life. If a debt emerges that seems too big to cope with at this moment, summon the power of the Individuality and have it withdrawn until such time as you feel you have the strength and the opportunity to deal with it. You are not being asked to make great and painful sacrifices, simply to acknowledge a debt owing, and to signify a willingness to adjust the scales.

The easiest way to cope with this bead is through a short pathworking. Each day summon up the image of a great hall furnished only with a stone seat before a large mirror and behind them a very large pair of scales. Look into the mirror and summon the details of the debts owing. You may, for instance, have abused a position of trust and stolen something in the past, or you may have placed blame on someone that caused them harm. You might have been a bad master to your servants or abused those who could not defend themselves. Look into the mirror and observe, note the details as clearly as possible. Often the acknowledgement of a debt and a genuine wish to make amends will be enough to balance the scales, especially if the one who was wronged will accept and forgive. Other debts may be demanded in full. It does not matter that the one to whom the debt is owing is not in incarnation, or if they are unknown to you in this life. The scales will adjust in other ways and you will be discharged from the debt.

This will lift an inner weight from you and will also lessen the adjustment due when you leave this body and face the review of the Individuality. In a way you are facing a little of the after-death judgement now. The payment itself will work out in your daily life. You may be faced with a similar situation or temptation and have to make the right decision this time round. Or again you might be called on to render the kind of help you once refused to give. You may not even recognize it when the time comes, but if you do, go into the experience with a good heart, knowing that you are wiping the slate clean of that particular debt. Few people get the chance consciously

to redress a wrong done in a past life. On the sixth day try reviewing your present life in the mirror and see if there is anything there that might be deemed a debt. By clearing it now you will save your next incarnation a bit of trouble. Your notes during this time must be precise. End on the seventh day by reading over the notes as usual and writing a summary. You might also try writing a short essay on 'The Clearing of Debts'.

THIRD PATH. FIFTH WEEK. THE FIVE DEATHS

Ahead of you is the last blue bead and yet another reminder not to allow emotion to affect your look into the past. This bead will ask you to remember Five Deaths you have gone through in the past. More than any other blue bead you will need to keep a tight rein on your emotions throughout this week. *It is essential that you do not allow the trauma of the death, if any, to touch you.* If it does, close down at once and try again the next day. You are asked to remember that you are not to endure it all over again. You must learn to watch without going through the experience, laying no blame, taking on no suffering, simply observing and not allowing your present personality to go through something that has no place in this life. As a future initiate you must learn to walk up and down the corridors of time, and to recall for a specific purpose but never to allow the past to affect your present time. This is easier said than done, and you will probably have a lot of trouble with this bead. If you do, stop the work, allow a week of rest and during that time meditate on the golden sphere of the Individuality, and on the Cord of the divine spark that runs through every life you have lived or will live. Then when you feel ready, try again. *Do not skip this bead and go on to another. You must face it and conquer it.* If you go ahead without doing this, the rest of your work on the Sacred Cord is made invalid.

During each session allow the images to be presented to you in a quiet, unhurried manner. Do not rush through them as there is much to be learned and understood here. Some deaths will be peaceful, even beautiful in their dignity. Others may be violent. As has been said elsewhere in this book, it is the trials and sorrows that teach the soul most of all, and therefore it is those times we remember most easily. As with the other experiences, take note of as much detail as you can, the situation, other people if any, dress, time of day and year, and of course the location. Watch carefully to ascertain if you were occultly aware at that time, for if you were involved in the

Mysteries in that life it will show at the time of death. You may be able to see those from the other side of life who come to greet and help the soul across the 'river of death'. In fact they may well be the same ones in many cases. If this is so it may mean that you are under the protection and guidance of a certain Tradition and the gods/guides/teachers of that Tradition. You may then fully expect them to appear in this life at the proper time.

Note what happens immediately after the soul has separated from the physical, for the chances are it will be repeated in this life. This part of the Cord can be hard to work on but it will show you how small a thing death is and the vastness of the time you have at your disposal.

Having watched yourself go through the experience many times you may finally lose your fear of death entirely, or at least have it diminished considerably. On the sixth day review your feelings towards the fact of your future death in the present life, noting how, if at all, your feelings have changed in this respect. On the last day review the notes for all the blue beads and summarize.

You now have a week of richly-deserved rest. The Path of the blue beads is not easy to tread and you can congratulate yourself on getting through it, no matter how long you may have taken to accomplish this. You may find many new feelings, emotions, ideas and needs emerging from this confrontation with death. Pay attention to them and note them down. There will be a temptation to rest longer than a week — try not to give in to this. It is vital that you proceed in a steady and disciplined manner for the Sacred Cord to work out through your body, mind and spirit. Keep in mind that the entire Cord is a learning process that is training you to use the higher faculties of the mind and the more subtle levels of the five physical senses. Soon you will be able to recall, analyse and understand any past experience and add to your knowledge of self and the universe of which that self is a vital part. At the same time you are being shown how to cope in the present span of life and prepare for those still to come.

THIRD PATH. SIXTH WEEK. THE WISDOM OF FIVE

Now you are ready to tackle the blue Overhead and this contains the Wisdom of Five. First check back over your notes for all the blue beads, then for five days choose one item, one memory, from each

blue bead and look at it again in quiet contemplation. Try to step back even further and look at the images as if from the point of view of the Individuality. Use the knowledge you have gained so far to invoke within yourself the impartiality needed to make a true judgement. Taking each experience in turn, decide what you would accept as being good enough to use again in a new personality, and what you would reject for inclusion in the future if you were the oversoul of the golden sphere. Write down your findings and add a summary on your understanding of the Individuality and its work.

Now rest for a week and gather yourself together for the next path which in many ways could be even harder than the last. In the interim you might meditate on the Primal Spark and its journey across time. Study the diagram of the beads and draw it yourself, colour it and use it as a reference chart for your journey or to instruct others.

With the next Path you are halfway through the Sacred Cord and its influence on your daily life should have become quite noticeable. You should be calmer, less stressed, and able to cope with upheavals that may occur in your work or home life. Carry it further and if something happens to upset you or need urgent attention, a few moments with the Cord just lying in your hands will act as an energy charge. You have been filling the beads with an amazing amount of power over these past weeks, now you can use that power to help yourself and others in the challenges of day-to-day living. The energy, once enclosed within the Cord, becomes self-generating, plugged in as it is to the primal creative energy of the cosmos.

THE FOURTH PATH

Three Mysteries to Contemplate; Three Truths to Face; Three Betrayals to Forgive; The Power of Three

Like the bead of the Individuality, the colour of the Fourth Path is gold. Gold for purity and truth. This path will test your ability to work in the Mysteries of the Temple, where you must face the test of the Adytum where the God/Goddess resides. You have walked the Outer Court, and entered the Inner Court, but between the latter and the Adytum there are three golden steps leading to the Holy of Holies and the three beads of this Path represent those steps which take you to that sacred place from which no man or woman emerges unchanged. You stand at the halfway mark of the Sacred Cord.

The number of this Path stands for form in all its potential, a number of great power, the number of creation. Each of the golden beads holds three testings or offers three experiences. Take hold of the first golden bead and swiftly go through the beads you have already travelled. You will notice that the primal pattern has changed again because it alters and grows with every new piece of learning you assimilate. Likewise, the golden colour of the second bead gets deeper and the red bead of the personality becomes more vital. The seven green beads and their Overhead, seen from a distance in time, seem to promise a still greater understanding of the Mystery of Seven when you work through them again in the future. The green beads glow like emeralds, full of the strength that your patience, effort and dedication have put into them.

FOURTH PATH. FIRST WEEK. THE THREE MYSTERIES

The gold bead in your hand glows warm and holds the promise of the Empty Room, the Sacred Adytum, the Heart of the Mysteries.

Relax and tune your mind into the preparation of the place, then when you are ready, gently allow yourself to move into the altered state of consciousness where the work of the Sacred Cord is done. The golden bead is held tightly in your hand and you form the link with the bead of the Individuality and call for the strength to face the Three Mysteries of Birth, Life, and Death. For each mystery you will take two days of work and meditation. The first is Birth. You have been prepared for this by the births you have watched in the path immediately before this one, but now you are looking at the Mystery of Birth. Look at what goes before it, the conception, and before that the vortex of power and passion created by a man and a woman that draws the incarnating soul towards earth and the promise of a new life.

Alter your perception and watch as the structure of the physical body begins. See how the DNA spiral builds, adjusts, and develops into the minute aquatic creature that will, in nine long dreaming months, become a human being. This is how you began. Let the miracle unfold before you step by step until the child is ready to be born. At that moment look beyond that child to its parents, grandparents and further, right down the line of life, the unbroken line of life that led to this particular birth. Watch as the line reaches back into the distant past and try to take in the immensity of it all. Within four centuries, allowing 25 years for each generation, one person will have over 32,000 ancestors. You will suddenly realize that the interrelationship between people is far closer than is understood. Every living man or woman on this earth has an unbroken line of descent from the earliest human being. A line that meanders from country to country, from the highest station to the lowest. Like the Sacred Cord, it stretches back in time and on into the future.

Withdraw from your contemplation of this vast subject and return to your own level. Note down what has arisen from your meditation, and return to the same subject on the following day.

Meditating on the Mystery of Birth for the second time, go now into the other aspects of birth. It is not only mankind that reproduces its own kind. Look now at the animal and plant world. Is birth less a miracle because it is a dolphin or a cat, an oak tree or a cabbage. All

grow from the implanting of the seed of life. All have a link that goes back in time to the earliest beginnings of life on this planet. Nothing that lives today on the earth is from failed stock. It cannot be or it would not be here, therefore it has an ancestry that reaches back into the dawn of time, perhaps to a point where it branched off. Further back and all vertebrates are one. Further back still and all life is lived in the warm seas that surround a still cooling earth. If we go back far enough, we reach a point where there is only one type of life, supremely adaptable and holding within itself the potential of every living thing we see around us today. With this in mind is it so unthinkable to call a whale 'brother'? Or to be able to touch a centuries-old oak tree and feel its heart? How far back did we lose this grace? How far will we have to travel to regain it? Return to normal consciousness and make your notes. They will make interesting reading when you come to write your summary.

Now comes the Second Mystery, the Mystery of Life. Take the bead in your hand and shift into the meditative state of being in which your Cord work is done. Think upon a handful of corn seed strewn on fertile soil. With your inner sight see how each tiny fragment of life snuggles down into the warm earth, burrowing deep and then resting. Finally, a small, greeny-white tendril appears and digs even more deeply into the earth. The same thing is happening where the seed has penetrated. One by one the tiny roots sink down seeking water and nourishment from the minerals in the earth itself, drawing them up into the parent seed.

Push your consciousness down into one of those tiny growing seeds. Feel the strength to live and grow that is built into it. Become one with its desire to reach up into the air and feel the sun. With the root system built, the corn seed now begins to force its way up through the soil and you go with it, feeling the blind urge to grow pushing upwards. You begin to feel the warmth of the sun filtering down and sometimes the earth around grows moist as the rain seeps down to feed the roots. Then the first tiny shoot lifts above the surface and you can feel through the at-one-ness link the satisfaction that fills the corn shoot. Day by day you grow taller and stronger until you can feel the ears developing and plumping out into fine fat heads of corn almost ready for harvest.

Yes, what of that? Soon the corn will be cut. Will it be similar to the death of a human being? The corn has one great oversoul in which each seed participates and through which it attains its immortality. For the growing things their many oversouls are of the

greatest importance and through them they live in connection with each other and with other forms of life. The oversouls themselves have a much higher consciousness and an understanding of their place in the universe. The corn has no fear of the scythe, for it knows that its multiple consciousness will survive through the oversoul. Now leave the corn swaying in the warm sunlight and return to your normal consciousness. Make your notes as usual and perhaps add a drawing or a picture of a cornfield to remind you of this inner journey.

On the second day of this Mystery, once you are well into the altered state, build up an image of a deep forest interspersed with miles of tundra-like wastes. Ahead of you there is a pack of wolves. They sit or lie quietly as if waiting. Stand for a few seconds and sniff the air, fresh and cold, scented with pine, and the musky, unpleasant smell of the wolves. Deep within you there is a feeling like a giant shiver. It wells up from your feet and explodes in your head. You drop to all fours and look down at two fur-covered paws. You, too, are a wolf! Sniff the air now. How different it all is! One sniff reads like a book. In the pack ahead of you there are four females and six males. One of the females has just dropped a litter of cubs the day before. Two of the other females are still carrying. The fourth is old, past bearing age, but highly intelligent, the leader of the pack. The males have a totally different scent, more acrid. The air also tells you of woodsmoke not far away. Man! The image recalls the smell of blood, fire, and, more distasteful than either, of men themselves, sour and bitter, and something else — fear — which has the smell of stale urine and sweat.

You move cautiously into the line with the pack and wait. The old she-wolf looks over her shoulder and throws her head back. The signal to move out. You all rise and pad silently off into the forest. Man is something to be avoided. As you move with the others, you become aware as never before of the scent of the world about you. Rabbits near by, the earthy smell coming from a mound of soil off to your left, some burrowing animal, the smell is familiar and ... tasty. You feel the saliva run down your teeth and drip from your jaws.

Deep into the forest goes the pack, hunting for food. A group of feeding rabbits is come upon unawares and you feel your borrowed muscles react instantly. There is a flurry, a blur of speed and within a few seconds several rabbits are dead. Life is life, you, as an animal, must eat; the rabbits must eat; you cannot eat grass but a rabbit is tasty. The kill is clean and swift and the young cubs will eat tonight.

It is enough for you. Withdraw now from the body of the wolf and

return to your own body. Close down very firmly. In these two days you have learned to enter into the world of the plant and the animal life of this planet in order to understand that the Mystery of Life involves all life on all levels, even if one area of life preys upon another. We are all a part of each other. An animal dies and its physical body rots into the ground. Later that ground is used for growing and the essence of the animal, retained by the earth, will pass into the plants. We eat the plants and the animal essence, mixed with that of the plant, becomes a part of us. Nothing can be divided. All is one. This is part of the Mystery of Life.

The Third Mystery is one you have already faced in your own past. Death. Now, however, you will face it as a Mystery that affects all life. With the bead held in your hand enter the usual state of meditation and see before you a young girl dressed like a nurse. Her face is bright and smiling. Her eyes bright and dancing with laughter. You are in a ward of a children's hospital. The young nurse leads you through the ward to a quiet room where a young child is on the point of death. The parents stand beside the bed distraught and tearful, but the nurse goes to the child and says that it will soon be time to leave. She bends over and kisses the child and its eyes close gently. The nurse lifts it up and, leaving the physical body on the bed, carries her burden out of the room. You follow behind to discover a garden in which an elderly couple wait to take the child in their arms. You turn to the nurse but find instead a man in uniform standing by an ambulance waiting for you to join him. A short ride brings you to an accident at a cross-roads with a crowd of people milling about. The man seems to get through very easily and, with you by his side, reaches a man trapped in his car. You look at the ambulance man and his smile is the same as that of the nurse. Together you lift the man free, leaving the shell of the body still trapped. In the ambulance he is made comfortable and your companion tells you that he will be taken to a place that looks like a hospital until he is strong enough to face his death.

Without warning you find yourself in an old farmhouse. Close to the fire is a basket where a much loved sheepdog is quietly facing the great change. The farmer and his wife are close by, knowing there is nothing they can do, but wanting to be there to ease the way for an old and valued friend. You enter silently with your companion and watch the old dog raise its head and struggle to raise its tail, thumping with the last of its strength. The Goat-Foot God calls him softly by name and the essence of the dog leaps joyfully from the

basket and its old form, pausing to give a last loving lick to the hand of his master, then the three of you are away over the hills laughing and leaping to the sound of the ancient pipes.

You sit with them beneath a tree and listen to the quiet words of the helper. 'Death is never a mystery to the one who endures it, only to those who are left behind for a while. It is the death of others that is the mystery. Death is different for every living thing and must be faced alone, but the facing, when it comes, is always what the heart expected. A greater mystery still is that all things change but nothing dies. We simply pass from state to state, always changing, always learning. To each one the bringer of change is someone known and loved. Even the most hardened criminal is met on the other side of life.'

Withdraw now and return to your own dimension. Close down firmly and write your notes.

On the second day of this Mystery, upon moving into the higher levels, build from the astral matter a garden full of flowers and call to that garden those of your family and friends who have passed through the Mystery of Death. Talk with them and enjoy their company. Understand that they have not left you for good, that they are simply 'out in the garden somewhere' and you can go to them whenever you wish.

A Mystery is not something to fear, but something to stand in awe of, something wonderful and full of surprises, something magical and beautiful in and of itself. Death can be like a Christmas stocking — full of the unexpected and with something sweet at the last.

FOURTH PATH. SECOND WEEK. THE THREE TRUTHS

Now you come to the second of the golden beads, and these are the Truths to Face. The First Truth is simply this, that you will grow old in your turn. The Second Truth is that nothing that you treasure, or have spent time collecting, or which gives you pleasure, can be taken with you at the end. The Third Truth is perhaps the most bitter and it is this, that in time you will be forgotten. Immortal fame is given to few among the races of mankind. Most of us will live only in the memory of those who love us, for a short time and then be forgotten.

For this second week of the gold beads we will approach things in a different way. Each of the Truths will take two days as before, but

the first day of each Truth will be spent in simply thinking about the subject in an ordinary way. Take hold of the gold bead and settle back in your chair. If you have yet to enter middle age or old age, think of what lies ahead of you. Really look at what you can expect to happen. You will certainly slow up, you will get stiff joints, you can expect more aches and pains. Your face will sag and other parts of you as well. You may think that this is not fair, that at the time when you are just beginning to get the hang of living, living gets harder to do! Well, that is the way of things. It is a Truth to face. Something that will happen whether we will or no.

Is there anything you can do about it? Yes, you can keep healthy and fit as long as you can. You can keep your mind alive by using it to the best of your ability. You can, above all, remember this, that the child in you, the young adult in you, can never be lost. They will get covered up a little by the later years but they will never fade out entirely — that is, if you want to keep them. In your meditations, in your pathworkings, in your fantasies, they will emerge as they were when you were young. If you are already in middle age or older, then think about being older than you are at the moment, and about the years you have had and will still have. There is a proverb, 'Those whom the Gods love, die young.' Many believe this to mean that the Gods inflict an early death on their favoured ones. Not so. Those who are beloved of the Gods die young in heart, mind and spirit, if not in body. Think on these things in your contemplation of old age. Then write down your findings at the end.

On the second day go into the future and watch yourself growing old. See yourself as being loved and honoured for your wisdom, sought out for your youthful heart. Plan ahead for this time, look at the things you will still be able to do, even if they have to be done more slowly than now. Make up your mind to keep using your mind and your talents and never to let them fade for lack of use. Build an image of yourself as an active, mentally alert, older person and lock on to that image. Now return to your own time and bring those ideas and promises made to your future self back with you and key them into your present self. Now make your notes and underline them.

Now comes the Second Truth we must face. We can take nothing with us when we finally go. On the first day take a notepad and pen and sit with the golden bead in one hand and write down a list of all the very special things you possess that you would like other people to have when you have gone. Think about this very hard. Each item should go to a person who will benefit from having it, or who will use

it, treasure it, because it belonged to you, and who will think of you whenever they see it. Write down each item and beside it the name of the person to whom you would like to give it. Now think up a little note to go with each one. It might be a wish that they will enjoy it as much as you have done. It might simply be a thank you for what they have meant to you. So many people are superstitious about doing this, thinking that it somehow brings death nearer. But death will come at the appointed time and not one second earlier or later. When you have finished, close down and put aside your list for a few hours, then read it over and see if you wish to change anything.

On the second day, take out your list and go over it, looking for items that you feel you could bear to give away *now* rather than later. You may find some, you may feel you want to keep them all for a while longer. But you should keep this list. Update it as you collect other things. Change it if you wish to do so and *always* go through it once or twice a year and give away those things you can part with. Why wait to die before you give something to someone? Unless you use it every day, why not pass it on *now* and have the pleasure of seeing their faces and the enjoyment of their pleasure? That way you don't miss out. Let your mind slip into a quiet state and build images of all the things in your list. Recall how you came by them and relive the pleasure you have had from them and perhaps still do have from them. Then detach yourself from their 'power to hold you', withdraw from them, cut off from them so that, although you can enjoy their use, they do not *own* you. There are always things that exert an enormous pull on us, things we imagine we could not live without, but one day we will have to give them all up and go on alone and empty-handed. If we do it now, consciously, we can free ourselves of a great deal of pressure and, at the same time, release a lot of energy, energy that we use to keep tags on these possessions. The Cord is not telling you to give anything away and leave yourself with nothing around you to enjoy. It's saying that maybe it's time to lighten the load a little. Or, try not to place too much importance on things and allow them to possess *you*. At the end of the session make your notes as usual, also note if you have given anything away, and to whom.

The Third Truth to face is perhaps the hardest of all, *that in time you will be forgotten*. To the ego it is unthinkable that inevitably we/I/you will not be remembered, but it will happen, and that fact must be faced and accepted.

Take hold of the golden bead and move into your meditative state.

For a while, link in with the life essences within the sphere of the Individuality. Look at them and allow images from the past to come before you. You must understand that all these past personalities are now forgotten. Those who would have remembered them have also passed on to other lives. Even you, for whom they were once the ultimate reality, have forgotten. It is only because you have reached a stage in your own training that you can recall them and then only briefly. The only place where all that has lived and died on Earth still exists, is in the world memory. Look now into the future, a future that no longer holds your present personality. Your family are old and ready to move on themselves. There are new faces around them that you have never seen, to whom you are merely a name. Look further to a time when, although the line moves on, even your name is but an entry in a family Bible, or on a yellowing piece of legal paper. But the essential you, the Individuality, exists and has its being in a different form, and beyond that is the primal self in which all selves are contained. Bring your thoughts back to the golden sphere and realize that here, at this point, *you* can remember yourself as you were, that it is only within the earth plane that you are forgotten. Here, on the higher levels, all that you ever knew and loved still exists and is still there for you to touch. Although on Earth you have only those who have been close to you in *this* life, on other levels you have access to everyone you have ever loved. You must realize at this point that you are a multi-level being trapped for a space of time in a single-level body. Withdraw now and close down. Make your notes as soon as you can, but allow random thoughts to occur during the day concerning these things.

For the second day contemplate the fact that this bead can be symbolized by the two-headed god Janus for, if you will be forgotten in the future, when no longer in incarnation, equally so before you were born into this time, no thought of you existed. Within the short span of one lifetime you will be held in the mind of others and then pass into the world memory to be held there forever. But the vast panorama of your existence is far greater than the course of one life. The primal *you* will exist across an eternity of time and space until all things that have ever existed will become one, containing all thoughts, ideas, desires and primal egos. Added to its inherent divinity will be the essences of all physical experiences and realizations of those egos, and it will be an integrated deity that is conscious of both heaven and earth. That which created us in the far-off beginning will then be free to go further on its own quest, leaving behind that to which it gave life and spirit to bring about a completely new creation.

Withdraw gently from your contemplation and close down firmly. Write your notes as soon as possible. You have now finished the second week of the gold beads. Use the seventh day to read over all your notes and add a short summary to round everything off.

FOURTH PATH. THIRD WEEK. THE THREE BETRAYALS

Now you can take on the third and last of the small gold beads. This asks that you *forgive Three Betrayals*. As before, take two days for each of them and use the seventh day to review and summarize. You may find that this week's work will hold a certain amount of emotional pain. Remember how you have dealt with this on the other Paths. Detachment from the immediate self is the only way to cope with this problem. You may still find it difficult, but it will lessen the impact.

Take a little longer over your relaxing and preparation, then allow yourself to quietly enter the altered state. With the gold bead held in your hand the First Betrayal to forgive is that of yourself, for not achieving your full potential in life. We all have dreams and ambitions we have lost or set aside because of circumstances, not all of which are beyond our control. For this first day go through your adult life and seek out those dreams and ambitions and see how far you have been able to take them. You may have settled for something entirely different or you may simply have reached a certain point and decided not to bother any more. Your learning processes as a human being go far beyond the daily work by which you earn your living. It also involves the dreams and hopes and yearnings hidden away inside you. It is that part of you that has been betrayed and to which you must offer recompense.

Do you remember the little dreams and hopes you had when a teenager? Have you achieved any of them or even a part of them? You are never too old to go some part of the way to making a dream come true. I know someone who dreamt of having her own horse when she was a young girl. Something that she could never afford even now, but she has adopted several horses at an animal rescuecentre* and, with a modest donation each year, she helps to feed and house them. They are *her* horses. She has a part in their well-being and visits them when she can. It is only a part of the dream but it is

* *The Bransby Home of Rest for Horses, Bransby, Saxilby, Lincoln, LN1 2PH*

enough. By pushing a talent or a dream or an ability down into the subconscious you betray your dreams. Open up your magic box of dreams now and look at them. See if it is possible to bring even a little bit of them into your present life. Think all this over very seriously and deeply and then close down and withdraw. Write up notes and, if anything has come to mind with regard to old dreams, see if you have anything in the house that reminds you of those days. If so, put it where you can see it when you meditate on the second day.

For the second session, look to your present line of work and ask yourself if you are reaching your full potential, using your mind and energies to their fullest extent. If the answer is no, then start looking at ways to change the situation. To allow your mind, the most complex and beautifully integrated machine on earth, to stagnate is a betrayal of your Primal Spark. Go carefully through your work and look at it in detail and decide if you can expand it, or at least your part of it. If not, then are you working as efficiently as is possible or can it be done better and with less stress? When you don't free your spirit you betray it; when you don't use your mind well, you betray it; when you abuse your body, you betray it. Lastly look at that body and see if it too needs your loving attention. The physical vehicle is a precise piece of machinery and has a rudimentary intelligence of its own. It is in manifestation because of an agreement between the spirit, mind and the four elements. To degrade it is to degrade and betray those elements. Because they are subject to man, they must obey and can be greatly harmed by the physical abuse of the body.

You will have heard of the term, 'The body is a Temple'. It is more than that. It is a complete universe. Each and every atom is a tiny sun around which revolve particles like a small planetary system. To these infinitely tiny systems *you* are the whole universe, a god, a creator who is the holder of life and death. You can destroy entire minute galaxies in seconds with one injection of heroin, one sniff of cocaine, too much alcohol, too many cigarettes. Because the divine fire in you permeates every cell in your body, you also die a little with each cell death. Remember when meditating on the white bead at the beginning we spoke of the creator/entity sacrificing itself to imbue each Spark with its own energy? Your spirit is in the same relation to the structure of your physical body. Withdraw now and return to your own universe. Each one of us has the potential to make his/her life rich and rewarding. Do it!

The second betrayal is The Betrayal of Others in the Past. Do not make the mistake of thinking you have never done such a thing. We

all have, again and again in each life. It is, unfortunately, one of the worst traits of humanity. Holding the golden bead, link into the sphere of the Individuality and search out a past betrayal of another. Summon up the memory and watch it played out, always taking care to detach your emotions from the image. Look at it and judge it, for we are our own greatest judges in these cases. Assess the harm, the hurt and the learning experience of that action and pass judgement upon yourself. Look deeply into your heart and ask if there is a sincere regret, heartfelt enough to balance the scales, or if not, then make sure you fully realize that the betrayal will have to be atoned for within the space of three lives. When you return to your own level, write down the synopsis of the betrayal as far as you are aware of it, plus your judgement on it and your assessment of the matter.

For the next day you must look through this life and seek out some action, word, or behaviour that was a betrayal of someone's trust in you. Look for just one instant and examine it carefully, the events that led up to it, the root cause and the effect it had on your life subsequent to that action. Go through it again and again until you have fully understood all the implications of what you did. If it is still possible to redress the wrong, try to do it, if not, then admit to your action and offer recompense in your heart freely and without thought of self. If you can do that then you can pass to the next part for, while it is usually fairly easy to forgive others, it is far harder to forgive ourselves. Return now to your own time and write down your findings as fully as possible.

With the Third Betrayal you will again need the help of the Individuality. Build up the image in your mind of the golden sphere and summon from it the memory of a time when someone *betrayed you*. Again, detach yourself from the emotion and simply watch the image as it is presented to you. Look beyond the immediate action to the cause of it. There may well have been reasons you knew nothing about at the time. You may have lived the rest of that life and gone into death believing that there was nothing that could condone the betrayal of the personality you were using in that life. Look now from the vantage point of being outside time and see each section of what happened. But, no matter what you find, try to forgive that betrayal with a loving heart. Look at it as something that has gone and, no matter what it cost you then, it has passed and you have learned from it. If you can forgive, you will lift from a soul somewhere a burden of guilt, wipe a debt that otherwise he/she will have to repay. In doing so, you will also wipe out a debt owed to you. It is as simple as that.

There may come a time when you stand upon the threshold of adept-hood. If that time occurs in this lifetime, then in the vigil that precedes it, in the quietness of the heart, try to find the strength to say these words:

Of my own free will and with a loving heart I forgive all those who have in the past betrayed me or committed ill against me in any way. I lift from them the debt that is owing and in its place I grant peace.

From the biggest debt to the smallest, from the first life lived to that moment, you will pardon each and every ill done to you and lift a small piece of karmic debt from many divine sparks struggling as you are struggling to find a way forward. You also clear from your own spirit any feeling of oppression caused by the knowledge of those debts. On that night the 'Morning Stars will sing for joy.'

Return to your own place and write your notes. On the seventh day review everything and summarize, then relax for a week and give heart, mind and soul a complete rest. You have now passed the halfway point.

FOURTH PATH . FOURTH WEEK . THE POWER OF THREE

When the time comes to resume the work, take time to reassess your performance of the protection ritual and polish it up if it needs it. Look at your beads and go over their meanings right from the start and become aware of the power you have already poured into them. Then start the first session of the work with the golden Overhead. Within it you will find the Power of Three. So far, you have coped with The Mystery of Seven, The Wisdom of Five and now The Power of Three. Three is the number of form, and the first form is a triangle. It is also the number of The Great Mother and you will find her attributes within this bead: The Triune Power of Love, Wisdom and Understanding.

Hold the bead in your hand and start the first session by looking at the Power of Love. Call to mind the faces of those who loved you. Remember how you summoned them from the golden sphere when working with the small green beads. Look at them again and with the further understanding you have gained since then, examine your love for them and theirs for you. Watch the images provided for you with a sense of belonging to and with each one of those people. Let

your love flow out and touch their essence; wherever it may be at this time, they will answer that call and their thoughts will return to you and fill up your soul. Those that truly love will return to each other, life after life, helping each other to grow and learn. But remember, when you end the session, to close down very firmly or tendrils of feeling from the past will enter this life and cause uneasiness and a feeling of loss.

For the second session look into your present life and recall those that you love, have loved and lost, or love and perhaps no longer love in the same way or with the same intensity. Look over each and every love, every kind of love and feel the wonder of it, the strength of it and its total mystery. To love is to give part of the self. In some lives this kind of love is not present. There is another kind, deeply caring, gentle, but not the total commitment that signals the real thing. But whatever the kind of love you have, bless those who offer it and offer the same in return. Some may say they have never been loved. They may have deliberately chosen to live a life without love being much in evidence but, somewhere along the line, it will have been there, in hiding, disguised as something else, but still there. Every love is different, every love is powerful. Love can move mountains and divert rivers and change hearts, the latter sometimes being the most difficult. Learn to look for love in the little things of life and treasure it when you find it. Close down the session and return to the earth level.

The Power of Wisdom is next in line. Learning is a great gift and it can give great power, especially over others. When you have wisdom people will seek you out and try to sit at your feet. Their eagerness to learn from your store of wisdom will be a subtle flattery that can sneak up on you and ensnare you. The real Power of Wisdom is that it sets you free of many things, the fear of life and death, the fear of failure, the fear of ridicule and the fear of emptiness. But it can also be a net to catch the unwary. The Power of Wisdom can bring great pride, self-indulgence, the urge to play God with other peoples' lives, and great selfishness and need to keep what you have learned to yourself and deny it to others. If you are working properly with the Sacred Cord you are on the verge of wisdom, so look long and hard at yourself. Do you have any wisdom? Are you handling it in the proper way? Ask yourself what wisdom you have and how you came by it and how much more can you learn. Ask yourself if you are truly a wise man or woman. End the session and return. Write your notes as soon as you can.

The second session on wisdom asks you to search out in your mind three people whom you regard as wise people and then, looking from a detached point of view, ask yourself what is it that makes you see them as wise. Do they have any negative qualities? If so, what are they? What are their strong points? Again, note them down. Now go to the past and think of three people from the past whom you would call wise and ask yourself why you picked them. Do people have to be learned before they are wise? Look at the wisdom of the Australian Aborigine and his ability to live off the land in a hostile environment. The same applies to the Inuit Indian of the polar regions. A man may be the world's greatest living authority on Shakespeare but shipwreck him on a desert island and a copy of *Hamlet* will not feed, house and clothe him. What then is true wisdom? End the session and return.

The Power of Understanding is the balance between Love and Wisdom. It partakes of both and belongs to neither. To understand is to be a part of what is understood, to share with it, to be one with it. We do not, as yet, understand ourselves, our planet or our universe, much less that which created us, so how can we be at one with it? This is why the Greeks placed above their temples the words, *Gnothi Seautan*, Know Thyself. Sit now and try to understand yourself as far as you can. Ask yourself what you know about this personality you are using. Have you learned more about yourself during this work on the Sacred Cord? Study yourself in this session and see what you come up with. Return and make up your notes.

In the second session on understanding, select a concept, anything will do, preferably something you don't know too much about, like the Second Law of Thermodynamics, or Occam's Razor, or even the exact workings of the internal combustion engine. Read up on it for the basics and then set out to 'understand' it and bring it into your mind as fully realized. This may take several sessions but, at the end of it, you will have a new piece of information fully integrated into your brain, usable and available. If, in the future, you come up against something you do not fully understand, get the basics in your head as data and then, with the gold Overhead, fathom it out in a series of meditative sessions.

At the end of this session write up your usual summary and then take a week off before starting the Fifth Path.

THE FIFTH PATH: Part I

The Earth is Home; Self; Self as Animal; Self as Plant

This is the path of Nature and she is red in tooth and claw, therefore the colour of the beads for this Path is red. It is a blood red that serves to remind us of the power of life that flows in our veins and which links to the rest of the animal life on our mother planet. Where you may ask, is the connection between red blood and the life of plants and minerals? The link is there in the ancient way of our forefathers, ways that demanded a blood sacrifice to feed the earth and make it fertile. The old ways also demanded the old tools, an obsidian or flint knife as the sacrificial instrument. Yes, blood red is the right colour for this Path. However, you must not judge the old customs too harshly. The people of those times did what they felt was right, having no other knowledge to guide them. A field where blood had been spilt during a battle often yielded a bigger harvest purely and simply because of the nutriments it had received from decomposing bodies and the blood that had soaked into the ground. The old ones did not understand the reason for the increase in growth, they just saw the evidence and linked its cause with the slaughter of men and animals, a cause that grew into a religious custom.

Those who are overly sensitive may find certain aspects of this Path painful to tread and may put the Cord aside thinking themselves unable to continue. If you do you will miss the whole point of the Path which is to underline the *at-one-ness* of all life on this planet and the lesson, the strength, and the understanding that can be derived from it. Without the strength to face these things you

will not have the strength to stop them. Without the understanding heart, you in your turn cannot be understood. In taking this Path and striving to fully understand its message, you will become more deeply in tune with the planet and the younger life forms that share it with you.

FIFTH PATH. FIRST WEEK. SELF

You will need a mirror on a stand, small enough to place on a table in front of you and large enough to show the whole face. When you have settled into your chair, adjust the mirror so that you can see your face comfortably and without having to turn or twist your head or body. Then, as usual, relax and withdraw into your altered state of mind using the rhythmic breathing as a guide. Gradually close off the outside world until you are fully centered and quiet. Holding the first red bead in your hand look into the mirror and see the face reflected there. Look at it as if you were seeing a stranger, be dispassionate, judge the face as if seeing it for the first time. Look at the eyes, the shape of the mouth and the set of the chin and jaw. Assess the character of the face before you, rather along the lines of 'Would you buy a secondhand car or a washing machine from this person...!'

Look carefully at each feature before you as if you were preparing to paint this face. Is the nose large or small? Are the eyes deep set or large and well spaced? Look at the mouth and see if it is a smiling mouth or a thin, tight-lipped one... or is it somewhere in between? Now look at the bone structure and the skin texture, the set and shape of the ears and the hairline. When you have seen as much as you can of this 'stranger's' face, close your eyes and, depending only upon your memory, describe out loud the face in the mirror. Pretend you are describing someone to an artist who will draw a portrait from your description. Put in every detail you have noticed, from the tone and colour of the skin to the wrinkles at the corner of the eyes. It will help enormously if you have a tape recorder at your side ready to switch on at the touch of a finger. When you have returned to your normal state of consciousness replay the tape and see if you could recognize the person you are describing. Later in the week play it again to a friend without telling them who is being described and see if they can tell who it is. When making your notes, put down how you felt when looking at yourself as a stranger. How many things about your face you noticed for the first time, and how you would assess that face as character.

On the second day of this first red bead, hold it in your hand for a few minutes and then set it aside and look at your hands, placing them side by side, and study them. The skin, is it wrinkled or young and smooth? Are the nails a good colour and well kept or are they split and bitten? Turn them over and look at the other side, look at the lines, the callouses and the evidence of work... or not, as the case may be. Your hands are a very revealing part of your body and a very important one. Without them you are helpless and they reveal evidence of your way of life almost as well as your face. Flex them, link them, use them to tap out rhythms on the arm of your chair. Now use one hand to feel the other, search out the roughness and the softness, the joints and knuckles and the delicate webs between the fingers. Lastly, close your eyes and use them to feel over the face you saw in the mirror the day before. Take your time and use the tips of your fingers in a delicate voyage of discovery. Then pick up the red bead and feed all the 'touch information' of the last two days into it. Now return to your own time and space and record your thoughts as usual.

Your task for the third day is to look at your physical body. Stand in front of your largest mirror, one that will show you as much of your full shape as possible. Study it intently, looking at the proportions of the body and its outline. Try to ascertain where the most concentration of physical strength lies, the legs, arms and shoulders, or the torso. When you have studied your body go and sit down and take the red bead of the self in your hand and close your eyes. Try to bring the shape of your body into the mind's eye and look at it in depth. As before, try to see it as the body of a stranger and assess it under those conditions. Is it a strong body? Does it have any health problems? Are there any physical defects? You are not asked to do anything about your findings, just to notice them and accept that they are there.

Now understand that your face, hands and body are all part of a beautifully designed container for your life force. It is rather like a lamp containing an atom of pure light. No matter what condition the lamp is in, that light will always be pure and indestructible. The higher you aim, the more you strive towards your higher self, the more brightly that light will shine out from its container. It matters not that the lamp will wear out, become old and broken, the only change the light will undergo is to glow more brightly. Your task, if you are following the Path of the Mysteries, is to increase the strength of that light for the benefit of your own onward and evolving journey and for the lighting of the Path for others coming behind

you. Without the physical body to contain it, the inner light would dissipate and there would be no contrast against which it could be measured. Within this there is a lesson to be learned and understood. Without contrast there is no discrimination. The stars can only be seen against a night sky, a single blade of grass cannot be easily seen when looking at a lawn but, against a patch of earth, it stands out. Think on this and record your thoughts.

On the fourth day take hold of the red bead and prepare to explore your body from the inside. To do this you can make use of a technique used to withdraw into the deeper levels of meditation. First make absolutely sure that you will not be disturbed during this time. Make yourself quite comfortable and go through your relaxing and breathing exercises, then take hold of your red bead. Concentrate your consciousness just behind your eyes until it seems as if they form an open door through which you are observing the world outside. Now move back within yourself until you can visualize the outline of that door and, when you have it as clear as possible, shut the doors slowly, closing the physical eyes at the same time and hear inside your head the sound of the doors closing. For a few moments simply 'look' into the darkness and listen to the silence. This is the first level of withdrawal.

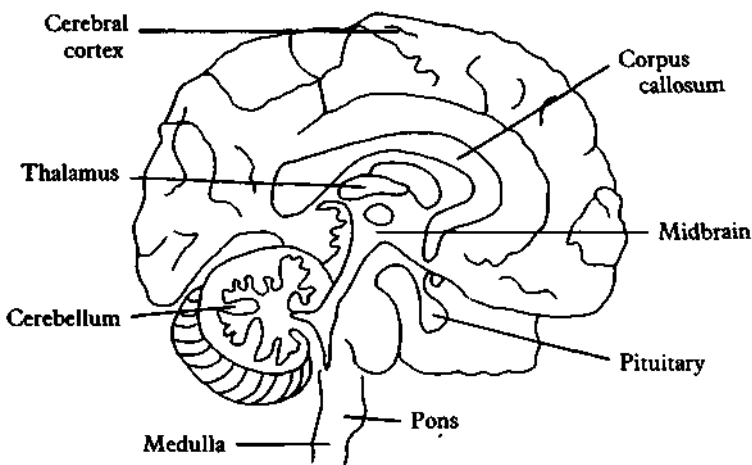
You will now begin to see colours and shapes forming and re-forming in the darkness. Allow this to continue for a few moments and then, by your will, make the colours form the shape of another door. Look at it (it may seem blurry and indistinct until you learn the trick of holding it steady), now pull back until the door is some way in front of you, now allow the doors to close and hear the sound as it does so. You are now at the second level of withdrawal. There are seven levels in all, each level deepening as you withdraw your consciousness. You should *never* attempt to withdraw below the fifth level. Why? The answer is simple. Below that level you hit coma. Below that again lie the levels of the ultimate withdrawal and finally death. There are minor shifts within each level up to and including the fifth level of withdrawal but, after that, each level is complete in itself and must be left severely alone *for there is no way back*.

You are now at the first shift of consciousness on the second level, which is sufficient for your present purpose.' The darkness around you begins to lighten, taking on a reddish glow. Focus your attention on your hearing. There is a steady drum beat, a double beat with the first beat just a half-tone above the second one. On either side of you soft spongy walls contract and expand in a steady rhythm and above

the drum beat there is another sound, a roaring sound as air rushes down into the lungs and is expelled again. Just watch the miracle of breath and remember that you are the regulator of this machinery. When you time your breathing prior to entering the altered states, the lungs slow down their action and the breaths become longer and deeper. The drum beat of your heart draws you on and you see before you the marvellous pump that started beating before you were born and will go on in the same steady rhythm until your last breath. See how the two valves are synchronized, one opening as the other closes. On a future journey with the beads you will go inside the *etheric* body and see the wonders of the sacred centres, spinning like jewels and energizing the whole of the interwoven structure that comprises your body at different levels.

Now check on other parts of your body, the spleen, the pancreas, the liver and so on. If you are unsure where they can be found, or what they look like, consult a Home Doctor book before working with the first of the red beads. A little advice here — watching the stomach and the intestines work from the inside is not a pretty sight and it would be best left until you have worked on the rest for some time... personally speaking, once was more than enough! As you go through the body check for any sign of distress in an organ or for infection. If found, then summon help from the antibodies and let them deal with it. It is time to return. Allow the reddish light to darken and the doorway to form. Let the doors open and your consciousness drift through. Hear the sound of the doors closing behind you. There is a sense of rushing forward at speed. Far ahead there is a pin-point of light that gradually grows larger. It is a doorway with the doors slightly ajar. They open slowly and you can see the room beyond them. Allow your eyes to open very slowly and your consciousness to advance until it is once more right behind your eyes and you are seeing the room around you in perspective. You may feel very disorientated for a few minutes. Do not try to move right away. Let your mind adjust to normal thinking. Concentrate on feeling the chair, your clothes, your feet on the floor. Slowly reach out a hand and take up the water/fruit juice you will have placed within reach beforehand. Sip it slowly and let it trickle down your throat. When you feel able to move, move slowly and cautiously until you are fully aware on the physical level, then have something to eat, a biscuit or a small sandwich, to help you close down. Write up your notes as soon as possible.

For the fifth day you are going to concentrate on the brain, the most



incredible computer of all. It may help to understand a little about the brain first and to know its shape and make up. We actually have quite a few brains. As mankind evolved and needed to learn new skills so nature provided new material to bring about those skills and the ability to control them. All life shares the primal or reptilian brain, but man needed more than this and so developed the cerebellum or 'little' brain. This sufficed for a while but was soon outgrown and the next stage evolved. This was the mid-brain or limbic system, the seat of memory, dreams, desires, growth and mankind's latent occult powers. In many ways the limbic system emulates Daa'th on the Tree of Life. But even though this was a great step forward it was still not enough and so there came into being the left and right brains, joined by the rainbow bridge of the corpus callosum. It is by means of this bridge that the two parts of the neo-cortex communicate back and forth.

By now almost everyone knows that the left-hand brain is the logical one and the right-hand brain is the intuitive one. What is not so well-known is the fact that the left-hand 'big head' often blocks the ideas and hunches that the right brain dreams up and which, if allowed to join up with the left brain's logical abilities, could become a solid reality. How often have you had a really good idea which involved you branching out in a completely new way (right-hand brain stuff), only to have the snide remarks of the left-hand brain put you off the whole thing, "That's ridiculous... You know you have never done anything like that before. How do you know can do it now?" If you listen to all the reasons the left-hand brain can put forward, you

will never do anything new and off-beat. What you really need to do is to learn to think right down the middle!

For this fifth day's work, take the first red bead in your hand and go through your breathing and relaxing exercises. Now, give your left-hand brain some work. Recite a couple of multiplication tables, the old 'twice one is two, twice two is four' routine. This is basic left-hand stuff but not so complicated that you need to use extreme concentration. Now switch brains, and use the right-hand side's ability to create images. Picture telegraph poles, swans, snakes, flamingoes, pelicans, a monkey's tail, a boomerang, a pair of spectacles, and a spiral with a long tail. If your right-hand brain is well used, you will already be ahead of me!

Start with the tables again but now, instead of just numbers, use the combined powers of the right and left brains and add up, using the images instead of numbers. You will find that each image carries the actual shape of a number.



= 1



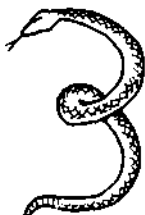
= 4



= 2



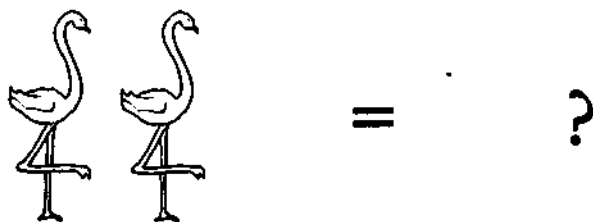
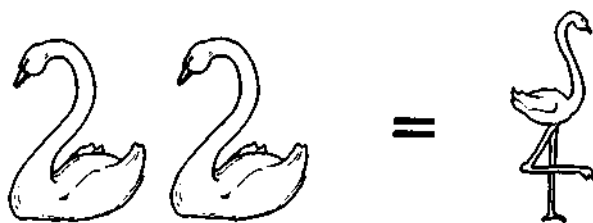
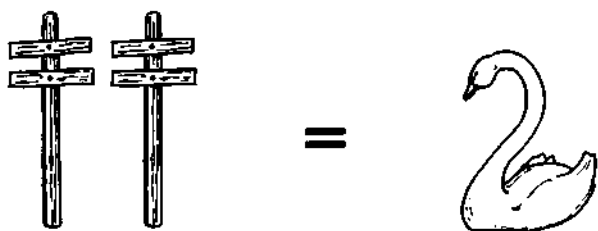
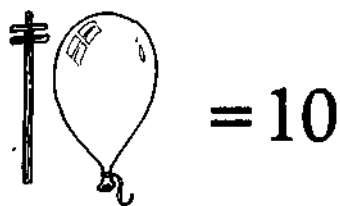
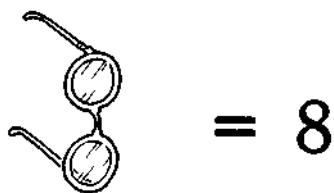
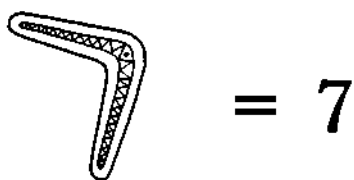
= 5



= 3



= 6



Two Telegraph Poles	=	a Swan.	(2 x 1 = 2)
Two Swans	=	a Flamingo.	(2 x 2 = 4)
Two Snakes	=	a Monkey Tail.	(2 x 3 = 6)
Two Flamingos	=	a Pair of Spectacles.	(2 x 4 = 8)
Two Pelicans	=	a Telegraph Pole & a Balloon.	(2 x 5 = 10)
Two Monkey Tails	=	a Telegraph Pole & a Swan.	(2 x 6 = 12)
Two Boomerangs	=	a Telegraph Pole & a Flamingo.	(2 x 7 = 14)
Two Pairs of Spectacles	=	a Telegraph Pole & a Monkey Tail.	(2 x 8 = 16)
Two Spirals	=	a Telegraph Pole & a Pair of Spectacles.	(2 x 9 = 18)
Two Telegraph Poles & two Balloons	=	a Swan & a Balloon.	(2 x 10 = 20)
Two pairs of Telegraph Poles	=	Two Swans.	(2 x 11 = 22)
Two Telegraph Poles each with one Swan	=	a Swan & a Flamingo.	(2 x 12 = 24)

At first sight this looks ridiculous, and so it is ... but the more ridiculous it is, the more it will work. Believe me, it is not as easy as it seems to visualize a simple multiplication table in this way. The left-hand brain will go berserk and keep replacing the images with numbers; the right-hand brain will balk at the task of adding numerals. If this happens, go back to the beginning and start again until you have gone through it at least once without a mistake. You may end up with a splitting headache. The left brain can be vindictive but, maybe for the first time in your life, you will have used both sides of your brain in conjunction *with full intent*. You may need to use two days for this exercise, but it will be worth it. Later on you can devise other ways of combining the two sides of the brains' activities for yourself. You will, no doubt, be highly relieved to get back to normal everyday thinking, but make sure you record the day's work as soon as you can.

For the sixth and last session with this first red bead you will meditate quietly on the *physical self* with which you have become familiar over the last six to seven days. Think of it as one part of a multi-being who uses different 'selves' in different dimensions. You are *not* just a three-dimensional body worked by a complex brain

computer. You have a spirit of primal star matter ensouled by a fragment of the great entity that holds the universe and everything in it within its thought-dream. You have a mental self, the repository of all your experiences and lives, an etheric, an astral and, finally, a physical self that is a full partner in all this. True, it will be discarded at death and will return to its component part of minerals and fluids, that does not mean it is unworthy of your attention and your respect. The earth matter used in the making of your body is blessed and raised by its participation in your evolverment. It has a sentience of its own, an awareness that is rarely acknowledged or even touched by most people. You will have read of the injunction written above the great temples of the past, 'Know Thyself. It has more than one meaning, just as you have more than one self to get to know, understand and work with. Begin with the -physical, first temple of all. Bless it, use it well and wisely, treat it with respect. This goes for the brain also. Remember the brain is simply a highly complex tool, it is *not* the mind; it is used *by* the mind. Think on these things and when you return to the earth plane, record them in your own words. In the days that follow, amplify words with actions.

FIFTH PATH. SECOND WEEK. SELF AS ANIMAL

With the second bead you will look at yourself as part of the animal life of the planet and learn to be at one with it and share in its existence. Before you start, select six examples of the younger life-forms along these lines: a domestic pet; a bird; an aquatic life-form, mammal or fish; a domestic food animal; and a wild animal. The last day's experience is best approached without prior knowledge. Read up on the life-forms you have chosen, their habits, environment, adaptation to their life-style, their body shape and movement, and eating habits.

Take the second red bead in your hand and prepare yourself by relaxation and measured breathing. When you feel still within, allow the image of the first animal you have chosen (domestic pet but *not* your own or one that you personally know), to register on the inner eye. Behind it build up the image of that animal's group soul in its natural form but enlarged to the point where it overshadows everything around it. Lift your mental eyes and look into the eyes of the group soul. Between the young animal and the group soul you can see a thread of silver light; from your own third eye centre put out a beam of consciousness and link into the centre of that silver

thread. Now you will be able to experience whatever the animal feels and the corresponding emotion of the group soul. You may not be able to undergo all of the following experiences at this time, but try, you will learn a great deal from it.

The first thing you feel is fear and confusion, memories of others like yourself and the warmth of a larger one that gave food and protection. Now there is nothing but space and a feeling of loss. Hunger comes into it as well. Once there was food always available, now you must wait until it is provided, not when you are hungry, but when it is convenient to those who now look after you. Sometimes it comes when you are so hungry you wolf it down and it makes you sick. That means a still empty stomach, but you are given no more. If you need to urinate or empty your bowels you have to learn to make your needs known, or be punished for it. Above all, there is the loss, the need for others of your own kind. There is something around your neck that irritates and frightens you. Sometimes you are taken out and walked along a busy street where everything is ten times your size and where everything is full of noise and foul-smelling smoke. Or there are young humans who want to play but don't understand that you need gentleness and not rough handling.

Often you need to sleep. Sometimes when you wake all is in darkness and the fear returns. If you are lucky and your needs understood, there is something warm and soft in your sleeping place that you can cuddle into, or gentle loving hands and a soft voice. If you are not, there are harsh words, hunger, the pain of a kick and bewilderment. Hunger hurts to the point where you will eat anything, even earth, simply to have a full stomach. Sometimes there is a short journey, the prick of a needle and then blackness, that is merciful; other times there is the coldness of water and the fight to live against odds that finally defeat you.

Sometimes you live on, becoming part of a human family, knowing they care for you, sometimes there is illness, pain and hands that are strange and may hurt, but which, finally, soothe and heal. Finally, at the end there is a quietness and an acceptance of ending, a gentle passing and a return. Sometimes there are cages and hard hands that come for you and use your body for their own purposes, a torture that mercifully ends in death and makes the passing one of relief.

Withdraw from the link of the two animal minds now and, if you can, lift your eyes to those of the group soul and mark what you see in them. Is it love and companionship or condemnation? Return to full consciousness and write up your records. Remember that on its passing every animal's essence returns to its group soul and its life ex-

periences are passed on to the group soul, programming the future behaviour patterns of that species towards mankind.

On the second day take hold of the bead and build the image of a bird's nest in which lies an egg about to hatch. As before, the group soul of the species builds up behind it. Once the group soul links with its living counterpart you may make your link with them both. Now you can feel the urgency within to break free of the confining shell. It needs strength and determination and, when you are finally free, there is a need to lie and rest and regain your strength. If there are others in the same nest there is a struggle for food — if you are not able to push forward for your share, you will die.

Go forward in time to a point when you are making your first flight. The ground looks very far away, and hard! But everything within you urges you on to spread your wings and let the wind lift you. Life is good, food is plentiful, the trees provide shelter and you have your own kind. But soon the weather changes and you face your first winter. Food is scarce now and the trees without their leaves offer little in the way of shelter. It becomes a fierce fight to exist from day to day. Some people put out bread, but though it is food of a sort, there is little nourishment in it. The fat and protein you need to survive becomes more and more hard to find. Rain and snow freeze the ground and body warmth grows less. If you are lucky you will survive, if not you will succumb to the white sleep that leads into death.

If you see another spring, food will again be on offer, but so will the chemicals that lie on the newly ploughed and seeded earth. It can cause blindness and burning pains inside, but then again, you may be shot by a farmer, caught in the snare of a poacher, or fall from weariness in the long migration flights. You may live to find a mate and rear chicks of your own, but sooner or later, you will be called to return to the source of your species and yield up the experiences of your life. Withdraw from the bonding and look into the eyes of the group soul. Begin the journey back to your own level and, when rested, write down your thoughts.

For your third session with the second red bead, you will join with the 'people of the sea'. There are many forms to choose from — seals, whales and dolphins as well as the ordinary fish folk. Most of you will choose from among the sea mammals because they are more widely known, but do not forget the sleek trout and the mighty salmon and its journey back to its spawning grounds, the mighty barracuda and the goldfish in the garden pond, and the turtles of the

Galapagos, which are just as much deserving of your attention.

I will assume, however, that you have chosen one of the sea mammals and if your choice is other than this, adapt the instructions to the species of your choosing. Start with the, by now, familiar preparations of relaxing and breathing — never skimp on them for they are the foundation of your inner work. The stronger that foundation the better and more far-reaching your work will be. Create the inner image of a dolphin and, looming above it, the much larger group soul. Wait patiently until the thread of communication has been established between them and then add your own bonding thread.

It may take a few minutes to adjust to the sleek, streamlined body of the dolphin but, when you do, you will find a freedom that is unlimited. You have speed, grace and intelligence. Are you surprised to find you have a language that is shared between you and your kind? Above the water, to the ears of humankind, it sounds squeaky and rather like the chirrup of a squirrel, but beneath the sea and to the ears of other dolphins, it is music, a living, melodic language that can hold thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Use your freedom as you will. Follow the boats. Lead them across the oceans. Play close to the rocky shores of remote islands. Sometimes you will find humans to swim with and play with. Their hands on your skin are slightly uncomfortable, too hot for the coolness you need, but their voices and their willingness to play and swim with you is attractive. When you tire of this, seek out your own kind and listen to their songs and their stories. Some of these stories fill you with fear. They tell of a far-off country where the dolphins are 'called' into the shore and then speared and clubbed to death. You ask why and they tell you it is because men want the fish you eat for themselves. Mankind makes little attempt to control his own breeding and demands more and more of the earth for himself alone. Then there are the poisons men throw into the sea, and the oil spilled, fouling the water and making it difficult to breathe. For every human with a love for your species, there are a hundred who would see you extinct from the world you belong to and love. It is not just you, but all the water folk who suffer — every time a tin can or a bag of refuse is thrown into a river or a lake, death follows for the life in that place. Life is a precious gift and once taken cannot be replaced.

Leave the bonding and watch the dolphin swim away. Now look into the eyes of its group soul and feel the sorrow and the anger there. Are you free from guilt in this? Return to your own level and record your thoughts. If you feel you cannot take any more of this facing of

the younger brethren for the moment, then wait and rest for a few days before finishing the last three days, but you must finish it before going on to the next bead.

The fourth and fifth session will demand a great deal from you emotionally and you must be prepared for that, unless of course you have little or no feeling for the other life-forms that share the earth with you. If this is so, I suggest you set aside the Cord and go no further, for you have another Path to travel, though you must face the group souls in the end and at some future time.

Take the bead in your hand and make the transition into the subtle levels, then build up the image of a domestic food animal and, behind and above it, that animal's group soul. Once the thread is established between them, you may proceed with the three-way bonding. Your empathy with the animal is immediate and you become aware of the farm surroundings. Look about you and try to feel from the animal's mind if this is a well-run farm or not. Look at the place in which you are kept, at the feed hoppers and the water supply. Is the animal you are bonding with feeling fear or contentment? Move forward in time leaps, going through the cycle of the animal's days and the treatment received at the hands of the farmer.

Try to understand and share the coolness of wind and rain on your hide/skin, the warmth of sun, the fullness of udders, the taste of sweet grass and hay in the mouth. From time to time, others of your own kind around you will disappear. As an animal you do not understand the reason; as a human you realize that they have been slaughtered. When the time comes for you to go, at first it seems simply an uncomfortable journey in a truck but, as soon as you are unloaded, you catch the smell of death. Now the fear starts. If you are lucky, there may be one person who is aware or who has, in a former existence, been trained and whose soul remembers. Then the fear will be less and the passing swift. All it needs is just one understanding person, just one, to bless the departing soul and give thanks for its life, even if that person is unaware of what they are doing. If there is no one, then even if the passing is hard and the fear great there is a presence that encompasses that place within its archangelic aura and makes certain that the essence is gently received and joined with its group soul. As the animal form with which you are linked moves towards its destiny, move away from the link and take with you all the fear and the pain, not just from this animal but from all who wait for death with the terrible patience of the animal soul. Remember this, nothing is lost. All returns to its source finally and is joined with

that source, equally so nothing goes unrewarded. This is true for the younger brethren even as it is true for humankind. Equally so nothing goes unpunished and those who cause pain and who delight in it will face judgement in the end. Pain passes eventually, fear subsides eventually, peace comes and, with it, the love that sustains the universe. But so far mankind has not proved fit to rule the small part of the universe that was given to him. The earth and its life-forms have suffered because of misuse and cruelty and if we are to grow towards divinity there is much to change.

Lift your eyes to those of the group soul and bless that group soul and draw from it the pain and suffering that it has taken upon itself, that its kin might not endure it. Do not take it into yourself for you are not strong enough as yet for that kind of exorcism, instead offer it up to the Maker of Worlds. It is taken up in a globe of light and released into the unmanifested universe. Return now to your own level and be at peace. When you are able, record your thoughts and feelings.

If you feel the need for a day in between the fourth and fifth session then take it. If not, then carry on into the penultimate session. Prepare by choosing the wild animal you intend to empathize with and making sure you know exactly how it looks, moves and behaves. It is also a good idea to know a little about the environment in which it lives, so that you can image it correctly. With the red bead held firmly in your hand take your time and go slowly and gently into the altered state of mind.

Build the image of your chosen animal form carefully, getting as much detail as you can, then, let the group soul build up of its own accord and by its own power above and behind the animal. By now the oversoul of all animal life will have become aware of your work and will turn its attention to you as soon as you begin bonding. You may find during this time that animals seek you out or if you have animal friends of your own they may seek your company more than usual. This is because they can sense the presence of the animal oversoul which, for them, is a kind of personal deity, around you.

Watch the silver thread as it moves between the group soul and the animal form and when it is clear and secure add your own beam of empathic power to it and let the bonding flow around and into you until you and the animal form become a part of each other. I cannot know what animal you will choose but by now you know enough to adjust the experience to fit your own needs. Remember the Cord is teaching you how to expand your knowledge and use it to advantage.

Once you feel you can face the emotional pain, go through the same sequence but as an animal that is being hunted, or caught in a steel trap. You will learn through the fear and the pain just what man as a species can do to other life-forms. Remember always that the animals with which you bond during the work on this bead are *not* real, they are built up from the astral matter. This kind of work aims to make you more fully aware of the younger brethren and their experiences of the human race. Only by living through the animals can you fully understand them and their needs. All life feels pain and loneliness, fear, anger, and affection. To ignore that is to fail in the stewardship placed in our hands and is a debasement of all we hold sacred.

Withdraw from the empathic link and acknowledge the presence of the group soul. You will meet it again in the last session with this bead. Return to normal consciousness and close down securely before writing up your notes.

Now we come to the last session with this bead. As it will include incidents from each bonding undertaken during your work with the group souls, go over your notes the day before to refresh your memory. Take time over your preparations for this last session and when you have shifted levels safely, build about you the semblance of a sacred place, open to the sky and built in a series of arches that form a great circle. In each archway can be seen one of the animal group souls. Take your place in the centre and be prepared to answer for your deeds, or receive a blessing for your care. Turn to face each group soul as it speaks and you may answer if you wish or remain silent. Listen carefully to what is said and recall incidents from the work you have done in the last seven days. When all have spoken you may speak, then, after a space of silence and thought you will be told if you have passed the judgement of the animal oversoul, or if there are lessons you must learn in the future. Keep the memory of this place. You may return here to ask for justice, to bring a much loved companion to join with its group soul and ease its passing, or to enjoy the feeling of being part of the wholeness of animal life. It is a place of great peace. Return now to the physical level and close down. Think deeply on this and record your ideas.

FIFTH PATH. THIRD WEEK. SELF AS PLANT

Now you may pass on to the third of the small red beads. This concerns the plant life of this planet and your involvement with it. There

is a saying, 'We are what we eat.' If that is true then it is true in a spiritual sense as well as a physical one. We all eat from the plant world, fruit, vegetables, roots, tubers, cereals and grains, herbs and spices. Indirectly through the milk, cheese and eggs we eat the life of the green earth feeds and nourishes our bodies. Though immobile and without voices, still the plant world is joined with all the life on earth at a certain level. If you are to come to a full knowledge and experience of being integrated with the whole planet, then you cannot ignore any one part of its life force.

Try to obtain some ears of corn, barley or wheat and place in a small jar in front of you. If the time of year cancels this out then use a corn dolly which may be bought at any time of year from a craft shop. Cereal crops are basic to the diet of mankind. They have thousands of years of cultivation behind them and the oldest legends of all tell of the ancient corn kings dying to ensure the fertility of the fields.

Cereal crops and any large areas of the same plant appear to have a shared consciousness similar to that found in a hive of bees or a nest of ants. Rather than a group soul they have a unified consciousness that is able to respond to certain circumstances. A farmer going from field to field to stand and 'watch the barley grow' is communing with that field consciousness whether he realizes it or not, and the crop will grow faster and better for that kind of husbandry. If a particular beauty spot noted for its wild flowers attracts people to its display year after year, the consciousness of that growing area will respond to the admiration and happiness of those who visit. Eventually such places will attract a being from one of the angelic orders, a Deva, who will look after the spiritual welfare of that place and those who visit it, both human and animal, from that time onwards. Such beauty spots often evoke a feeling of awareness in those with psychic abilities and if they have the inner vision they may actually be able to see the beauty and the brilliance of the Deva itself.

Small woods, forests, moorlands and orchards may also have this type of consciousness. Older long-living trees, especially if they stand alone or are a part of a sacred grove planted centuries ago as a place of worship, may have a singular consciousness of their own and at times seem to have a definite identity. This has passed into our folklore to become part of fairy tales and myths about haunted woods, guardian trees, or trees inhabited by evil spirits, etc. In establishing empathic links with the green folk you will find them slower in thought, more ponderous, but also extremely wise and full of strength. Tolkien's 'Ents' were very close to the true tree soul.

Take hold of the third red bead. Relax back into your chair and

commence breathing slowly and deeply in the usual rhythm. Carefully build up in the mind's eye a wheatfield just before harvest. See the tall, golden ears of wheat bending and dipping in the breeze. The gold is bounded by the vivid green of hedgerows and applied with scarlet poppies here and there and, in the centre of the field, where it has stood for over a hundred years, is a large beech tree. Listen to the silence just after dawn, when only the birdsong breaks it. There is a feeling of expectancy and wonder over the whole scene.

Just above the tree there is a shimmer in the air and very gradually you begin to discern the form of the Deva of this place. The being's robes flow out, wide and diaphanous, over the whole field with the green hedge forming its hem. The face is beautiful but indistinct with only the brilliant eyes seen completely, the hands raised to bless the lifted heads of wheat. The Deva becomes aware of your presence and looks up and directly at you, locking your consciousness into its own. At once you become aware not only of the Deva but also of the multiple consciousness of the wheatfield. Thousands of tiny dreaming thoughts touch your mind like feathers blown against your cheek. Dreams of the deep, sweet earth and its life-giving moisture, of growing up towards the sunlight, of green giving way to gold, of wind, rain, sun and the Deva. Go deeply into the communal mind of the wheatfield and search out the contact. Exchange thoughts, give thanks for the wheat and the bread that it makes and then remember that bread is part of the eternal communion between the life force of this planet and the solar Logos. A wheatfield and a loaf of bread may never be the same again in your mind. Withdraw from the mental contact and bless both the wheat and the Deva. Allow yourself to return to normal consciousness and close down. Record notes as soon as you can.

For the second session prepare by searching out an old, well-established tree near to your home, or one that you may already know and perhaps see or visit often. If you are lucky enough to live near a sacred ring of trees or one that lies on a ley line, use that. Take a leaf or a small twig from it and hold that in your hand together with the red bead.

Once through into the altered state, build a mental image of the tree and allow it to fill your mind until you feel a part of the living tree. Sink down into the earth to the root system and feel the strength that draws up the life-giving water. Follow the flow of the sap up the trunk and into the hundreds of branches, then filter into the leaves and buds. Settle into the tree and feel yourself rooted deep in the soil

of your native land, stand proud with your many branches held out and up. Slowly and gently allow your consciousness to blend with that of the spirit of the tree. You no longer see with eyes but through a complex system of heat and cold relayed to the soft core through the leaves and small branches. There is a sense of age, time, and endless dreams of sweet water and warm earth, of seasons and years and the closeness of others of your kind. Also a feeling of wonder at the touch of a human mind, a trace of fear, images of fire and the bite of an axe, then a gradual and growing curiosity that becomes stronger and stronger. Human and tree are locked together in a mental embrace, exchanging feelings and knowledge and the sense of being at one each with the other.

Bless the tree and withdraw gently so as not to cause injury, then close down firmly so that you are quite separate. This is important, for trees, especially those that are very old, are also very powerful and a contact with them can be rather over-powering. Mind touch at this level creates a definite bond and you may find yourself drawn back to that particular tree again and again. Visit it, talk to it. In the early spring take a bag of fertilizer and dig it in around the roots. Why not? You would take a gift to a friend when visiting! Tie a ribbon in its branches when it is in full leaf. A tree likes to look its best in summer! The idea of a tree friend is nothing new. In some communities a sapling is planted at the birth of a child and they grow together with the child being taught to love and care for the tree as another sibling. Often the tree will undergo a trauma when its human friend eventually dies and this is shown up in the rings when the tree dies in its turn, often soon afterwards and for no apparent reason.

The third session needs no preparation apart from the usual relaxation and breathing. Once the change in levels has been achieved, allow the sense of warm darkness to enfold you. You feel the dim presence of others around you as if you were not alone. You understand that you are bonding with an aspect of plant life but not yet what that aspect may be. Gradually the darkness lightens and assumes a deep rosy glow. There is a sense of fullness, of growing bigger and needing more room. Then you become aware of the scent, a scent that pervades your whole being. You feel the urge deep within to stretch and reach out. The rose glow lightens and you sense a slow unfurling of... petals. There is warmth and then coolness, water being sprinkled on you and on those around you. The scent is a part of your being, growing stronger all the time, then slowly the light grows brighter and the opening petals of a deep red rose open out and turn to the sun.

You feel the others around you and something else, a feeling that is pleasant. The rose does not understand but you do. People are around the rose bed, admiring, smelling the scent, touching the delicate blooms with gentle hands. With a silent laugh you realize that the rose is somehow preening itself and drinking in the admiration being bestowed on it. You are aware that a Deva has materialized over the rose bed and that the flowers have built a group consciousness in order to communicate with it. They are seeking, no, almost demanding, something and you pick up the images they are sending. They are requesting the presence of bees, the honey-seekers so necessary for flowers and their survival.

After a few moments you feel deep within the heart of the flower a distant thrumming that gets louder and louder. From the meadow beyond come the golden hive sisters seeking the promised sweetness of the roses. There is a trembling deep within the flower itself, an anticipation that comes close to the sexual arousal of humankind and when, finally, the bee enters the heart of the rose, you find you can share in its ecstasy knowing that its survival is now almost certain. Choose this moment to withdraw and return to your own level of consciousness and take with you the feeling of beauty, joy and excitement in both the flower and the insect. Take your time and make sure you are fully earthed before you record the thoughts and feelings you have shared.

A forest of closely-packed trees and undergrowth can be either serenely peaceful or dark and frightening. But people react in different ways to the same forest. One particular Border forest holds memories of utter terror for me. I spent holidays there during the war and we always took a Sunday afternoon walk in the forest. It was a bare half mile down the road before the advance party of trees closed around you. The locals were withdrawn and resentful of strangers and had a habit of falling quiet as you approached, a quietness that threatened the most hesitant of greetings. Once past, their eyes remained upon you until you were well out of earshot, then the conversation would start up again. The forest itself was dark and damp and full of small, surface coal mines, mostly family holdings running back a hundred years or more. Only narrow tracks crossed and re-crossed the tangled undergrowth. Few birds sang there and those that did sounded lost and afraid, as if they sang to keep their spirits up. And then there were the pools, deep and overgrown but surprisingly clear, but they usually held the dead bodies of animals. I never felt safe there, yet others have said how much they enjoyed it and found it delightful.

Other forests are full of light and dappled shade and lift the heart and spirits of those who enter them. Although the bigger/older trees have individual essences or dryads, a large tract of trees nearly always has an oversoul. Sometimes this is a group mind composed of all the trees within that area and sometimes it is a Devic entity. Both can be contacted and interacted with on the subtle levels.

For the fourth session with this bead take your Cord and go out of doors. Find a wood, a forest if you can, or simply a stand of trees. The more beautiful the site the more likely it is to be overshadowed by a Deva; the older forest and woods, particularly if they straddle a ley line or form part of a sacred site, are more likely to hold a group mind. Look for one near you. If it requires a longish journey by car, train or bus, then change this session with one on a Saturday or Sunday.

Dress warmly if the weather is damp or cold and take something to sit on that is waterproof, also pack a Thermos of something hot to drink. If you are doing this in the warmer part of the year, then just take something on which to sit and a cool drink to help you close down afterwards. Sit in a place of your own choosing, somewhere comfortable and with a good view that you can use to stimulate your inner senses. Quietly relax and breathe deeply and rhythmically until you feel ready to shift levels. Start by either closing your eyes, or by allowing them to slide a little out of focus. Allow the peripheral vision to predominate and you will find images, figures, and small movements beginning to form there. Keep the relaxation and the breathing going and gradually allow the spirit of the place to present itself to you in whatever form is nearest to hand. It may be a face in the bark of a tree formed by light and shade, a small form built from shrub, twig and stone, or if your inner vision is developed enough, you may see the true form in all its beauty.

Let this form communicate with you as it will through the inner ear, the wind, imagined voices, the very sound of silence itself. In the preceding session you have imagined yourself into situations, now you must let the place speak for itself. Let the images rise with the feelings. Every place has stories to tell of happenings down the ages. Listen to those stories and soon enough the tellers will come before you in vision. There is not one place on ea"rth that does not have a history to it, no matter how isolated. It has been trodden by feet long passed and others have sat here and looked down into the valley, or up into the hills and thought their thoughts and dreamed their dreams. Now you will add to them and become part of the history of

the place in your turn. If you return to this spot often it will become aware of you and show you more and more of itself. There is no time limit to this session except what you put upon yourself. When you feel ready, then come back through the portals of the long ago and close gently. You have been fully at one with the trees and plants of this place and they have told their story in pictures and inner song. Record both in your diary.

The fifth session is also out-of-doors. Look for a place where there are tiny moss flowerets. They can often be found by streams or in places where there are rocks and scrub land. The tiny rock plants when seen close up are exquisite, perfect in their form, yet with the strength to break open those same rocks over long periods of time, their roots striking down into minute cracks and gradually opening them wider and wider so that frost and ice can continue the work of breaking down.

When you have found a suitable spot, proceed as for the fourth session but now lie on your stomach and look down at the Lilliputian world of moss and lichen. Just fill your sight with them and let the overall group mind do the rest. Let yourself sink into the moss and become one with it. The lichens are very old and their stories are even better than those already told to you. They can tell of the great Ice Ages and terrible whiteness and the crushing weight and the long centuries of waiting for the light of the sun to return again. The times when streams and rivers flooded with the melting ice and carried spores and seedlings down into the lowlands. They were here when wolves and bears roamed these isles, and the feet of Roman men and Druid priests trod over them. They are timeless and have much to give in the way of patience and endurance. So much smaller than an animal, and without an animal's ability to move and think and use the five senses, yet they are thousands of years old and will exist when we are gone. Close down now and withdraw. Let your mind return to the wider spaces around you and understand that all belong together.

Now you are ready for the last session with the third red bead. If you are reading this in spring or summer and there is a special garden near to you which is open to the public, then use this as your location. If not a garden, then a public park with plenty of flowers and trees. If it is in winter then you may still use a park or large garden but in a slightly different way. Take your Cord with you and choose a place where you can sit unseen but within sight of both trees and

flowers. Relax and let your breathing slow down and fall into the usual pattern, holding the red bead as usual. Allow the scene before you to lead you into the altered state so that the changeover is slow and gradual. Bit by bit feel your way into the group consciousness of the park or garden and when you can touch it, use its strength to link into the Deva that overshadows it. Try to envisage the Deva and if you have a talent in that area, when you return, try to draw it. Form a triangle of awareness between yourself, the group mind and the Deva and then you will be able to seek out and touch the essence of each flower species and each tree. In this way you can work through a whole afternoon feeling into the ways of the green folk of all kinds.

If this takes place in winter then you can still link in with the group mind and the Deva but then you will need to seek out the tiny sleeping seeds below the earth and touch their dreams of spring, sun, rain and light. You can tell them how it will be, how they will look and how other humans will come to look at them and admire them — not too much flattery, flowers can get drunk on it! In this way you will learn that a winter garden is not dead by any means, just sleeping and waiting for the next round of life, just as you will sleep and dream and await the coming of another life after you have left this one. When ready, gently break the contact, return to consciousness and write up records.

On the seventh day wait until nightfall and then go out into the garden or a park. Stand under a tree or by a river bank and sit in the shadows and wait. The green folk at night are quite different from their daytime selves. Now they drink deeply from the wells beneath the earth and listen to their Mother Earth's advice and tell her of their day's learning. You may hear your name mentioned and see yourself through their thoughts. You will soon come to understand how the group minds and the Devas see you. If you listen carefully you will hear the thoughts going between the trees and the other green folk, or see the inner colours of the night used as energy sources. At this time, when humankind is sleeping and the world is quieter, you may find it easier to hear the songs of the Devas as they go about their unending tasks. If you are really lucky you may see the dryads emerge and dance under their trees in the starlight. Fanciful? No, just the inner eye re-training to see the unknown reality that is all around us, but to which mankind has made itself blind for hundreds of years. Bless them all for what you have received from them in these days. You are a part of them and they of you. Acknowledge that at-one-ness now and it will be there forever. Return now and

close down slowly and gently and go back to your own home and dream of the green world and its inhabitants.

For further information concerning dryads write to Dusty Miller, 14 Weston Road, Strood, Kent, UK for a leaflet of artefacts and tapes.

THE FIFTH PATH: PART II

Self as Mineral. Gaia.

Integration of the Whole

FIFTH PATH. FOURTH WEEK. MINERAL

The fourth red bead is concerned with our relationship with the mineral world. It is a mistake to think of this part of creation as inanimate. True their form of 'life' is different from ours. It is slower, vaster, and endures over countless ages against the brief span accorded to the other life-forms of earth. Nevertheless they do have a consciousness and, as a firstborn of the Earth Mother, their relationship to us is rather like that of a much older sibling who is alternately overbearing and indulgent. It is hard to see in the devastation of an earthquake or the eruption of a volcano the same part of the earth that grows our food and gives us precious metals and gems for our delight.

The sessions that follow contain some outdoor work and to facilitate the arrangements you may have to make for travel, etc., I have given a list of the type of locations to look for and the other things you will need to obtain.

- Location 1. A place of ancient stones or, a place where weathered rocks are a part of the landscape, i.e. moorland, dales, tors.
- Location 2. Mountain scenery or cliffs, any high place that overlooks town or country, sea cliffs or inland.
- Location 3. A running stream/river or the sea-shore, either will do.

- Item A. A piece of unpolished rock crystal.
Item B. A piece of smooth stone of any kind.

If you find some of the locations impossible to get to, then use a travel poster or a picture from a magazine, but extra effort to reach such places will be amply rewarded by the richness of the experience.

The first session with the fourth red bead is worked in Location 1. On reaching the chosen site, sit with your back against one of the stones but *not* inside the circle, sit against the side that faces outwards. You are not working with the forces encompassed by the circle, only with the stone you are using. If you are using a moorland rock or tor simply sit comfortably and quietly against it and go through the relaxation and breathing routine. By now your subtle body will be well attuned to the process of entering the altered state and you should find it no problem to shift levels quickly and easily.

Take hold of the fourth red bead and let yourself sink back into the stone against which you are leaning. You may find the sensation similar to the backward somersault performed by scuba divers from the side of a boat. The inside of the stone is cool and dark, but not lifeless. There is a sense of age and wisdom and a vast, though somewhat alien, intelligence. Make yourself receptive to the stone and slowly, quietly, you will begin to receive images of the stone's history. If it has been brought here from another place you will feel the trauma of that journey and the stress as it was perhaps cut and fitted for its position. If it is a piece of natural rock then you should be able to tune into the changes it has seen and endured since it was first thrust to the surface from the molten heart of the planet. Go back sequentially if you can, and try requesting images from a hundred years ago, and then two hundred and then three and so on. You will get very few human figures but animals certainly. Then, as you go further into the pre-historic era, you will see the climatic changes of the area around the stone and finally, if you are lucky, you will be able to touch on the very beginning of the stone.

Remember the stone is sharing its memories with you, and because we are all part of the whole, your coming will have been heralded. As soon as you sat down and started to prepare yourself that part of the mineral world will have recognized you as one who is aware of the whole, and working towards a full companionship with the environment. The pictures and memories you will touch in your work with this bead will be dim and grainy because the rocks and stones do not have the visual equipment of animals or the sensory perception of the green folk. They are much older, for they are from the time before

the five senses came into being. Nevertheless, the signals you pick up will be translated into images by your own senses in their higher and finer form. You may bring back only vague feelings but do not discount these; reflection on them can yield a great deal of information. Return when you are ready and write up your notes before leaving the area.

For the second location you need a high hill, mountain or cliff overlooking a town, village or the sea-shore. Follow the same procedure holding the red bead in your hand and sitting with your back against the rock/stone. Instead of sinking back into the stone however, call on it to share with you its memory of this place and of the town or sea-shore below. Allow the stone to parade before you a pageant, going back through time. See how the town changes, growing smaller and more isolated, or how the shore line changes, perhaps growing wider and the shape of the cliffs changing as the ravages of the sea are reversed. Look at the shapes and types of ships change, or how the method of transport changes in the town. The atmosphere grows quieter, the air cleaner and the pace of life slows as you move back through the centuries.

If one era interests you ask the stone to hold that in check to enable you to see it more clearly. Keep a check also on the stone/cliff itself and see how it, too, has been shaped by wind and rain. There is a sense of 'The Land', in sitting here and using the primal children of the earth to tell you their stories. Sun-warmed or snow cold, the stones, rocks and cliffs are the strong bones of the land and carry the deepest memories of all. Everything holds memories — chairs and tables, china and silver, old linen lovingly embroidered and edged with crocheted lace. Old carpets hold the sound of footsteps long ago stilled in death just as old houses hold vibrations of those who once lived in them. The Chinese and Japanese hold that everything has a soul to a greater or lesser degree and that, if it is held in esteem or if time and thought have gone into its making, then its 'soul' will be that much stronger. To help you to understand this more easily I will recommend a book by Manly Hall called *Very Unusual*. * Return now and close down firmly and make notes.

For your third day's session with the mineral world find a running stream or river or, if you are near the sea, you can use that as a location. Take hold of the red bead and sit beside the stream/sea. Look for some water-smoothed pebbles and hold them in your hands

* Manly Hall, *Very Unusual*, The Philosophical Research Society Inc., 1976.

together with the red bead. These stones will not have come from this place but will have travelled far from their origin, therefore they will have a great deal to tell you. Water pebbles have different voices from the heavier rocks and stones — like the water that shapes them they chatter and sing. Let them tell you their stories as you sit cushioned within the relaxed state of meditation. Each pebble has a different story and a different voice and they may try to speak all at once. Discipline them like children and make them take their turn.

Small stones from a swift-running river will have much to impart concerning the land through which they flow. Rivers change course over the centuries and have always been ways of travel for mankind. Their stories will differ greatly from the larger and wider scale of the former locations. Do not be tempted to take stones from the river or sea home with you unless you are making Rune Stones from them.* This is their place and they must continue their journey. Always replace them carefully when their tales are told. Time now to end the session and to close down. Record your notes as soon as possible.

For the fourth session, you will need a piece of unpolished rock crystal, something about the size of a robin's egg. Hold it together with the red bead and, after the preparations, move into the meditative state and begin. Because the crystal is in a raw state it will be open to influences. The process of polishing causes stress to the crystal's essence and this often interferes slightly when one comes to work with it, so an unpolished stone is better for this kind of work. First gently cleanse the stone from any influences it may have picked up before you had it. Do this by gently bathing it in a soft amber light directed from the heart centre. When this has been done send a beam of light from the pineal centre down into the crystal but slowly and gently. First touch the surface lightly and ask the essence of the crystal if it will allow you in, you wish only to communicate with it and perhaps to become a companion. If the crystal will not allow this you will feel the jolt. Then you must end the session and start again with a different crystal. If the feeling is that of welcome proceed gently into the very heart of the stone and sound your body note.²

* See 'Gypsy Rune Stones' SOL Knowledge Papers.

² A body note is the one that your being vibrates to naturally. It can be found by means of a musical meditation in which you sound a simple vowel mantra and work up the scale starting with the lowest note you find comfortable. At some point you should be able to 'feel' one note more deeply than any other, there is a tingle when it is sounded. This will be your body note. For further information see *Music and the Elemental Psyche* by R.J. Stewart (The Aquarian Press, 1987).

Wait for a while and you will hear with the inner ear the body note of the crystal answering you. This will not be an audible sound but an inner sound and should be answered by a second sounding of your own body note. This is similar to an exchange of names or an introduction.

The preliminary contact is now over and the next step is to enlarge on that introduction and seek to know the heart of the crystal and share its history and memories. You may find yourself recalling memories of your own, a sign that the crystal is returning the compliment. There is far more to this meeting of essences than simply sitting holding a stone in your hand. This is the point at which you must go forward on your own and seek to understand the earth child you are holding; the joining may be superficial or it may deepen into a melding where the simple stone becomes a wyrdstone tuned to you and only you. The coming together and the sharing will not be accomplished in one session, only the 'introduction', from then on you must increase the bond by your own efforts. Spend some time working with the crystal three to four times a week, just a few minutes each time will suffice. Place it under your pillow, or where you can see it when you are at home. Take it with you when you go walking or working in the garden. Do *not* take it to work or carry it when you are feeling stressed or angry. It will pick up the vibrations and beam them back to you; it has no way of knowing that such vibrations are harmful. It is incapable of judging right or wrong, it just *is*. When working with crystals, always take more care than usual to close firmly. Such essences are eternally curious and will tend to pick up all sorts of feelings, emotions, and information, not all of it good, and some may taint the relationship.

During the week you are working with the fourth read bead you can also be looking for a hand-sized, smooth or rounded stone, a beach stone is ideal, for the sea rubs them down until they are like silk. A fair-sized stone from a river bed will also be good. The minimum size would be as big as a duck egg, the maximum the size of a woman's hand. Wash it in salt and water and get it quite clean. With acrylic paints design a face, a fierce face with patterns on cheeks and forehead. Use bright colours and designs that take your fancy, but all of which spell out warnings. You are painting an 'attack stone' or 'guardian stone', some people call them 'wards'. Underneath write the name of your guardian and a symbol, such as crossed swords, a hand held up in the stop position or even the traffic symbol for 'no entry'. When it is finished and the paint is dry, cover it with a clear varnish.

You will need to touch the heart of the stone as you did with the crystal and tune it to your body note and to the note of the house or flat. This is done by sounding a series of notes in the hallway to ascertain the note of the house. If you are happy in your home you will find its entry note is compatible with your own, i.e. it will harmonize if played together on an instrument. Fix both notes into the heart of the stone by holding it in your hands and humming or sounding those two notes for a few minutes several times a day during that week. As you sound them build a picture in your mind, a cartoon burglar complete with striped jersey, a black mask and a bag. Now image the stone growing big enough to block the door or falling in on him and squashing him. Alternate that image with someone dressed all in black, masked and hooded, perhaps with a knife at the door — again the stone prevents entry. Dream up all the kinds of people you do not wish to gain entry to your home and each time tell the stone to prevent entry. The stronger your imagery the stronger the stone will be. After each image, bless the stone for its work, filling it with light. The stone may send back images to you while you are doing this. If so, take note of them as they may be telling you something you ought to know. Try to get into the habit of humming or sounding, even if sub-vocally, the house note as you put your key in the lock. This is just to let the stone know it can relax... the mineral equivalent of shouting, 'I'm home!' as you come through the door. The making of the guardian stone is the work for the fifth session with the fourth red bead.

For the last day with this bead see if you can find in your area an old wall, a ruined castle or ancient house, perhaps an old stone gate or a boundary stone. Let the red bead in your hand act as a link, or an interpreter between you. Conduct the session as if it were an interview and see what you can find out about the stones. Remember that with animals, plants and stones, patience is the keyword.

On the seventh day read through your notes and bring them up to date. It is important to remember that in working with the other children of the earth you should keep one thing in mind. Once you have alerted them to your *conscious* attention they will begin to look forward to your presence, in other words you take on a responsibility towards them. Imagine you set out to make the acquaintance of a new neighbour in order to find out about their work and interests, then as soon as you have found out all you need to know, you take no more notice of them. They will feel hurt and let down, and rightly so. The

'friends' you have made during your work with the red beads should be treated with respect and courtesy. Visit them once in a while for a 'chat' — you will not lose by it and indeed you may gain more than you think.

FIFTH PATH. FIFTH WEEK. GAIA

Now for the last of the small red beads, Gaia the Earth itself. During this week you will need to literally 'touch the earth' in order to hear her voice, feel her heartbeat, touch her dreams. Some of the work you will need to do at night, because that is the time when she can be heard without straining to listen over daytime noise and distraction.

For your first session you will need a garden, or a location where there is access to earth. If either of these is totally out of the question then get a bowl or box or even a large deep baking tin and fill it with earth. It must be big enough to allow both feet to rest in it comfortably. If you really must, use a small Gro-bag from a garden shop. Take off your shoes and socks and put your bare feet into the earth. If you have got a garden, then dig down to the rich soft soil below the surface and 'plant' yourself. It's even better in a wood or forest. Dig your toes in and let the feel of the earth fill you up.

Close your eyes and relax. Breathe deeply and gently in rhythm and slowly allow yourself to shift onto the meditation level. Move your feet and toes gently, just enough to let you feel the earth and catch its scent. Try to recall the smell of earth after heavy rain, the freshness of it, the sweetness. This is what you are made of in the final instant. This is the element in which your sustenance is grown, which helps to build body, muscle and sinew. We are what we eat, we are told, and we eat food grown in earth, food that partakes of its nutrients and minerals. Our bodies return to it at death. It is the primal womb and the final tomb for it holds us first and last.

Let your consciousness sink down into the vast mind that lies beneath your feet, the Mother consciousness. Recall the golden sphere of your Individuality and watch as a symbol forms. It is a golden arrow that falls from heaven and pierces the earth, sinking down into the depths to lie there like a shining seed. Soon the golden seed re-forms and begins to struggle upwards to the light of the sun. It breaks through the soil and its stalk grows higher and higher, while below, the roots seek deep for clear, sweet water. Above, the bud of a flower forms and, ripened by the sun, bursts open to show a golden child seated in the centre of the flower.

The golden arrow is the seed of the Primal Spark, clothed in many skins as it descends through the dimensions until it reaches earth and buries itself far below. There it germinates and grows and obeying the pattern of its nature grows both upwards and downwards, as above, so below. The flower is the physical shell that dies and grows again and again, but always its perfect centre is the golden child of the universe, you.

Feel the link between the earth under your bare feet and the sentient being that is you, now feel the sentient being beneath your bare feet responding to the sentient being that is you. Now widen your sense of perception and you may begin to feel a presence near to you, vast, benign, and powerful. It has no real shape or form but it can take on a form in order to communicate with you. At first it is so big and so dispersed it is difficult to see but— then, gradually, you start to see a figure taking shape. Tall and slender with dark curls that lie in profusion about the shoulders. Twined into them are vine leaves and clusters of purple grapes. The garments are soft and flowing and the colour of sun-ripened corn bordered with scarlet poppies and summer green leaves. The face is calm, almost brooding, the eyes large and dark, also watchful. You are in the presence of Sandalphon, a being of those levels named angelic, though tradition will tell you that this being once walked the earth as a man.

Allow yourself time to get used to the pressure this visitation causes — such pressure is normal and may cause a feeling of tightness round the head and a certain breathlessness. Sandalphon's whole concern is with the intelligence of the earth, with Gaia as a living and conscious being. It is his wrath that is roused by the burning and clearing of the forest, by the carelessness that starts bush fires. It is his tears that flow as he waits beside the poisoned bird as it dies, that bears the sorrow as the trapped animal gnaws off a foot in a vain attempt to free itself from the steel jaws. It is his howl of rage and despair that follows the harpoon as it bites deep into the body of a whale as it sings to its mate. Yes, go carefully in the presence of Sandalphon.

Let the image fade and return to your own level. Too much of such power can be harmful. Record your thoughts and ideas and draw what images come to mind. Close down carefully and be sure to wash your feet!

For the second day of your work with Gaia you will need a bowl, the earth you used yesterday and some water, and lots of newspaper if you are working indoors. You do not always need to sit quietly with

closed eyes to shift levels of consciousness. First of all take hold of the bead and move it around in your hand, recall some of the ideas of yesterday and the feel of the earth under your feet. Now lay the Cord aside and pour enough water into the bowl of earth to make a fair amount of simple ordinary mud.

Do you remember being a child and making mud pies? Do you remember how cross your mother got when you dirtied your clothes and hands? A child is learning the feel of its primal mother when it plays with earth in this way, it is touching and being touched, loving and being loved. Now you will not get shouted at... go ahead and put both hands in it and allow it to slide through your fingers. If you have not put too much water into the bowl you will have a consistency that will hold a shape, so try making forms. It doesn't matter if you have little talent for shaping, just make round balls, little cubes, lop-sided houses and boats.

As you are doing this let your mind slide away into another place. You are once again the golden child and you are making a planet. You are making creatures and forms and creating landscapes. Smooth them out and start again, over and over until you see that you have made something good, something that pleases you. Now just look at it and try to catch the feeling of creation, a feeling of pleasure, joy, of sadness that your forms must return to their natural state. Can you imagine that feeling a thousand times greater, a million times, a thousand million, double it. You will still not come even close to the joy and pain of creating a planet and all that it needs to become *Earth*. You are a long, long way from being a creator, a god, but you are on the way. Withdraw from your reverie and close down. Wash your hands and tip away the earth into the garden or into a pot, and plant some seeds or bulbs into it in thanksgiving. Record your notes.

Now we come to the third day's session. By now you will have found places that you can use for your work that are within a reasonable distance and can give you the privacy you need. It may be a beach or a seldom-used area of a park, wood or moorland, but you will need a place where you can walk barefooted. The very edge of the sea-shore where earth and sea meet is a very magical place and most people are within a train journey of such a place. If need be, any of your sessions can be changed around to enable you to utilize a weekend rather than a weekday.

When you reach your chosen place, first of all you must walk, still with your shoes on, holding the red bead of Gaia in your hand. Concentrate on linking up with her as you have done before. Call to her,

greet her and listen for her inner voice. After a while, take off your shoes and socks and sit quietly, relax and slip easily into the breathing pattern that is now a part of your life. Keep your mind fixed on the inner contact and allow the subconscious part of yourself to take over the automatic part of walking. Get to your feet and start to walk slowly along. Let the feeling of Gaia filter through to your heart, throat and head centres. She will enter your being through the moisture of her body as you walk, the dampness of earth, or sand or heath. This is her blood, and if it be that your feet get scratched or cut, then your essences will mingle and you will become even more intimately conjoined.

Walk until you are pleasantly tired and then sit and rest, and while you rest talk to Gaia through your thoughts. Tell her about yourself and about how to see her, exchange thoughts, dreams, hopes, sadness and laughter. Let yourself sink deeply into the world's heart to rest and recover, dream, rest, love and be loved.

You will find that you rouse from this state quite naturally, as if Gaia has shaken you awake. Look around you and see the world differently as something new and fresh and waiting to be explored all over again. Get up, stretch, and then run... run like a child without a care. Chase the birds, throw stones into the sea, or sticks into the air, kick leaves around, be a child of Gaia. Let the mood hold as you walk back to your starting point holding the red bead firmly in your hand. It is a key to the world of the Earth Mother. Put on your shoes and socks and with them, your everyday self. Record your thoughts and ideas when you get home.

You will need to buy something for the fourth session; depending upon the time of year you will need either several packets of spring seeds, some bulbs, some small bedding plants or hardy plants, or perhaps a young tree sapling. You will also need a spade or trowel, a small bag of potting earth or peat, and a large bottle of water. Take all these to one of your 'working places', somewhere the plants can grow undisturbed. When you get there take off your shoes and socks and work barefooted. Place the plants, seeds, or sapling in front of you, sit down and call from deep within yourself to Gaia the Earth Mother. You are offering to plant these green folk into her body so they can grow and become jewels for her neck and arms. In your mind build up a form of Gaia, not too slender, but round and motherly, offer her your love and your gifts and ask her blessings and protection upon them.

Now dig cradles in the earth for your offering. Make it deep for the

sapling so it will have good support. Line the holes with peat and sow or plant carefully, blessing each one and keeping the image of Gaia in your mind, feeling her bending over your shoulder as you work. Finally bless the water. Pour it into a bowl and kneel before it, point the first two fingers of your right hand into the water and pour energy from the heart centre down through your arm, into your fingers and into the water. Say these words, 'Be clean, be blessed, be filled with light and strength, be charged with love and made holy by the creator of this world.'

Now pour the water over the place of planting, using every drop. Now settle yourself in a comfortable position and relax, breathe deeply and move into the altered state of mind that is now so familiar to you.

Build in the inner eye the sight of your offering as they grow. See them in each stage of their growth. The first hint of green, the small shoots, the sturdy plants reaching upwards and finally flowering in all their beauty. See the Earth Mother pausing as she wanders the earth to touch and take delight in these green children planted specially for her, with your love. Let the picture fade now and withdraw from your state of meditation. It is time to go home and record your notes, but try to visit as often as you can to check on 'Gaia's garden'.

This fifth session may take a little time to accomplish. However, it is important and if you have to delay a while to arrange it, don't fret, but accept the delay in your progress for it will be well worth it. For those who delight in camping it will present few problems, for those who, like myself, regard living in a tent and sharing one's sleeping bag with a variety of multi-legged younger brethren one of life's lesser pleasures, it will be more difficult.

For this part of the work absolute privacy is essential. You must be alone, no companion unless of the four-footed kind. It is therefore assumed you will be doing this on a week-end, a Friday or Saturday night. You will need your Cord, a robe and a blanket, a lantern, some corn or millet seed, and some charged water, (use the same charging process as you did to plant the flowers). Here I must digress and point out that if you are a woman, sleeping alone out of doors and in an isolated spot can be dangerous. I would strongly suggest that if you do not have a garden of your own that you ask a friend if you can use theirs. As an alternative, do the ritual in the daytime with someone far enough away to give you privacy, but close enough to be on hand if needed or to warn of intrusion. Simply adapt the whole thing to your circumstances.

Bathe and put on clean clothing before you leave and if possible walk part of the way to your chosen spot. If you are staying the night, set up your tent and arrange everything you need. Wait until the world has settled down for the night and then go a little way from your own camp and prepare. Sprinkle the millet seed or corn in a circle large enough to take your body lying down, then cover the seed with the charged water. Work using yourself as the centre of the circle. Walk around the circle with the lantern and place it where your feet will be. Then sit down and begin to attune yourself to the night, and to the earth. Wrap yourself in the blanket if you feel cold. Go back over the week's work and try to correlate what you have learned or understood, then call out to Gaia and invoke her presence, and that of Sandalphon. Continue to invoke until you can feel the atmosphere changing, until a prickle flutters down the spine and the nape hairs begin to raise up.

It is time. Stand up and take off the robe. Fold it and lay it aside. Standing naked and vulnerable, hold your arms up and out and send out a call for the group souls of the animal kingdom, and those of the plant kingdom and those of the primal children, the mineral world. Now lie down with your body against the earth's breast, stretch out the arms and legs into the form of a five pointed star, keeping tight hold of your Cord and the red bead and set your inner self free.

All round you will build up the astral forms of the group souls until you are surrounded completely. At your feet stands Sandalphon, and at your head is Gaia. At this moment you are completely at one with all living things and with the great Lady of Nature and her guardian. You will not be able to stay long, the pressure will be too much, but hold the moment as long as you can. Then turn onto your belly with your face against the earth and commune with the Earth, just the two of you. Then stand up and hold out your arms and invoke a blessing upon all those gathered together with you. Then give them leave to depart in the name of that which caused all things to be manifest. Take up your robe and put it on, wrap yourself in the blanket to get warm and walk round the circle with the lantern in the opposite direction to its casting.

If the time of year is warm enough you might like to keep the rest of the night in vigil. If not, then return to your camp and sleep, or go back into the house if you are using a garden. Close down with a hot drink and sleep, making note of any dreams you may have in the morning when you write up your notes.

For the work for the sixth day with this bead you will need to colour

in the line drawing on page 105. Colour it as you wish, with one exception. The face and hands of the Madonna must be black or dark brown. The Black Madonnas *are the miracle workers, the givers of fertility and the bringers of a gentle death. They can be found in most parts of the world but are mainly concentrated in France, Spain, central Europe, and South America. There are others in isolated locations but those to be found in the afore-mentioned areas are the best known.

For untold centuries these serene, dark-faced images have been the focal point of prayer, legend and hope. In most of the sites the legends go back into pre-recorded history, telling of the dark goddess nursing a sun-child, ever open to the hopes, fears, and pain of those who sought her out. Chartres, Guadalupe, Monserrat, Czestochowa, Avignon, Clermont Ferrand and many others are all designated holy places where the Black Isis, the sweet fertile Earth Mother, reigns supreme. Her power is the power of the Earth as an element, as a planet, and as a planetary being. This is the power you need to contact to round off your week's work. When you have coloured the picture with either paints or crayon, detach it from the book and stand it up where it can be seen. This picture (drawn by Anthony Clark) is not supposed to represent any of the Black Virgin statues currently extant, but to symbolize Gaia as the Black Isis with the sun child purely and simply for this part of the Sacred Cord.

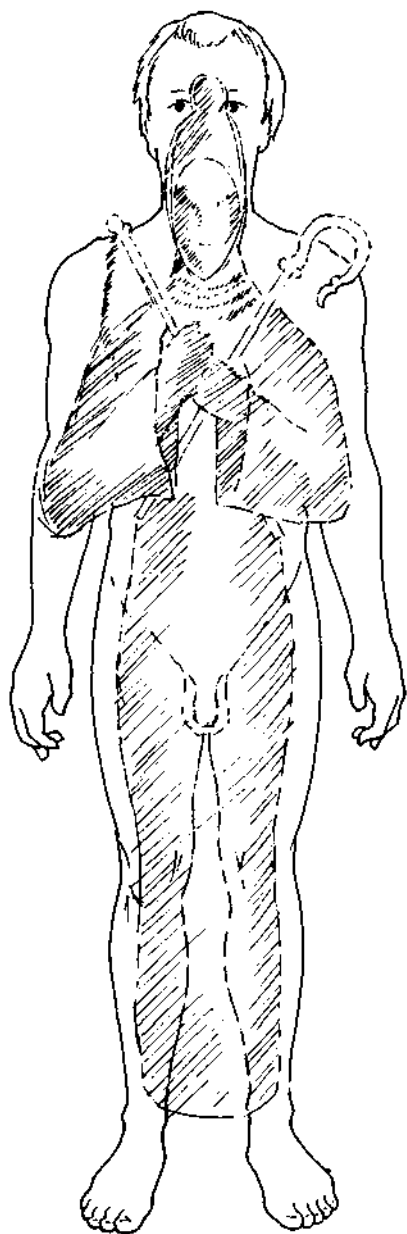
Sit with the picture facing you and, while going through the relaxation and breathing exercises, allow the eyes to slip out of focus now and then, so that the picture becomes blurred and indistinct. In this way the image becomes imprinted on the inner eye in a way not possible when seen in clear focus.

Instead of deliberately creating images, simply let them rise up from your sub-conscious mind and present themselves to you. Look at whatever comes and commit as much as you can to memory so that you can record it later. Sometimes it may seem as if what you are seeing has no connection with Gaia or the Black Virgin, but usually there will be a hidden link.

After a while focus on the image of the child and see your own face portrayed. Look at yourself seated on the lap of the Great Mother, black as the fertile earth she represents. She moves her head to look down at you and smiles, smoothes your hair and lays a gentle kiss on the top of your head. You watch as the child that is you, turns in her arms and snuggles against the deep breast and sleeps.

* See Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (Arkana, 1985).





Another change now. Instead of looking at the mother and child, you can feel the warmth of her lap beneath you, the tender arms curving around you, the pressure of the body supporting you. Her hand gently touches your hair and you feel her breath as she bends to kiss you. With closed eyes you feel the strength and softness of her body holding you. Her scent is all about you like flowers and grass after rain, fresh and sweet and very feminine. Let yourself go, let yourself sleep, the red bead held closely in your hand, sleep in the arms of the Great Mother, the Black Isis, Gaia. Sleep and dream, and waken when you will.

On the seventh and last day read through your notes for the whole of your work with the red beads and add a short summary of your thoughts and feelings. Now you can look forward to a week of rest and then on to the red Overhead.

FIFTH PATH. SIXTH WEEK. THE INTEGRATION OF THE WHOLE

The largest of the red beads symbolizes the Integration of the Whole, and with it you will learn the meaning of at-one-ness. To do this you need to prepare yourself for you will undergo an experience that may just change you forever.

The assumption of a god-form is something every student of the occult arts learns to do at some time or another and there are various ways in which this can be accomplished. Most of the time it is a matter of simply sitting in the god-form position, with hands at rest on the knees, back straight, head up, and imagining yourself as Thoth, Ra, Hermes, Odin, or whatever god-form you need to bring down. This is at the lowest level. At the intermediate level you need to study the god-form and to have some depths of understanding as to its inner meaning and power. Then, you must build a small image of the form within the solar centre of the body, holding it there until it is quite definite and steady. Now you must allow the small image to grow until it almost fills your body — at this moment you can begin to think of yourself as that particular god-form. (See page 106.) At the advanced level — and I must emphasize that to practise the advanced level before you are capable of controlling the enormous pressure that builds up can cause problems with the endocrinal system — goes much further than this. I therefore propose to give *two* different levels of work for the red Overhead, one for the basic and in-

intermediate reader, and one for the advanced. However, I must urge you to err on the side of discretion in this and, if you have any doubts whatever about your level of ability, use the level of lower intensity rather than the higher level. I do not say this to be mysterious, simply to keep you safe and sound, for during the time you take to read this book you are in my care.

Make certain you will not be disturbed. This is most important. Have beside you something to drink, fruit juice or hot tea in a flask, and some plain biscuits. A blanket to wrap around you after the session in case you have lost body heat. It is also a good idea to arrange the session just before bedtime and go directly to bed afterwards.

Level 1

Go through your relaxation exercises thoroughly, then on to the breathing exercises, taking your time and moving slowly into the meditative state. As the altered state deepens, behind your chair there builds up a pillar of soft diffused light. At first there are many colours that come and go within its depths, then slowly a rich deep gold underlined by a warm russet red begins to build up, then an olive green and, finally, the soft brown of well-tilled earth. These colours blend and swirl and the pillar changes shape building gradually into a human form, much larger than life.

First the eyes appear, dark brown and with laughter glinting in their depths. Dark curls entwined with vine leaves and purple grapes surround a face strong in bone structure as a man's, yet the mouth shows the tenderness and sensitivity of a woman. Tall and straight, with robes that swirl and flow about its body the archangel Sandalphon, guardian to the planetary being, manifests directly behind you. About you blows a wind filled with the scent of many things, sun-warmed grass and violets after rain, a damask rose at evening or a pine forest in the snow, a child fresh from sleep and a kitten's fur, wood fires in autumn and bread baking in the oven.

Let the image materialize as clearly as possible (if you have the right sort of etheric make up this *may* actually manifest, but it is rare). Feel the presence behind you and allow the consciousness of that presence to fill your mind. The being places a hand lightly on either shoulder, high up and touching the area where the big arteries are placed. Feel the slight pressure there.

With the touch comes a swirl of emotions: exultation, joy, fear, pain, wrath and an anguished acceptance of 'what is'. Then the mixed feelings die down and you are now in contact with the being we know as Sandalphon. This is the one who soothes and comforts

Gaia in her pain and rejoices with her when she laughs. This is her companion and her friend, her guardian and her champion. Look now at the Earth as it is shown to you by the archangel of Earth. I cannot tell you what you will see, what you will hear, what you will feel, or even if you will understand any of it. This is your personal integration with the living soul of the planet on which you exist. Through contact with Sandalphon you may look upon the Earth and all that lives, breathes and moves upon her breast, and see anything and everything you wish to see.

Recall the work you have done with the small red beads and ask that you may be shown what is relevant to that work. Go through the same procedure each day taking the self on the first day, animal on the second, plant on the third, mineral on the fourth, Gate on the fifth and on the sixth day looking at the whole life energy of the Earth working as a unit.

Each day build the presence of the archangel behind you and each day it will deepen its contact with you a little more. On the last day ask a blessing from the presence and with the blessing, a gift, an increased awareness of how you can help the planetary being. Make notes and keep records each session and on the seventh day read them over and reflect on what you have learned from this Fifth Path.

Before I give out the information on Level 2 a word of explanation concerning the advanced procedures for assuming the god-forms. Again I say, even at the risk of boring you, *Do not work on Level 2 unless you are sure you are capable of dealing with the psychic pressure.* If in doubt, ask yourself how many years you have been *seriously* working within the occult disciplines. If it is less than three to four years of sustained and guided work, or if you are totally unsupervised, then stay with Level 1. Of course, there will always be those who will go against advice in sheer bravado; their own ignorance or complete lack of real psychic power can sometimes act as a shield, but do not count on it.

Advanced assumption work follows the same lines as the intermediate until the point is reached where the inner form is allowed to grow so that it almost fills the physical body. At this point you should pause and ask yourself if you are still in control for, at all times, the god-form must be subordinate to your own will. You are seeking an interaction between yourself and the god, *not* offering yourself as a vehicle. An adept who is working under the full guidance of a master teacher may go further and form a symbiotic link with such a being, but a particular kind of physical make-up is required for such work and you are either born with it or not; it cannot be taught.

Once the form is established within, a sphere of intense light is imaged hovering above the head. From the sphere there descends a beam of light that pierces the head centre and goes down through the pineal, throat, heart, solar and genital centres and stops there. It does not proceed beyond for you wish to keep the power 'off the earth'. Project the symbol or an image of the god-form to be assumed into the sphere, whereupon the light will change to the symbolic colour of that god-form. The power of the symbol will slowly descend via the beam of coloured light, penetrating each centre as it descends. When the link is fully established, the assumption is complete, *but* at all times you should remain fully aware of your own identity.

For those who walk the way of the mystic or combine the occult with practising Christianity, and there are many, this procedure may be used for the beautiful ritual of 'Practising the Presence of God' using the sphere of light filled with the Christ force, or even with the grace of a particular saint.

Level 2 is very similar to such a procedure... but not quite. Instead of assuming, you are assumed!

Level 2

Make your preparations as for Level 1. Allow the figure of the archangel Sandalphon to build up behind you, concentrate on the features and colours. If you are working at Level 2 then you should be well able to formulate the figure accurately and with little effort. Go on slowly and gently until you can feel the breeze and smell the many scents described in Level 1. Now concentrate on feeling the power and strength of Sandalphon as the being stands close behind you. Work on this until the hair begins to rise at the nape of the neck, until you are sure that if you turned round you would see the glowing shape standing there.

Hold in your mind's eye a picture of a favourite beauty spot, somewhere you know well and love to visit. As you hold the picture the archangel moves forward and envelopes you, assuming you into its aura, making you a living part of its being. You become submerged into a world of colour including some you could not name, scents far more acute than you can smell physically, touch, as if a thousand different sensations are being experienced at the same time, hearing so acute you can hear the mountains breathe as they expand and contract in response to heat and cold. In your mouth there is the taste of honey and wine.

You become aware of a soft drum beat, your heart, then another, similar but quicker, the heartbeat of an angel. Yours quickens very

slightly, that of the angel slows down, the two begin to adjust to each other's rhythm and slowly they become one.

You grow within the aura of Sandalphon until you are many times your natural size. Then your sight clears and you look out upon the Earth through the eyes of the guardian of the planetary being, feel with that being's heart, understand with that being's intelligence and wisdom.

If you are working with Level 2 you will not need me to tell you what this will mean, what you will see, how you will feel. You will also know that you cannot remain at such a level for very long, so you must try to remember what is happening and record it later. Use the same day-to-day sequence as for Level 1, self on the first day (not a comfortable feeling, to see yourself as you are seen by an archangel), animal on the second day and so on. •

When you feel you cannot take the pressure any more, simply ask Sandalphon to help you close down. The power of the senses will diminish and you will be back within the swirling colours of the angelic aura. The two heartbeats will separate, yours slowing down, that of your host quickening. Then you will revert to your normal size and the being will move away from you until it is once more standing behind you. Thank you is totally inadequate for what you need to say. Try this instead:

For the gift of seeing with thy sight, I bless thee,
 For the gift of hearing with thine ears, I bless thee,
 For the gift of feeling with thy touch, I bless thee,
 For the gift of scents beyond those of the earth, I bless thee,
 And for the joy of being within thy heart's love, I bless thee.
 Be blessed in all these things now and forever.'

For a being such as this, indeed for any level being, a blessing is the most precious gift of all. It carries with it the promise of brotherhood beyond eternity.

Sit quietly for a while when you regain normal consciousness, then eat and drink and rest again. Then, and then only, record what you have remembered. Follow the instructions for five days and on the sixth day spend the time with Sandalphon and go briefly through your Cord to date with the being. You will find many things clear for you. On the seventh day read up your notes and whatever seems relevant. Then you may rest for a week before beginning the Sixth Path.

THE SIXTH PATH

The Element of Earth and Self;

The Element of Water and Self;

The Element of Fire and Self;

The Element of Air and Self;

The Root of Being

THE SIXTH PATH. FIRST WEEK. THE ELEMENT OF EARTH AND SELF

We carry within us each and every one of the elements from which our earth is made, earth, water, fire and air. In order to understand and experience *at-one-ness* with the whole of creation, we must first understand the wholeness within ourselves. Unless we work with the four elements contained in our physical bodies, we will be neither healthy nor mentally aware of our place in the universe. Once we can establish a relationship with the elements it will change, spread out, and grow for, not only are they the basis of our planet, they extend in different forms and aspects into every particle and into the very fabric of the universe itself.

First you must look back to the gold bead of the Individuality and see once more the descent of your Primal Spark to build and quicken it. From there the power is stepped down through the levels until it finally emerges as a living being on the physical level. But, during that descent, it will gather about itself many layers of matter, one from each sphere of existence it passes through. Those layers continue to react when they come within the pull of even the smallest trace of its original sphere. Some people have more of one element than another, some have too little, some react violently. Allergies are not always purely physical, they can be a reaction to an inner lack or over-abundance of matter/element from a different dimension. Some

people cannot wear gold or silver; the 'little folk' or faery folk, so tradition tells us, could not touch iron. Copper conducts certain psychic elements better than any other metal.

The correspondences that every occult student learns by heart gives rulership of certain metals and elements to certain planets. This is not by accident, nor is it as fanciful as it may seem. Every astrologer knows that each planet in the solar system exerts an influence, however subtle and tenuous it may seem, on every living thing, and each planet is tuned in a way we do not fully understand to certain metals and elements.

This is the penultimate path on the Sacred Cord, and you may be flagging by now, but you have almost completed the full cycle and, if you have taken the specified rests between each path, you should now be feeling the excitement and joy of a good job almost done.

Take the gold bead in your hand and go through the familiar warm up of relaxation and breathing, then concentrate on the colour of the bead. Gold, gold as a colour is seen in the ripened cornfields and as a metal in the making of jewellery and precious objects. Yet we also carry traces of gold within our physical bodies. Our race memory of this is reflected in idiomatic speech, 'She's as good as gold', 'He has a heart of gold', etc. We say of a good orator that he has a 'silver tongue'; a determined person is seen as having a will of iron. Let all these things pass through your mind. The amounts of minerals, metals and elements differ in the bodies of human beings, and you will be seeking out which ones affect you most and which the least.

On this first session you are seeking for the gold within yourself. This metal is attributed to the sun, so ask yourself how you react to the sun, its heat and its rays. Do you enjoy lying out in it for hours on end or do you avoid it? Do you burn easily or go brown directly? Are you allergic to this metal or simply like or dislike it? Think of your natal chart and its position by sign and house. Is it above or below the horizon? Think of the gold beneath the earth in great veins, hidden within the body of the earth as gold is hidden within your body. Gaia's body is like yours. It holds minerals, metals, elements, air, water and, like you and me, it has a central core of heat. We are alike, think on this, the planetary being was created along similar lines, it breathes, it moves, it dances through space, it makes sounds, it needs sustenance and, above all, it needs love and care, just like us.

Continue thinking along these lines, looking for examples of at-one-ness with the Earth. Think of the dust you will eventually become and how that dust will eventually become part of something

else, a flower, grass, eaten by a bird or an animal, transported from one place to another. It no longer holds more than a faint trace of the body it once was, but it still exists in a changed form and will always exist. All the matter in the universe was once a vast whole, what we are now, what we have been, what we will be in the future ages, was all held in that *whole*. Everything that existed and still exists and will exist, was already there, waiting for its time to *be*. The Earth was there, a minute part of that vast ball of matter destined to become a small planet in a tiny system on the edge of a minor galaxy. On that planet would be born idiots and geniuses, musicians and inventors, ordinary and extra-ordinary human beings. You are a part of this. Close down now and return. Record your thoughts as usual.

For the session on the second day you will need to seek out the presence of silver within your body. It is a moon metal, and very feminine. It is also 'colder' than gold in appearance but it has properties of its own, especially in any work concerned with that ancient science we call magic. Holding the bead in your hand, think of a landscape bathed in the silver of moonlight and observe your reactions. Do you have a good night sight? Then you may have more of the element of silver in your make-up. Are you prone to withdraw from people and to prefer your own company? If so, then the same applies. Silver is a hidden metal. It seeks to pull away from bright light, it is also a metal that tends to hold influences.

Think of the moon in your natal chart and its place by house and sign, and what this can tell you about your relationship with the metal. If you know or can find out, think about the moon's quarter when you were born, new, first quarter, full or dark. Silver people are seemingly cool but can hide a great deal underneath that coolness. Although both gold and silver have been used as a means of buying and selling for centuries, in the last hundred years they have been replaced by the use of baser metals in coinage, but the colours have remained. We still have gold-coloured pound coins and smaller silver ones. Silver has its place in traditions also. A silver (real) coin placed in the shoe of a bride will bring her good luck. It is really an old fertility symbol linking the metal with the moon goddess and the bride's menstrual cycle. The silver moon boat brings children to the childless and takes away the souls of those who die young. All these things link mankind with the minute quantity of silver within the physical make-up. The moon at the full tugs not only on the tides of the oceans but on that metal that is her very own. Close down now and return to the physical. Record your thoughts as soon as you can.

Now for the third day's session, and the focal point of the work is a mineral which is also metallic: zinc. Zinc is the first member of group 11B in the periodic tables which includes cadmium and mercury. Group 11B and group 1B, which includes gold and silver, closely resemble each other. In chemistry zinc is used to precipitate gold and silver from cyanide solutions so it is a natural companion to both of them. It also has innumerable other uses in metallurgy, ceramics, and in the making of paint. But it is also used in medicine and is an important mineral for good health. Think of it as a knight in armour, guarding the immune system, for that is its main work in the body.

Hold the bead in your hand and move into the meditative state, and when you are ready sink deeply into your etheric body which is a counterpart of the physical. See it as a vast complex of workshops, ramparts, defence systems, laboratories and machines with a governing body making all the decisions in the boardroom at the very top. Seek out your body's reserves of zinc and see them as a knight guardian bearing on his shield the symbol Zn in red on a white background. Take a good look at your guardian and see how it looks. It should be strong and tough, look healthy and ready to combat any infiltration of disease. If it looks weedy, insecure and in need of a square meal, make a mental note to get some zinc tablets from your chemist. You can check on all the trace elements in your body in this way. Return to normal consciousness now and write up your record.

For the fourth session dealing with the self and the element of earth we look at the Earth's gift of fruit. Holding the gold bead firmly pass through into the altered state and imagine yourself at a table where you find fruits of all kinds laid out on a white cloth. Each and every one has been grown in the earth, fed by the minerals and nutrients in that earth. Almost every fruit has some folklore attached to it. Let your mind think over this and see what thoughts come up.

The apple is perhaps the best known of all fruit, connected as it is with the so-called Fall of Man. It has been portrayed in art, song, poetry and prose, and it has been looked on as the fruit of temptation, the apple of the knowledge of life and death, or sometimes of good and evil. It has tempted in other ways as well, for the fleet-footed princess, Atlanta, lost a race and gained a husband when she stopped to pick up the golden apples he threw down to distract her. There is even a goddess of apples, Pomona. 'Apple-cheeked' is a description often applied to fresh complexions. The same is said of the peach, a fruit looked on with favour by the ancient Chinese who liken its delicate colouring, flavour and shape to the nubile maiden. The divi-

sion of the buttocks in a young girl is often described as 'the cleft of the peach'. The English fair skin is called 'peaches and cream'. The pomegranate is connected with Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, and of the Dead, yet it is also a symbol of fertility and therefore of life. At the heart of all these tales lies the thankfulness of mankind for the richness of Gaia's gifts. Take a fruit and cut it in half and marvel at its perfection and at its life force hidden from sight at the centre of the fruit itself. In just the same way the seed of mankind is hidden from sight and nurtured until ready to pluck from the tree. Think of the links here between human life and the fruit. Return when you are ready and write up your notes.

For the fifth session think deeply upon the ancient craft of the farmer and his special relationship with the earth. The domesticating of the horse, and cattle, the patient gathering of knowledge that enabled him to judge the times of sowing, growing and reaping. In this age we look to scientists as the essential people, but it is the farmer who feeds the world. There is within such people a deep and abiding love of the earth in all its moods. Gaia is sometimes capricious and fickle, one year she can give a good yield, others, barely subsistence level. Yet still the fanner courts her, turns over the rich soil, ploughs and seeds her and waits for her to give birth. In this patience there is the seed of this session's lesson. Think on it deeply. In the mind's eye see a field go through a complete cycle from the cold, frozen earth of winter to the richness of harvest. Close down and return.

The sixth session now, hold to the gold bead and drawing on all your knowledge, make your own contact with the element of earth within you. Try to understand what it means to you, if anything, to be called 'a child of earth'. Go through all the symbolism that you know, the gods and the goddesses, look at the planet as a whole, and as a sentient being that lives and moves and has a life within that only comparatively few people know, or even care about. What is *your* relationship to the earth within and without. Finally, draw on your knowledge and experience to choose a symbol that will, for you personally, come to mean earth, and the Earth. Are you her child, or her enemy? Return and close down.

On the seventh day read through your notes and add a summary. Although it may seem innocuous this last week will determine your inner attitude towards your environment for a long time to come. In occult studies never underestimate the gentle exercises!

SIXTH PATH. SECOND WEEK. THE ELEMENT OF WATER AND SELF

You now come to the second week and the second bead of this Path, and it is green, the green of the ocean, the green of a woodland stream reflecting its mossy banks, or a quiet lake covered with waterlily leaves. The body of a human being is nine-tenths water, water is one of the most important things on this planet. No matter how many people finally inhabit the earth, the water content will remain the same, it will never increase by so much as a single drop. This means that if the world's birth rate does not slow down, *now* and *fast*, we will run out of water. But as we will probably run out of oxygen and clean air long before then it will hardly matter except for the few who are still alive!

Everyone knows that this element is ruled by the moon, which causes the oceans to rise and fall. But not only the seas obey the lunar summons, the fluids within the human body also respond to an inner ebb and flow. In the teachings associated with astrology, you will find each sign linked to a certain area of the body. The most pronounced effects on body fluids will occur in those areas governed by the sign holding your natal moon, but there will be a lesser effect in every area as the full moon makes its rounds.

Aries rules the head, so those with the moon in that sign will be far more prone to headaches and sinus troubles when a full moon occurs there. Taureans have trouble with the throat, especially as a fair number of them live by speaking and/or singing, or work at jobs that require a lot of talking. If your natal moon occurs in this sign, keep a close eye on the area when a full moon occurs. Sore or inflamed throats and neck glands are more likely then. Gemini has custody over the lungs so it is wise to avoid catching coughs and colds when the full moon falls in the Twins, it can easily turn into pneumonia or bronchitis.

Cancer has rulership over the breasts and nursing mothers can find themselves with an increase of milk at the full moon in this sign. It also causes a retention of water in some women at this time. Leo's body parts are the heart and spine and the fluids occurring in these areas are affected by the full moon when it occurs in Leo. The sign of Virgo rules the stomach and the upper intestine and a natal moon here can mean stomach upsets due to acidity when a full moon occurs there.

Libra and Scorpio rule the liver and kidneys, the genitals and bladder respectively, making their natives susceptible to kidney stones,

liver complaints, gout, cystitis, and menstrual troubles when a full moon rises in either of these two signs. Sagittarius, however, governs the thighs and hips and full moons here can cause pain when the fluids that keep the joints oiled and moving form a crystalline substance that prevents the joint from moving easily. When a full moon appears in Capricorn, Aquarius or Pisces, those with the same lunar aspect in their charts are often afflicted with oedema in the knees, ankles and feet. A book with a lot of pertinent information in these areas is *Astrology and Health* by R.C. Jansky, published by Para Research, Rockport, Mass., USA.

For the first session as you hold the green bead in your hand, let your mind be still. Hold the stillness until you can hear the beat of your heart and feel the blood pulsing through your veins. Then open up your awareness and gently seek out the cosmic tides that ebb and flow about us and about the planet we inhabit. We and the Earth float on a sea of stars and that sea obeys a rhythm far greater than any we know of on our tiny planet. Feel the motion of the Earth as she rocks like a ship drifting and dreaming, obeying the great solar winds and riding the waves of the void. Feel the swell lifting you up and down, lulling you into a near sleep. Be conscious of a sea far greater than any on Earth with its own tides, waves, currents, and storms. Now gather your consciousness about you and return to your own place. Close down more firmly than usual and write out your notes.

For the second session find a small stream, pool, or pond and if the weather is warm enough, take off your shoes and socks and sit with your feet in the water. Let your mind move into meditation, feel the water on your skin as if you had never felt it before. Let the water in your body, and the water of the stream meet, feel, and recognize then-bond. If it is possible, walk in the stream and feel the pull and tug of the water around your feet. Scoop it up in your hands and fling it upwards, watch the light as it catches each drop. If you cannot find a stream, try an indoor swimming pool if it is cold weather, but an outdoor one is better. Swim and feel the water on your body, feel it lifting you and supporting you. The water in your body and the water beneath you will communicate. This is the element that gave your species birth in the distant past. Remember that and be grateful. Now return to full consciousness and close down.

The third session is more of a physical act than an inner experience. Buy yourself four large bottles of pure spa water — Perrier, Malvern,

or Highland Spring — it doesn't matter. For this third day you are required to fast, to eat nothing, only to drink pure water, but to drink it with full intent each time. Listen to the sound it makes as you pour it into the glass. Hold it up to the light and marvel at its clearness and sparkle, feel the coolness on your skin. Sip it as if it was a fine wine and let the taste cleanse your tongue and fill your mouth. Don't drink it down fast, linger over it and know that it is a living thing that you are taking into yourself. As it enters your body try to think about its journey. Because of its purity it will cleanse every part of you, your stomach, liver, kidneys, intestines and bladder. When eventually the residue makes its way out of your body, make that an experience as well. There is nothing unholy or unclean about it, it is a natural by-product of a superbly-designed living machine. The liquid that leaves your body will eventually be re-cycled and made pure again, either through modern technology or through the Earth herself. Throughout this day of fasting be mindful each time you drink a glass of water that it is the most precious thing on the planet, without it nothing can survive. At the end of the day meditate on the feeling within you, your thoughts about your day and the importance of water and you as a human being.

Now you are ready for the fourth session. If you can, start your day with a shower, letting the water flow over your body, gathering about your feet and entering every pore. Be conscious throughout the day, until the time of your session, of the water beneath the Earth. Flowing silently through sunless tunnels and dropping down between giant crevasses to form deep, unseen pools into which giant stalagmites dip their icy fingers. When at last you begin to work the session, in your mind's eye follow those unlit, unknown streams of crystal water as they meander through the veins of the Earth Mother. They neither know nor do they care that they cross boundaries and borders, or that above them the face of the Earth changes in form and character as do the languages of men. In your body of light you can slip through the narrowest of channels and disport yourself in pools where no light, save that which now shines from your inner self, has ever shone. Here there live creatures that have no need for eyes, or colouring, or warmth but which are still children of the Earth Mother.

In this silent world there are crystal halls no man will ever see save in dreams, seams of gold that will never know the desecration of man's greed and jewels that will never adorn the fingers of beautiful women. These are the hidden treasures of the Earth Mother, these

she keeps for herself. Return now and close down firmly. Write up your notes.

Now for the fifth session. This comes in two parts. If you reach this part of the Cord work in the summer months and the weather permits, go out into the country and find a small river, or a deep pool where you can have privacy. Take off your clothes and step naked into the water. Though you cannot risk going deeply into the meditative state you can believe in the impossible for fifteen or twenty minutes. During this time try to see the world around you through the eyes of a water elemental. Look down through the water at what lies below, gravel, stones, sand and tiny living things. Look at the plant life growing along the banks, the sky above you and the horizon. Lie on your back, floating and drifting, making yourself believe that this is your world and you have manifested in human form for a short while. Music and water have always been connected, streams and rivers 'sing', as do the mer-folk. If you feel music within you, then sing out loud and clear. Now, climb out and sit on a rock, or the bank for a few minutes and look around. If the inner sight is strong enough, you may find you have had the company of the real water people around you. Let your eyes slip slightly out of focus and you may see them. Now thank the river and its inhabitants for your brief time with them. Get dressed and spend a few minutes closing down completely. Write your notes as soon as you can.

There are places where it is possible to do this, especially on Dartmoor or in the Yorkshire Dales. You can look for such locations well ahead of time and mark them down as being suitable. If it is not warm enough to work outdoors in this way, then wrap up warmly and sit by the river or pool and pathwork the whole thing in your mind in exactly the same way. If it rains during this particular week, take advantage of it, get out and walk in the rain turning your face up to the element and letting it soak into your skin. Every time you use water, for whatever purpose, try to do it consciously and realize the many ways in which that use is vital to our health and well-being. It also helps if you can visit an aquarium around this time.

Now for the sixth session. The inner symbology of water is connected with psychicism and intuition, seership and the use of the second sight. Buy a pottery or china bowl. It must be obtained and used solely for use in this work. Using a gloss enamel, paint the inside of the bowl black. Use two or three coats to make it shine and, when dry, polish it with a soft cloth. Fill the bowl with water, rain

water if possible, if not, then let the bowl stand for an hour or so to let any sediment sink to the bottom. When you begin your session sit with the bowl on a small table in front of you, at a convenient height so you can look into it without discomfort.

If you wish, you may place an indigo or purple candle on the furthest side, but take care that there is no danger of catching your hair or the hood of your robe in the flame. Pass your hand over the water murmuring a short invocation either to Nixsa as the elemental king of water, or to Gabriel as the archangelic regent of the element.

Now look into the bowl and focus on the light reflected there. For a while you may see nothing. Indeed, it may take many weeks to stimulate the sub-conscious into communicating in this way but, eventually, you should be able to develop your intuition in this way. Many people think that images must be seen objectively in the water, sometimes they are, but for most the images rise in the mind, the bowl and the water merely acting as agents to focus the inner eye. A few minutes each day will yield better results than an hour once a week. Or you may be lucky and start the ball rolling first time.

For the last day read through your notes and meditate on what has been gained. Write a short summary on the week's work and any change in your way of thinking about the element of water.

SIXTH PATH. THIRD WEEK. THE ELEMENT OF FIRE AND SELF

The third week's work is concerned with you and the element of fire. Of all the elements fire is the one most people find it difficult to deal with in magical work. For some there is the memory going back to a moment of fear or pain, a childhood experience of being burned. For others the link goes back much further and recalls the burning times of the Inquisition. But however this element affects you, it must be dealt with, faced, and resolved. Fire and flame hold a big place in our myths and language. We read of the flame of love, the fire of knowledge. Vesta, the Roman fire goddess, was worshipped and consulted by the Caesars as well as the populace. Brigid, as the Celtic goddess of fire, presided over the hearth fire of the home. Pele, the Hawaiian volcano goddess, was appeased with sacrifices for hundreds of years. Sekmet and Loki, and the raven god of the American Indian, have all been held in high esteem by the ancient peoples. Many of them are seen as the creators of mankind, or credited with the steal-

ing of fire from the gods to give it to man. Fire stimulates conversation and encourages even strangers to gather around its warmth and swap experiences along with food and drink. Man has had a love/hate relationship with this element for thousands of years.

For the first session you will need an earthenware plant pot, some sand, charcoal and, if possible, some cedar or sandalwood chips. If these are not available then use some small pieces of pine twig. Light the charcoal and get it glowing, then carefully place the twigs on the charcoal, enough to build what is virtually a miniature brazier. Make sure you have a supply of twigs near to hand to keep the small fire going.

This small watchfire is linked way back to the fires of wandering tribes for whom this element was a God-given thing. It is a symbol of the cooking fires that transformed the eating habits of mankind, and of the way in which over the centuries speech was gradually evolved as a human characteristic. Let your mind turn back the years and show you images of those far-off times deep in the glowing heart of the charcoal. Feel and admit to your link with those prehistoric hunters and try to understand their awe of the element of fire. Your bloodline goes back that far into the past; every living man, woman, and child has such a link. Fire is the connecting element. Withdraw now and return.

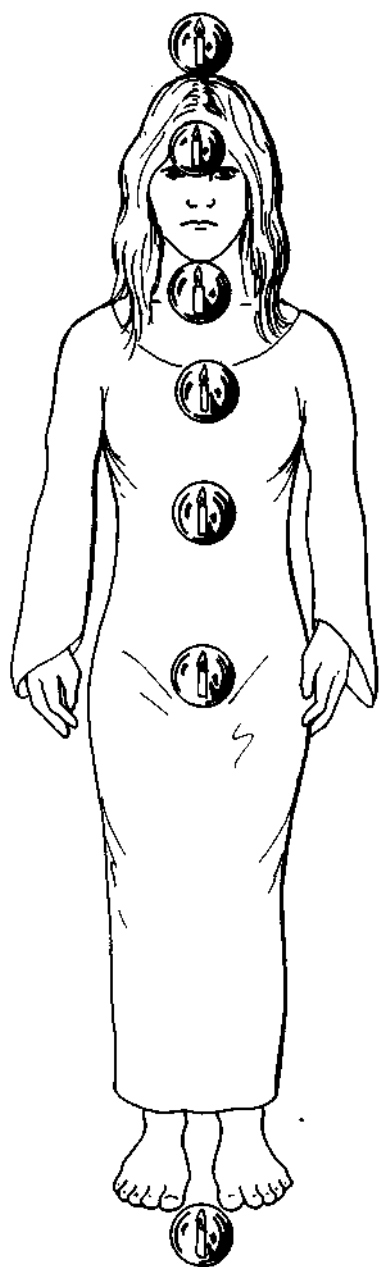
For the second session take a candle and place it in its holder in front of you and light it. Notice how the wick burns and how the flame seems to surround it in a slow moving dance of ecstasy. Look into the flame and examine it, its colours, warmth, ever-changing shape, and most of all its ability to give light and make things clear. Watch the flame steadily and as you move into the altered state mentally exchange places with the candle wick — *not* the flame, but the *wick*. There is a pleasant warmth but no searing heat, the flame is all about you and yet you are not consumed. Energy radiates from your central life force to be transmuted into light and heat. You can see through the flickering shape of the flame the shapes in the room beyond but they mean little, only the ever-present light and warmth seems real. Your whole being seems to be caught up in the tiny wick that supports the candle flame. Slowly you begin to understand many things. You now know that the wick can never be truly consumed, that the candle enclosing the wick symbolizes the physical body, losing substance as it is consumed. The wick is the spirit burning but never consumed, giving of itself to light the way for others. The flame sur-

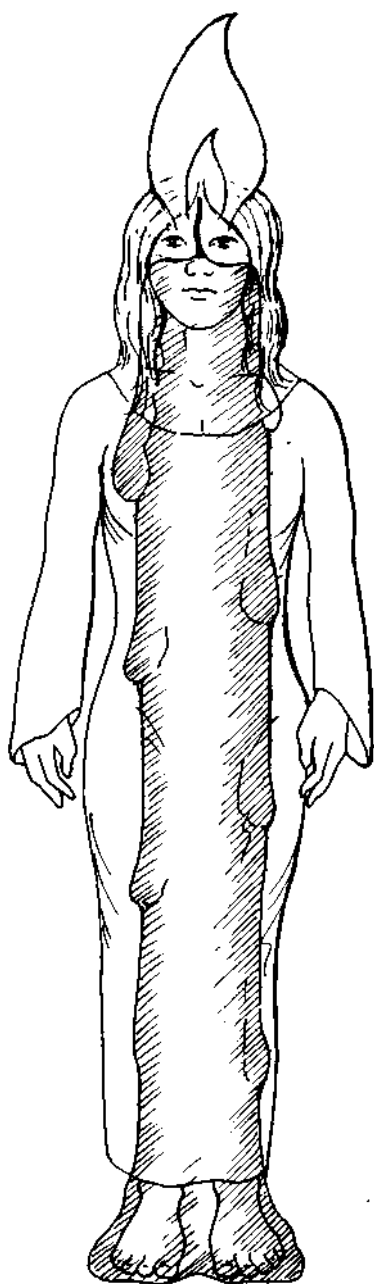
rounding you is the Primal Spark visible only when the wick of the spirit is alight with love and life. From one candle hundreds of others can be lit without ever diminishing the flame. When its life is ended the universal memory still holds its light within. Return slowly and carefully to your own time and place. Record your notes.

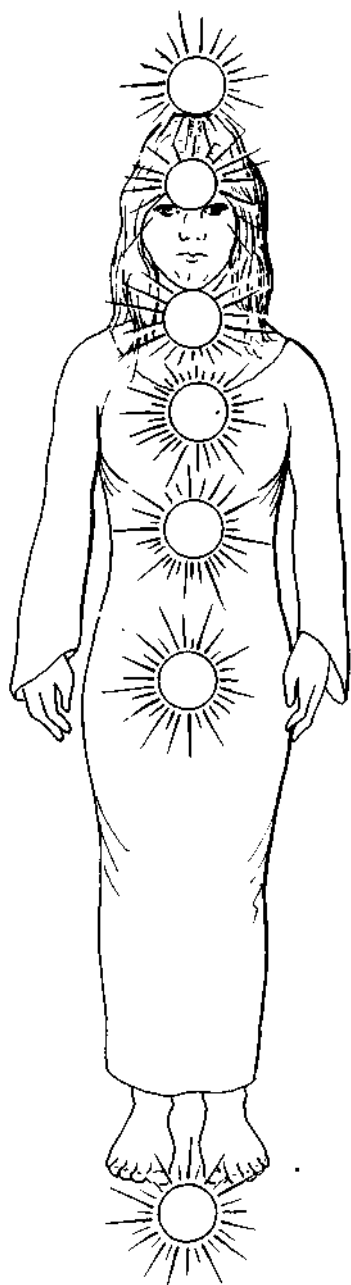
We come now to the third session. Again you are asked to light a candle and place it in front of you. Sit straight with your back supported and in the god-form position. Visualize just above the head and slightly penetrating it, a sphere of soft golden light. Within the sphere there now appears a lighted candle, the light pours down and forms a new sphere identical to the first in the third eye area and again a lighted candle manifests within it. This in turn flows down to build a third sphere containing a candle, and so it goes on, right down through the sacred centres of the body, each sphere holding within it a candle. (See page 124).

The head sphere is the wisdom aspect and its candle symbolizes the light of knowledge that spreads throughout the world. The sphere in the brow centre is understanding and its light is memory. This leads down to the sphere of communication and here the candle symbolizes the gift of speech and laughter. The candle in the heart centre of the emotions is love and just below it lies the most important sphere for this element, the solar centre, with the candle of energy and activity burning there. The sphere is the life centre and its candle is creation. The last sphere encompasses the feet and is the centre of stability. Here the candle symbolizes our earthly make-up, our link with the Earth Mother. You may light up these candles in small groups or all together according to which ones are needed at that moment. Now let all the candles meld, becoming one candle that rests within the sphere of stability and stretches up to where the wick may be seen between the eyebrows. The flame rises from it and encompasses the head and reaches out beyond it. (See page 125.) The visualization of this 'inner light' can be a powerful protection against the Lords of the Dark Face. Allow the image to gradually grow fainter and die away, then withdraw and return to your own place and write out your notes.

Now you may begin the fourth session. The basic format is that of the third session but, instead of spheres containing lighted candles, each centre becomes a sun radiating heat and light. (See page 126.) Start with the head centre and work downwards, but pause each time to get the imagery as real and as detailed as possible. Let the rays of







each sun stream out and make them light up the room around you. The use of these suns varies according to what energy you need to give out. When speaking to others use the sun in the head centre to touch those who are listening to you and to open their centres to your voice. Go down the line and determine the kind of energy each one can offer to others. This exercise is particularly useful for healing with solar energy. When you feel the strain begin to tell, withdraw and close down. Write your notes as usual.

The fifth session begins by building the inner image of a forge fire, white-hot and ready for work. The smith is the god Hephasteus, or Vulcan as he is sometimes called. Watch as he selects a bar of metal and thrusts it into the heart of the fire to soften it. When it is ready he takes it from the fire and lays it upon the anvil and begins to beat it into shape. Time and again he repeats the process, continually folding the metal to make it stronger and finer. Then the delicate task of shaping begins and slowly the blade takes shape. Its colour is that of the white fire itself, the hilt and guard are formed like three flames. Finally it is ready and is thrust into the fire one last time. Hephasteus calls you to stand before him; your sword which is the will of the spirit is ready for its last testing. He draws it forth from the fire and turning he thrusts it deep into your heart. Thus is will tempered by love, and the agony, though not of this world, is hard enough to bear. Your mental body is the scabbard in which rests the sword of the will. It may only be drawn when all else fails and once drawn must be used only in the service of the Lords of Light. Return to your own place and close down.

For the sixth session you must examine your relationship with the element of fire in the light of what you have experienced during this week. Touch on each session and ask yourself what you have learned from it. Build once again the candle-lit spheres and the radiant suns, and watch the sword of the will being made. Fire is a difficult element to handle and you must be sure of your ability to control it. Unless you can do so, that sword of the will may become the sword of the tongue. Return and close down and write up your notes. Meditate on what you have learned from your work with this element. These four beads will have a marked effect on your life when you have worked through them. You will find an increase of earth healing ability in your hands, a new depth in your ability to scry, after your work with the water bowl, and a lot more physical and mental energy after working the fire bead. The air contact will increase the ability to work with the inner levels.

SIXTH PATH. FOURTH WEEK. THE ELEMENT OF AIR AND SELF

Now for the blue bead symbolizing the element of air and yourself. It is with the co-operation of this element that we can breathe, speak, sing, and communicate with others of our species. No one element is above the others, all are vital to our life on this planet, but without the gift of speech we would have had to take another road — perhaps mental telepathy would have developed instead of the tongue. This would have presented many problems, not the least of which would mean the unbearable torment of experiencing the emotions of everyone around you. Sorrow would be increased by as many as were within range, joy would become too much to bear, physical pain would be increased a thousandfold by the mental pain of those linked to you. If ever we evolve the talent of telepathy we had better, for the sake of our sanity, evolve the ability to erect a mental shield at the same time.

For the first session we must consider the power of this element. Climb up to a high place, the higher the better, where the winds can buffet the mind and body. Holding tightly to the blue bead open yourself to the winds of heaven and listen to their voices. Call them by name:

Boreas is the North Wind, the bringer of snow and ice.

Notus or *Auster* is the South Wind, warm and balmy.

Eurus is the East Wind, bringer of storms.

Zephyr is the West Wind who gives warm rain and gentle breezes.

Turn to the four quarters and name them one by one. Determine from which quarter the wind is blowing and make a special invocation to it. Dance with the wind and you will find it will join in the fun. All the winds love movement of any kind. If ever you have need of energy then go up onto the hills and dance with the wind, always call them by name and thank them afterwards. You will find yourself buoyed up for several hours after this session, the more wind there is, the longer the energy will last. Close down as soon as you are off the hill and out of the pressure of the wind. Make your notes as soon as you can.

By now you should have quite a list of isolated places where you can find the privacy these sessions sometimes need. You will need one for the second session. If by any chance the place you choose has an echo you are in great luck. Take with you a book of favourite poetry or a

short story. A book of pagan invocations would be nice or even a favourite chapter of a much loved book. Anything that can be read aloud.

Make yourself comfortable, wrap up warmly if it is autumn or winter-time. Take this opportunity to check on the quality of your relaxation and breathing which should *always* be done, even if it is not mentioned in the text. When ready, take hold of the blue bead, still the inner self and send out a call to the wind lords. When the first bit of wind disturbs the trees, begin to read aloud. Listen to what you are reading and speak as if you were entertaining Boreas and his brothers. Each time you take a breath you are drawing the element of air into your body and using it to revitalize your energies and to speak.

Human beings who can sit quietly on their own, who show by the colour and shape of their auric field that they are aware of the inner worlds, will soon be accepted by the inhabitants of those worlds. Now stand up and move into the open. Breathe deeply once or twice, then, on a long, evenly distributed breath, chant the mighty evocation of 'IAOU':

EEEEEEEEEE-AAAAAAAAAH-OOOOOOOOOHHHHH-
UUUUUUUUUUH

Take another breath and repeat it, and another. Three times in all. Try to make your voice as resonant as possible. Let the sound come from the diaphragm supported by the air. If you use just the throat you will soon lose your voice. Hold the last sound as long as you can without it falling flat. Stand for a moment thanking the wind lords and then close down and make your way back home. Write up your notes as usual.

Now comes the third session and you can stay indoors for this one. Sit quietly in your meditation chair and pay attention to your relaxation and rhythmic breathing. When you feel ready, allow your mind to slip gently into the altered state, holding the bead firmly in your hand. In your mind's eye build above your head a sphere of white light. It should be twice the circumference of the chair you are using. The light from the sphere flows down, completely covering you and the chair in which you sit. On the next in breath draw into your lungs the light, impregnated air. Feel it circle around your body, reaching every part of you. As you breathe out, all the impurities from the body are exhaled into the light around you and purified. Repeat this cycle three times, then change the colour of the sphere's light to a

deep glowing red. Breathe in the colour and feel it energizing your mind and body. Repeat with this colour three times. Change the colour to orange and on the in breath it will charge up the mental abilities and energize your memory banks, and on the out breath it will release whatever needs to be cleared from that part of your system.

Now change the colour to yellow and on the in breath fill your body with its mood enhancing qualities. This colour will help to lift depressions and stimulate the thinking processes. On the out breath you can get rid of all the inner dullness you have stored up. In case you are wondering what colour has to do with the element of air, try holding a prism up in the sunlight and see how the colours radiate 'right out of thin air'. Time to change the colour again, this time to green, the vibrant colour of new growth. Breathe it in and let it renew tissues, muscles, brain cells, etc. The out breath will take away the toxins. Remember, each colour must be used three times. Blue next. This colour can still the mind and calm the nerves, so if you are feeling jumpy and stressed try sitting in the blue light and breathing it in and letting the out breath lower the blood pressure and ease the nerves. Next comes indigo, a Yesodic colour that enhances the psychic qualities and gives true dreams. The out breath can discharge nightmares, insomnia and what Ernest Butler always referred to as 'The Night Nadders'. Last is violet, the colour of the love ray, giver of gentleness and spirituality, bringer of the inner silence that heals, renews, and uplifts. After doing this three times return the light to its original white. Do three more breathing cycles and close down.

Now you are ready for the fourth session, and you are outdoors again and back to your high hill or open space, hopefully with a good wind. Buy yourself four balloons, if at all possible helium-filled. Each one should have a two foot piece of string attached to it. Sit down and hold on to your blue bead, think deeply about something that is upsetting you or a situation that is causing pain. On a piece of paper write down everything you want to say about this state of things. You don't have to hold back on anything, just let the words spill out onto the paper. On the other side write a short invocation to Boreas, the North Wind, asking that being to take your trouble far away from you, to cleanse it in the purity of the upper air. Now tie the paper tightly to the string of a balloon, add a hair from your head and let it go. Let it travel wherever the wind lord will take it.

Now think about one of your greatest joys. Go over it in your

mind. It might be an experience, a beloved child or lover, it might be simply a joy of living and being. Write it so that if by any chance someone should find the balloon and read the paper, it will tell them of a joy that filled your heart. It may be something that will lift their spirits just when it was needed. Write it all down in your own words and on the back a short invocation to Eurus, the East Wind. Tie a small flower to the paper and both of them to the balloon, then let Eurus take it where he will.

Now think about your heart's desire, something that you keep within yourself as a secret wish. We all have such hidden longings and, because there is no name on the paper, no one will ever know whose wish has been given to the wind. It might be that your wish can never become a reality, but just putting it down on paper manifests it a little bit. On the back write an invocation to Zephyr, the West Wind, asking him to lift it up beyond the hills and mountains and take it as near to Heaven as may be possible. Tie the paper and a tiny crystal to the balloon, let it go, the West Wind will lift it up and the crystal will be filled with light.

Now for the last balloon. Set yourself to write down what your life has meant to you so far. This last paper can be longer than the others if you wish, but remember that it must, if picked up, tell that someone a little about you as a person. On the back make an invocation to Austral, the South Wind, make a wish for whoever may pick it up and as a symbol, wrap the paper around a small packet of seeds. Even if no one finds it, the packet will rot and spill the seeds on to the Earth. Let the last balloon go and return home. As you walk back hold on to the blue bead and think about the balloons travelling through the air taking your thoughts and wishes with them.

Next we pass on to the fifth session with the blue bead of air. For this you will need a handful of fine sand or earth and, once more, your hill or high place. Find a comfortable place and hold your blue bead firmly in one hand. After the usual preparations, change levels and begin. Pour the sand/earth into your hand and hold it. Let the warmth of your hand fill it, and your body scent mark it. Let your mind dwell on the fact that you are basically a mixture of dust, water, and trace elements all clinging together in a shape suitable for this planet. Think on the saying, 'Dust thou art, and to dust will return.' Against the span of time that is the life of a planet, this life you are living is only the blink of an eye. Because you breathe in air, because the oxygen you take in sends the blood around your body and enriches the brain, because of this you are a living creature.

Because you are human you can look around you and find reasons for joy and sorrow, and hope for the future. But when you return to the dust what will you leave behind? Go back over some of the things you have learned during the long weeks on the Sacred Cord. Let your mind pick out the highlights and the low times and ask yourself again... what can I leave behind me? Think about the vastness of the cosmos and the smallness of the self. Go deeply into yourself and search out some answers. When you are ready, stand up and move to an exposed place, open your hand and let the wind take the dust that has been impregnated with your thoughts. As it is blown from your hand you will understand that no creature, no plant, no living thing that has ever lived has disappeared from this planet. They are all here, in the earth. The forms may have gone but their dust has been scattered over the whole earth and they are one with it. Close and return. Write your notes as soon as possible.

The sixth and last session with the blue bead. This is indoors and is simply a quiet meditation. After the relaxation and breathing exercises turn the mind to the four lords of the winds. Meditate on Boreas, the North Wind, and the coldness of winter gales, the snow piling into drifts and the icy rain. But also think of the time as a waiting time when the spring lies below the earth in the form of seeds and sleeping animals. Now think on Austral, the South Wind, bringing the hot dryness that can sometimes drive men mad. We see this in the mistral and simoom winds. Eurus, the East Wind, blows across the great continents of Asia and Europe, and Zephyr is the warm wet wind of the West. See what you can find out about the four winds in mythology before you start the meditation. Think also on the special winds that roam over the earth. The Etesian winds are light refreshing winds that blow for forty days each year through the countries of the Mediterranean. The harmattan, which blows in December, January, and February, is a very dry wind that can take the skin off hands and face. The fifty days of the khamsin heralded the inundation of the Nile. The dangerous sirocco can drive people to suicide. The solano that blows over Spain causes nervous tension.

On the last day go back over your notes and meditate on them. See if you can add anything to what has already been written, or understood. Now you may rest for a week before beginning to work with the only black bead on the Cord.

SIXTH PATH. FIFTH WEEK. THE ROOT OF BEING

For the first session, after the preparation exercises, take hold of the four element beads in one hand and the black bead in the other. Think deeply upon the presence of all four elements within your physical body, how they work, and how they affect you. Take each one separately, and then as a whole. Then turn your attention to the black bead and see how those four elements come together as a whole, as the root of the elemental world. Try to understand how interdependent they are upon each other. Earth cannot give life without water. Water cannot retrieve its expended moisture without the help of air. Air is drawn in by fire and transmuted. Fire cannot burn without air. We cannot exist without the co-operation and help of any of them. See what you can add to this. Then close down and write up your notes.

The second session will need the four aces from a pack of Tarot cards. Set them out on a table before you. Meditate upon each one in turn and listen to what they are telling you, showing you by mental imagery. Do not take the usual attributes that are assigned to them, but go beyond that information and seek something new. These four cards are like four great root systems that uphold the elemental kingdoms. As you finish with each card turn it face down so it does not distract you. Withdraw when you feel you have enough information for your notes.

The third session. After the preliminary exercises, concentrate on opening the chakras of the middle pillar of the body. When you feel ready, move onto the astral level and begin. Think about your family and the closeness you feel for and with them. They are of your bloodline, linked by the genetic cord stretching back into the past. Think of your racial type and acknowledge your link and that of your family to that race. Think of the animal kingdom of which you are a part, human yes, but still an animal that evolved on this planet. You are a part of the animal life of Earth. Go further, understand that you are a part of all organic life in Earth, part of the plant life as well as the animal. All need water, sun and oxygen to exist. You are one with all this. Think of the Earth as a whole — this is your home, your place of birth along with all other living things. Know that deep in your soul, you are one with the planet.

Be in space and view the whole of the solar system of which Earth is a member. You belong here, this sun warms your Earth, it also

lights and warms the others to a greater or lesser degree. Without that sun the solar system would die. You are a part of it. Draw back and see the solar system as one small part of a galaxy. You are still a part of all this, so is everything else on this planet. Draw back further still and see, as if laid out upon a black velvet cloth, many galaxies and star systems. Here is the ultimate root of being, and you and it are a working part of each other. You and the universe are indivisible, immutably one. Close down now and write up your notes.

On to the fourth session. After the usual preparation, hold the Sacred Cord in your hands and slowly let each bead pass through your fingers. Stop and think about the large bead of each Path for it contains the *root* of that Path. When you reach the black bead you must realize that it is the symbolic root of the whole of existence on every planet. Return now to the idea of your parents as the root of your present being. From them, from their genetic material, from their sexual joining, you as a physical body were born, but the root of your spiritual being lies way back in the Primal Spark at the beginning of the Cord. The creator of the cosmos is the root of beingness for *all*, therefore you are as much *at one* with the creator as you are with your planetary life-forms. Think on all these things and let them bring other images to mind. When you feel ready, return and close down.

The fifth session is one you must deal with by yourself. I can give you only the meditational seed thoughts that will engender it. They are:

The root of divinity within.
The divine self as the root of all things.

These may be used together or as two sessions.

The sixth session is the last for this Path. Go out to one of your secret places and after placing something beneath you (natural fibre, nothing synthetic), lie down and stretch out your arms and legs. Relax and start your breathing exercises. Let the familiar shift of consciousness take place and begin. From your arms and legs, fingers and toes, from the joints of knees, hips, and elbows, from the vertebrae of the spine emerge tendrils that burrow down into the earth and become root systems that spread far and wide linking you to the very heart of the planetary being. They grow strong and thick and root you firmly.

Then from the sacred centre of the heart send out a shoot that grows into a seedling. The other centres feed the sapling with their

strength and power and soon it becomes a young tree. It keeps growing, getting thicker, stronger, bigger and taller. Between the root system and the tree, the being that gave birth to all this has seemingly been lost, but not so. You have become the tree itself, it reaches upwards and grows downwards at one and the same time. Birds nest in its branches, small animals lie in its shade and still it grows. Clouds are caught in its leafy top and soon start to begin to glow here and there. And still it/you grows. Now the roots are planted in the centre of this galaxy and the upper branches reach another galaxy, its branches spread far and wide to encompass suns and nebulae, linking them all together.

In the very topmost branch is held a glowing sphere of light. It travels downwards through branches and leaves, and trunk, down into the mighty roots of the cosmic Tree of Life, and there it enters the being that is *you* and fills the heart centre, there to dwell forever. Slowly the tree dwindles down in size and the roots withdraw until, at long last, all is as it was and you are lying stretched out on the sweet earth. But now you are changed, and can never be the same. Close down firmly and go home, you need rest now. In one week's time you will start the last Path.

THE SEVENTH PATH

Balance; Awareness; Divinity

You have almost come full circle, and today you start to walk the Seventh Path of the Sacred Cord. The three weeks ahead of you are weeks of summing up, contemplation, joyfulness and the satisfaction that comes from having completed a long and difficult task. It has been almost a year of your life, but a year in which you have changed physically, mentally, and spiritually. Now you stand within sight of the goal, an awareness of, and a commitment to, your own divinity. Knowledge is power it is said; it is also joy, fulfilment, and commitment to life.

Those choosing the occult Path of High Magic often ask how long their training will take. There is only one answer, 'For the rest of your life and beyond.' There is no end to the learning of new things, no end to the continuity of service, and no end to personal growth. If that dismays you, then return to the Path of the Hearth Fire, in itself a fulfilling and important path for, unless you find a never-ending joy in learning and in passing on what you have learned, this Path is not for you. Never keep what you have learned to yourself, knowledge was meant to be shared, passed on, and given with a loving heart. It is true that some knowledge must be held back until the mind can cope with the responsibility that knowledge will bring, but when the time is right, do not withhold it. Too much secrecy can defeat its own purpose, too few holders of great knowledge run the risk of that knowledge being lost forever. I have always made it my policy whenever new or recovered knowledge comes my way, to seek out, as

far as possible, capable people in two or three major locations, and pass on that knowledge. In this way I try to ensure its survival.

To withhold knowledge because the holding gives power over others is a step in the wrong direction and can lead to other mistakes you would rather not make. Similarly, the burning or destruction of books or knowledge, even if it is of something with which you strongly disagree, is very wrong. If your faith or your beliefs cannot accept another point of view, even one diametrically opposed to your own, then that belief and that faith is weak and will not stand the test of time. All things have a natural opposite, all things when weighed should balance.

SEVENTH PATH. FIRST WEEK. BALANCE

Prepare for this week by reading through your records and refreshing your memory of the work. After your preparations sit quietly with the green bead in your hand and look at it closely. The colour is that of Nature who strives for balance in all things. If there is less water, Nature adapts her creatures to need less, or to conserve more within their bodies. If there is an over-abundance of food in certain years, more creatures are born to take advantage of the food. If you do not use a talent it will atrophy, if you use it often its use will intensify. This is the Law.

You have spent almost a year learning about yourself, adjusting your inner balance. Now close your eyes and build around you a vast starry void. You sit poised in space in a great high-backed chair with intricately carved arms and feet. Before you is a pair of golden scales, and around you, spaced at intervals, stand a circle of 'Watchers'. They are far beyond human stature and the little that can be seen of their faces, hidden within the cowls of their misty robes, show a glory that is not human. They are here to act as witnesses. Beside you stands a tall figure, robed and hooded, bearing a book and a pen. This is the Recorder. He will keep the record.

Think about the work you have done. Have you worked with determination or have you skipped the lessons and the exercises? Weigh it up in your mind and when you have arrived at a conclusion, lift your right hand. A Watcher steps forward and places a small book (your record book) on one side of the scales and on the other a similar book (*their* record book of *you*). The scales adjust themselves and show either balance or imbalance, and this is recorded. The scales will balance according to the Law. There is nothing you can do to in-

fluence them, but do not be despondent if they fail to equalize, it is not how many times they balance that matters, but your attitude towards learning and using knowledge. This will merely show you how things stand and what areas need more attention.

Think about the First Path you travelled and recall what you have learned since then about the Primal Spark, the Individuality and the present Personality. Have you balanced what you know with what you have experienced? Take each in turn, the white bead, the gold bead and the red bead. The Primal Spark is not in balance for it is lacking its counterpart of the white bead of conscious divinity. That is the last bead of all, and so it must be left until then. The Individuality is continually assessing your progress. Look at that progress now and contemplate its work so far, then place a symbol of it on the scales and allow it to balance. It has given life, health, education, pleasure, laughter to others. These are things to leave behind you as priceless gifts to others. Close now and return. Write down your feelings and emotions and how you now see the work of the First Path.

The second day's session should begin with renewed attention to relaxation and breathing, which may have got lax of late. Even now, so close to the end of the Cord, you must tighten up the little things. Build the same images as yesterday and when you feel ready start recalling the work you did on the Second Path with the green beads. Balance out the weaknesses and the abilities you worked with then. Try to understand the lessons you learned from facing the Seven Weaknesses and, from a distance in time, see if you have overcome any of them, or even if they have lessened their hold on you. Let the scales show you the results. When you have done this look at the Seven Abilities you claimed. Now, many months later, can you claim them as confidently? Have any of those abilities increased in strength? Again, let the scales have the last, and truest, word. Think now upon the Seven Disciplines of that Path. Have you applied any of them to your daily life? If so, has there been a change for the better or not? Turn now to the Seven Questions and the Seven Answers you sought out at that time. Have you found any of the answers? Have you been asked any of the questions that fit with the answers? Lastly, think about the Seven Problems and the Seven Rejoicings and ask yourself if they are the same now. The scales will tell you. The Recorder will note everything down. Think again upon the Mystery of Seven and see if you can now add to your knowledge and, if you wish, you may question the Watchers. However, beware, some

of them may play the Devil's Advocate. When you are ready close down firmly and record your notes as usual.

On the third day's session you need to balance what was learned on the Third Path. Be aware that the Watchers do not judge, only assess. Recall the Five Births and the opportunities they offered at the moment of entry into the physical world. Try to understand that every birth starts out as a new opportunity to overcome the lower self and increase the powers of the higher self. Pass on to the Five Names you remembered. Do they still carry a charge of emotion after centuries have passed? If so, what is that emotion?

Look now at the Five Loves, the five people you loved in the past. One by one they appear and give an account of their life with you. Your treatment of them and behaviour in that life will be recalled, balanced and recorded. In the faces of those you have held dear in the past you may see echoes of your family in this life, for often those closely linked will strive to stay together. Recall now the Five Debts remembered on the Third Path. If you were not able to fully forgive those debts then, perhaps you can balance the scales by doing it now. If so, then you will feel a lifting of the spirit that comes from an inner adjustment. In your turn you can, at this moment, ask that those to whom you are indebted may offer you a release. It may not be given at all, but there will be some who will have grown in understanding, as you have grown, and will be able to offer you release from whatever is owed.

Last of all, look at and balance the Five Deaths you once endured and balance them against the lives that led to them and know that all lives, no matter how long or short, are precious and will never offer those opportunities again. Look now at the Wisdom of Five and know that a true expression of wisdom is to understand first of all yourself, and then those around you.

The session of the fourth day brings the need to balance what you learned from the work on the Fourth Path. By now the images of the Watchers and the Recorder with the book and scales will build up easily and quickly. Contemplate first of all the Three Mysteries of Birth, Life and Death. As you look at them realize that they are in perfect balance in their completeness. Each birth offers life, each life sinks down into death. It is a universal rhythm, an unending dance of change, growth, and transformation. You need to balance your idea of these mysteries within your own deep self, facing them and accepting them, all of them as part of the Creation.

Now to balance the Three Truths. Know that in growing old you balance your birth and your death. They are two experiences that hold much in common. As a child you grow in physical stature and learn to control the world around you. In old age you decrease, and learn to let go of the world. The first breath and the last breath are in perfect balance. The Second Truth troubles many people, for they lay great store on their possessions, yet it is true that you bring nothing with you at birth and take nothing with you when you die. The secret is simple, perfect balance lies in *what you can leave behind*. To your children the memory of a loving parent, a loyal friend, and a person of integrity. A happy, loving family to take your bloodline and DNA into the future. Completed work, books, paintings, poetry, a building or a bridge, a lifetime of service. You must constantly adjust your viewpoint of life to that balance.

The last Truth seems very small in comparison. Yes, you will be forgotten in time, but you will survive in the world memory for you will have been a part of history. Everyone is a part of history; the famous and the unknown are both necessary. It all balances out.

Lastly, you must balance the Three Betrayals. The betrayal of yourself, your betrayal of others, and your betrayal by others. Balance the betrayal of yourself by yourself with an acknowledgment of your humanity and frailty. Place on the scales the self you think you are, and the self others think you are. Watch the result carefully. Your betrayal of others in the past can be balanced by understanding the hurt and pain your actions have caused and by recalling your own feelings when it has happened to you, as in the third betrayal. The balance can be found in the age-old words, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' The work of the fourth day is ended. Return and close down, then write your notes.

For the fifth session you must balance the Fifth Path. Call to the scales a representative of the animal souls, and of the plant and mineral life-forms. Come to the scales and take your place as a representative of the human race. The Recorder comes forward and places your heart symbol on one side of the scales and on the other a tiny harvest mouse. Watch the scales and see if they balance. If they do, bless the animal souls and give them leave to depart with peace between you. If the balance goes against you, you must offer redress to the animal kingdom. What that redress is, is something you must decide.

Now a single rose is placed against your heart on the scales and you

are judged against the plant life of Earth. Again the judgement is absolute and you must abide by it. If you have not been mindful of the green folk, then a balance must be brought about, perhaps by the planting of trees, or by greater care for the future of your immediate environment. Now the Recorder places against you a small river pebble. It will judge if you have been a good caretaker of the Earth during your life. If not, the Earth itself may deny you its gifts of fertility and beauty. You must adjust the balance.

Last of all comes Gaia herself. She places on the scales a lock of her hair. If it balances she will smile and if not she will weep. Which will it be? Behind her stands Sandalphon, dark eyes fixed upon you as you stand before the scales. In the beginning mankind was designated caretaker of the Earth, initiator of the animal kingdom. Each man and woman must be judged as being part of the whole; this is a part of Integration as in the last bead of this path. Watch the scales. When all has been recorded you may return to your own place and time.

For the last session you must balance the Sixth Path, that is the elements within you. Again you stand before the scales and face the four mighty figures of Paralda, the Elemental King of Air, Nixsa, the Elemental King of Water, Djinn, the Elemental King of Fire, and Ghob, the Elemental King of Earth. They have come to the Balancing of the Elements. Step forward and face the Lord of the Air and answer his questions.

Q. Have you used your voice to utter falsehoods against others?

A. Answer in your own words.

Q. Have you praised that which created you during the days of your life?

A. As before.

Q. Have you given thought for the elementals of air that give you the gift of breath?

A. As before.

Q. Have you laughed for joy?

A. As before.

Paralda places a feather on one side of the scales and steps back. Nixsa comes forward to ask his questions.

Q. Have you polluted the waters of the Earth?

A. Answer in your own words.

Q. Have you given thought for the cradle of life, the mighty oceans?

A. As before.

Q. Have you been aware of the elementals that provide your body fluids?

A. As before.

Q. Have you thirsted and been glad of sweet water?

A. As before.

Nixsa steps forward and places a sea shell with the feather. Djinn comes forward to test you.

Q. Have you used the element of fire to hurt or destroy?

A. Answer in your own words.

Q. Have you given praise and thanks for the heat of the sun that warms the Earth and sustains life?

A. As before.

Q. Are you aware of the elementals that provide your own inner fire?

A. As before.

Q. Have you offered the warmth of your love to another human being?

A. As before.

Djinn comes forward and places a live coal with the feather and the shell. Ghob is next with his questions.

Q. Have you abused the Earth Mother in any way?

A. Answer in your own words.

Q. Have you given thanks for what you eat and been glad of her fruits?

A. As before.

Q. Have you given thought to the minerals and salts in your physical body, without which you would not exist?

A. As before.

Q. Have you ever looked upon the Earth and been lost in her beauty?

A. As before.

Ghob comes to the scales and places a crystal on them with the other tokens and they begin to balance against your heart symbol. Watch carefully and if they balance the Watchers will shout for joy and the Kings will bestow their gifts upon you. If they do not balance, then the Recorder will note it down and the Kings will ask you to make restitution in the coming years. They do not blame, or turn from you, they do not judge, they only *hope* for your understanding.

Now they gather around you and enclose you within their auras and their powers, each according to his element and you become aware of those elements within you going back through your line of descent from your first ancestor. This is the root of your being, and the Kings will adjust and balance it. Now thank the Recorder and the Watchers, and the Elemental Kings and return to your own place and dimension to write down your thoughts and feelings. The work with the green bead is done.

SEVENTH PATH. SECOND WEEK. AWARENESS

Rest for a few days before you take up the challenge of the Gold Bead of Awareness. Walk in the early morning and in the evening and store up images in the mind and in the heart. When you are ready return to the task that awaits and prepare yourself with the relaxation and the breathing. The slow slide into the altered state is now easy and familiar, as if you are returning to a much loved place. Take hold of the gold bead and become *aware*.

In this first session become aware of yourself, your body, your heartbeat. Listen to the small sounds of your body, and be aware of the fact that it is constantly working to keep you alive, healthy and conscious. Flex your hands and be aware of the marvel of engineering they represent, the delicate tasks they can perform, from scrubbing a floor to hammering in a nail, from a lover's caress to pulling a trigger. Flex your toes and feet. They support your whole weight. They move you from place to place. They give you mobility and grace. Think of the movement and discipline that is apparent in the grace of a ballerina, the strength and power in the body of an athlete. Be aware of your brain and the unseen power of the mind that uses it. Be aware that with every new thought you think, every new understanding you arrive at, every new piece of information you collect, a new connection is made between the tiny fibres of the brain. Be aware of the uniqueness of *you* as a human being, know that there has never been another like you, that there never will be another like you. Seek out other things concerning yourself and your body and mind and turn them over in your thoughts. Return now and close down firmly. Make your notes.

For the second session with the gold bead, be aware of your family and friends. Take each one in turn and look at them as a human being, as a relative or friend and as one who is, like you, on a journey towards divinity. Study them and become aware of their good points and their faults, but never judge, just observe and be aware of them. Try to ascertain how far they may be along the path of enlightenment. Now be aware of how you may seem to them. Ask yourself if you have been a good parent, child, lover, friend. Be aware of the many ways in which you might do more to show your love and affection. Ask yourself what it is that binds you to certain people, and how you came to know them. Be aware of the circumstances that brought you together.

Now do the same but with people you dislike, or find boring, dif-

ficult, upsetting or in any way unbearable. Be aware of the fact that somewhere along the line there was a causation point that brought about communication difficulties. Ask yourself who was at fault and if anything can be done to rectify the situation. Be aware of your hidden anger and shattered dreams, of your frustration and your weaknesses, dissect each one and make yourself aware of their cause and the way in which they diminish the inner divinity. Be aware of your frailties and your strengths and, above all, of your potential. Do not blame or praise yourself, simply, *be aware*. Return to your everyday level and write out your records.

On the third day begin your session with extra attention to your relaxation and breathing, then move into the altered state and in the inner silence become aware of your everyday work. Look at every aspect of it, not just your own. Make yourself aware of its aim and its content, of the people with whom you work. Do you enjoy your work? Do you enjoy going to work each day? If not, are you aware of why this is? Can you do something about it? Are you aware that you, as a person, can make your place of work happier for everyone simply by applying what you have learned by working through the Sacred Cord? Are you aware that you can, at any time, change your work, change your life, change yourself? Look at your colleagues. Take each one in turn and be aware of them as people, as workers, as parts of a whole.

Now turn your attention to what your work achieves and make yourself aware of those people who may benefit by what you and your colleagues do or make. Now widen your attention and become aware of those around you at this moment, in the house, in the street, then in the town. Without opening yourself to their troubles or sorrows, joys or dreams, simply be aware of them and of their place in your world. Open now to the country in which you live and make yourself aware of its strengths and weaknesses, lay no blame, just see them as they are. Now, from a vantage point in space, look down over the whole planet and make yourself aware of it for just a moment. Then close down and return as usual.

Now for the fourth session. After you have entered the meditative state return to the last point, looking down on the planet from space. Be aware of it as a whole, as a living entity, as Gaia. Gradually the Earth will become aware of *you*. Look at her, see her beauty and her scars, her ugliness and her strong bones. She becomes aware of you as one of her children. This is your Mother the Earth, hold out your

arms, greet her, love her, make your peace with her, for you are a prodigal child who has roamed far from her in thought and deed. Become aware of her pain and sorrow, of the plight of her other children, the victims of humankind. Be aware of the burning forest, the mine shafts, the waste lands of pollution, the sick oceans, the poison and the traps with their suffering captives. Hear the cries of those in pain. Be aware of the greed and the corruption, the potential for good thrown aside. Be aware of the Earth as she once was, before mankind grew so arrogant, and reflect. It just might be that the casting down of the proud angel was a future glimpse of man rather than a past look at a legend. As you look and listen, think on all these things.

Now turn your mind outwards and be aware of the Great Beings of Light that surround the planet, seeking to help, nurture, and befriend. But they cannot help unless they are *asked*. 'Ask and ye shall receive', we were told, so *ask*. Look further and be aware of the Seven who stand before the Throne and be aware also of *their* awareness of you. Now close down and return to your own place. Make your notes as usual.

On the fifth day in the fifth session let yourself enter the altered state as if floating on a sea of silence beneath a warm sun. With closed eyes rest upon the waters of the cosmic sea, warmed by the central sun of suns. Become aware of joy in all its forms. The joy of being alive, of loving, giving and receiving, of giving birth, of a gentle death, of companionship and the clasp of a friend's hand. The joy of happiness in what you are, and what you will one day become.

Now it changes and you become aware of sorrow, the sorrow of loneliness and pain, the sorrow of despair and injustice. Be fully aware of all the moments of sorrow you have known or have witnessed. Then be aware of what can be learned and understood through the experience of sorrow, and know that there is an end to it and a new beginning, always.

Now you become aware of wisdom. It permeates the universe and leads on to the full understanding of the self and all that surrounds that self. You are aware of the underlying wisdom that has created all these things and made a place for them in the structure of the cosmos. There is a completeness that slowly becomes part of your understanding, as you float gently on the cosmic ocean. You begin to know, deep within you, that this is how it all began, with a gradual awakening of mind and a growth of spirit drifting on a long-forgotten sea, the loneliness, the despair, the need for others of your own kind,

and the knowledge that you were the only one. Deep inside your consciousness there wells up a great cry that holds within it all that you have found on your long journey, and now you understand what that cry is, was, and always will be. A cry of *self-knowledge*, the cry of the initiate: *Eheieh, Eheieh, I am for I am, I am myself, I am alone, I am all that ever was and shall ever be, I am part of that which was from the beginning and to it I will return and we will be part of each other even unto the end of that which is eternal.*

Float quietly on the inner sea, drift and dream and gently return to your own time and place. There is no need to make notes, this session you will never forget.

The sixth session. Be aware of God, be aware of yourself, be aware that you are a living part of each other.

And on the seventh day, you shall rest.

SEVENTH PATH. THIRD WEEK. DIVINITY

You have come to the last bead, identical in size and colour to the bead with which you began your journey on the Sacred Cord. Then it symbolized your Primal Spark, new-born and setting out on the journey to gain experience of the dimensions that lay below. Now it symbolizes your return to that which gave you birth with the knowledge you have gained. No longer will there be loneliness and despair for you know that you can never be alone, never be tested beyond your strength, never without the knowledge of your God-given divinity.

Place your Cord in your coat pocket and go out among your fellow human beings. Hold the last white bead in your hand and link yourself to that far-off Primal Spark that has now won through to become a child of the central sun. Let what you have become flow through you and out to every living thing you meet. The power flows through your body, and fills your heart and your eyes. People look back as they pass, drawn by the peace surrounding you. Find a quiet place that overlooks your town or city from a height and let that which has awoken to life within you flow out over the whole place. Rejoice in your heart that you can give this. If it is a working day then let the power fill your place of work and fill everyone there, in particular those you have found it hard to get on with in the past weeks. Let your day pass like this and return to rest and dream in your own home.

Second session. Find a sacred place, a church, a ring of stones, a hill where in the past wise men and women have gathered, an ancient oak, a standing stone. Wind your Cord around it. Lay it along the ground, coil it and put it beside you, or simply hang it around your neck, and hold the white bead. Let the entities, the Devas, the saint of the church, the past worshippers of this place join you in contemplation of the divinity of the cosmos and that which created it. Within that divinity you will find all faiths, religions, traditions and paths to the creator. There can be found the druid and the shinto priest, the witch and the bishop, the imam and the lama, the shaman and the tribal elder. In divinity there is no division. You are a part of them all, acknowledge this and return to your own place.

On the third day and for the session keep a vigil through the night and during the long hours turn your thoughts to the year just past, its work, its effort, the triumphs and the lost battles. Walk under the stars and stretch your mind in wonder. Ask yourself what lies in wait for mankind out there among the seas of stars. But you become aware that whatever may be in store, the inner divinity will go with you and with your kind as they set out to travel beyond the known and the safety of Earth. Watch for the dawn and when it comes take the Cord in your hands and offer it up to the incoming light, the light that is the same for human, animal, plant and mountain alike. The light that shines upon all beliefs and warms them equally. Return and rest.

For the fourth session wrap your Cord in waterproof material and take it out into a wild place. Dig a place for it in the earth and lay it there, deep in the earth. Mark the place well and then return and leave the Cord to pass into the Earth Being all the love, toil, knowledge and effort that you have put into it. The Earth Mother will take it, and charge it with her own power and refill the Cord. After three days you may return and recover your Sacred Cord. Take it home and sit with it in your hands, holding the last white bead and let it whisper to you of all that the Earth Mother has hidden within it.

For the fifth session take your Cord and hang it in the branches of a tree and let the winds of heaven fill it with their voices and their songs. Leave it there for three days and then take it down and hold it in your hands. It is filled with stories and music and clarity of speech and these things will be passed on to you as the days and weeks and years pass. Earth-blessed and air-blessed, your Cord is growing with every day that passes.

On the sixth session take your Cord and lay it in a deep pool or in a fountain or a stream for a few hours. The moving water will cleanse away the last traces of your former self and leave in exchange the insight and intuition that is the gift of this element. When you draw it from the water you will draw with it an increased ability to see beyond the earthly into the infinite, and the Cord will be blessed by this element. Take it, dry it with care and sit with it in your hands and search out the secrets the water has hidden within it.

The seventh session and the last. Lay your Cord upon a white cloth in some secret place and place around it at the four quarters some burning incense and replenish these at intervals for the whole day. The element of fire will make sacred that which has been created within the Cord, the new self, the divine self, the spirit that strove and fought to complete the long journey. The last white bead and the first white bead are in reality the same bead at different points of evolution, just as you are the same spirit that began with the first personality and now stands perhaps with the last ... who knows? The journey is over. Rest.

POSTSCRIPT

The journey of the Sacred Cord has ended, but in another sense it has just begun, for what you have completed in symbolic terms may now start to work in earnest through the physical plane. All magical work, especially on this level, needs to be approached with caution, for it works first upon the inner self which then proceeds to channel the whole being through to the day-to-day world. You must be fully aware that your work on the Sacred Cord will affect your life from the moment you start. It is no use whatever saying when you reach the Fourth Path, 'I didn't realize, I think I will stop now!' You may, the Cord will not.

The work of the Sacred Cord may be used by students of ceremonial magic who are fairly new to such studies, though the absolute beginner should *not* attempt it. However, it is a fact that the results will always be in proportion to your ability to deal with them ... most of the time. It does sometimes create circumstances that will stretch you to your limit, and maybe a little beyond. *Do not underestimate the power locked into the seemingly simple set of meditations.*

As stated in the beginning, the basic idea of the Sacred Cord was passed to me many years ago. I have extended the principles into a coherent plan of work using notes and suggestions made by my teacher at the time. The symbol of the rosary, of a string circle of beads, is very ancient and therefore contains much information and knowledge that may seep through into the conscious mind of the

reader as the journey unfolds. I urge you, if this happens, to keep notes in your daily records otherwise it can be lost forever. On a practical level, try to keep the Cord as clean as possible in a bag made for the purpose and keep it away from prying and curious eyes. Sacred things lose power when shared around with sceptical minds. May your journey bring you wisdom and joy and fulfilment.

DOLORES ASHCROFT-NOWICKI

APPENDIX

As a footnote to this book I would like to offer the following by the late Revd Robert King, who was the much respected teacher of W.E. Butler. A friend of mine found it when reading through some old back copies of a *Liberal Catholic* magazine. It bears out a great deal of what has been written in the book itself and I find myself wondering if Ernest Butler and Robert King ever discussed those few notes and the diagram that has eventually, after many years, become a book.

THE ROSARY

Notes of an Address by the Rt Revd Robert King

24th July 1945

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read the useful article by the Revd T.R.G. Lyell entitled 'The Rosary' in the issue of January last. The value of a simple contrivance of this nature for devotional and aspirational meditation is, I feel, not well recognized among our members and yet many who meditate regularly would find the unassuming little chaplet a great help to them.

It was my good fortune to receive a short time ago some notes of an address given a few years ago by Bishop Robert King on the same subject. Bishop King does not employ the Ave Marias and Paternosters of the Roman Church when saying the Rosary. In fact, he breaks away very largely from the accepted formulas in a way which I think will appeal to many of our persuasion. I was struck by the technique he suggested and I think it will prove more attractive to members of our Church than the orthodox prayers and repetition.

With his kind permission I quote passages from the lecture which seem to me to be important.

J.L. SHEPHERD

When people use the rosary they should have an intention. The doctrine of intention among ordinary Protestants is unknown. What is your intention? This is the keynote of the rosary. Whether everyone who uses a rosary has this intention is another matter, but this is its

purpose — meditation on the spiritual. Thus a rosary becomes a physical means, bear that in mind, a physical means of concentration. You can do it without, of course, but as a worker of many years, I can tell you it is a very great help. People say, why should it help? Well, let us see.

We are all familiar with the fact that through the sense organs we get our contact with things, the vibrations coming to us from the outside world. If they are more or less emphasized they compel our attention. If anything especially appeals to us we get stimulation from it and we can readily see that the five senses connect us to all physical matter. If we take the sense of touch we are dealing with solids; everything we touch must have substance and by touching the object we emphasize that sense. Taste, on the other hand, has to do with liquids; if you take a dry substance into your mouth you cannot taste it at all, it must be combined with some sort of liquid. Smell is partly connected with the sense of taste, but it is also gaseous, and hearing too has relationship with the gaseous condition of the air. Sight is connected with the finer vibrations, it is the first of the great etheric sections. All seeing is brought into being by light-waves. These senses have to do with the ranges of matter, but you find at back that the fundamental thing is the sense of contact or touch, that is the basic sense. Light-waves touch the retina of the eye and so on. The sense of touch is the basis of all our perception through the body.

There is one very interesting thing about the contact sense; when you clasp anything it tends in a remarkable way to hold the attention; the feeling and holding of something is a stimulation and the thing becomes more real. This sense has a very definite relation with the reality of what we are doing. It does tend to focus the mind, to bring it down to a point.

Now you know concentration is the basis of all occult training; if you are going to do occult work dealing with the forces of nature, it is an absolute necessity. If you have no concentration you are a danger to yourself and to others. In all schools, concentration — the power of holding the mind still — is one of the first things you have to practice. It has to be done, it is compulsory if you are going to do any work at all. Therefore you can readily see that any means whereby we can be assisted in concentration are very useful; anything which will help to focus the mind is to be welcomed. This is where the power of the rosary comes in.

You might say 'In what way is a rosary helpful? How can a string of beads help?' Well, help it does. As I told you, I found mine of the greatest possible value in stimulating the attention. The reason is

that when you have a clear cut conscious thought the clearness of that thought and intention is definitely built on the inner planes in your mental body. Concentration will mould the material of the inner bodies and, depending on the strength of the intention, will determine whether the image imposed be lasting or otherwise. You must have a true and strong desire; if you just build in a vague general sort of way you will not do much. If you build a definite image with clarity, the clearness depending on *your* ability to hold the thought, you will be doing something effectual. This is a way of character building. Concentration and selected intention are most important; and also in thought which has to do with help for others. If deliberately you desire to help, you can make the thought form of the person you have in mind, charge the thought with intention and send it along the line of least resistance, that is, the line of affection, and it will then fall into that person's aura and discharge its content there and the person will receive the thought that you wish to send. Without concentration, the thought is vague and does not get outside your own aura.

You ask, 'How can a rosary be of service?' I worked in this way.

The first large bead on the right hand side of the five little beads and the crucifix, I took as Truth — that the intention at the back of all things I did should be true — that truth should become a reality in my consciousness — that I should think and do all things that were true. In that way I meditated on Truth, so when I had used this bead in that way for some time, it became by feel and association to mean Truth to me.

Then I took the next large bead for Courage — the virtue of self-reliance — not to be moved, not to be afraid of my own convictions — to stand fast. At that materialistic period one needed courage to follow the teaching of occultism, it was no easy thing to talk on these subjects or express one's opinion.

The next large one I took for Endurance — could I endure without complaint all the pressure of big and little things, especially the little things — the pin-pricks — could I carry on through all the difficulties which arose. In passing it is of interest to notice that this is the third — 3 — the number of Saturn which is the number of endurance.

For the next I took the virtue of Purity — actual purity in all things — were my motives pure — leading to pure action, or did I want to mix other things up in my efforts?

The fifth and last large bead I took for the virtue of Humility, not a crawling cringing humility, not the humbleness of Uriah Heep, but real humility, knowing my own weakness and thanking God for what

was accomplished, not with my help — but with me in the way — goodness achieved in spite of myself.

After this I used to run through the ten little beads in between the large ones taking the different aspects of these virtues. While one is occupied in this way nothing going on around one matters, one is focussing one's sense of touch and is quite unconscious of things outside.

Finally, when it came to the little beads that are at the end and lead to the crucifix, I used to take each one and give it its own keynote-rhythm. The first was Strength, strength to carry out my intention — next Wisdom — that Divine Wisdom which has nothing to do with learning but which we find in ourselves — the third was Love — Divine Love — the love of all things, and I duplicated these on the two which followed. All these are connected with the senses. One method is to throw the essence of that sense right up into the divine: 'May my sense of touch and all that passes therein be turned to Thy divine use.' Then you come to the Figure on the Cross at the end — the symbol of self-sacrifice — that utter renunciation of your own personality.

So you see that in meditation you will find the rosary of enormous service through the contact with your fingers. Take whatever virtues you feel you need most, we each have our own needs; take each one and work through the large beads, then the groups often, then along the single beads to the sacrificed Christ, the Christ within, hold the thought there for a few seconds. Sometimes you get that extraordinary lifting up which nothing you can put into words will express.

It is said that it is automatic, an automatic form of prayer. Well! Supposing you do arrive at a time when you do it automatically, you will find that you are still creating your thought-form and that these virtues are beginning to come out. You are putting into the subconscious mind a rhythm that will always come back when the occasion arises, you are building up a very real character. You will find, for example, that meditation on courage will not fail you if you are hard pressed; if you have to face unpleasantness or danger the courage will come because you have built it into yourself and it comes automatically. That is the way it works.

Now we come to concentration used in the helping of friends. I used to have single little beads which were dear to me as representing persons, those who were linked to me in any special kind of way, the same bead always for the same person. When my fingers went to those particular beads, I was conscious of the form of the one for whom I had the intention, and I found that I could help them very

much. I put names on some of the beads and so I would go round the list, devoting a certain time every day to this part of my concentration, sending out help to those people, focussing my attention upon them and augmenting it by the mechanical sense of touch. Then at the end of my meditation I would bring them through the five beads to the crucifix and leave them in that wonderful world of eternal fullness.

It certainly can be mechanical, it can be done quite automatically and still accomplish much good, but with intention — just think what the power must be. I felt that I could entirely rely on it. The Rosary was the focusing point and it lifted my friends up through the mechanical feeling to the consciousness of the inner planes.

So you see why the Rosary holds its own, and of what very great assistance it can be. And though with some it becomes automatic, still, every thought in the right direction helps and the goodness pours out. You can see that if it is used with understanding and intention it carries you from the solid, concrete form of physical things to the spiritual, to form a character which will withstand the storms of life and endure all the petty irritations as well as the outstanding troubles. It leads you perhaps to your own crucifixion, but that is a reality in life and it is through that and that alone that we find the fullness, the eternal life of Christ Within.

RT REVD ROBERT KING

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