

EXERCISES

Summary of PART ONE The Basic Exercises

Stopping thoughts.
Self-observation: observing oneself as being in four centres and displaying three qualitative degrees of attention.
Self-remembering.
Non-expression of negative emotions.
Observing identifications.
Being in balanced active self-expression.
Checking unnecessary talk.
Showing consideration; checking mechanical demand for consideration.
Not avoiding moments of conscience, on the contrary: welcoming moments of conscience.
Not saying "I" about everything.

PART TWO Additional Exercises

Call Forth At Least Two Kings

Supposing you are in any king except the king of diamonds, the king of clubs, for instance: you observe something, for example a flower, very attentively. If then you suddenly realize that you are in the king of clubs, you can easily call forth the king of diamonds. Because you do this by directing your attention to the fact that you are in two kings. This exercise is called "At Least Two Kings". There is no penalty tax on calling forth one more king. The king of hearts is close when you are looking at something beautiful. Now you have three kings! From this state it is comparatively easy to move to self-remembering. The idea of this exercise is that kings, by their very nature, are close to self-consciousness and self-remembering. Once you are in a king you can with a comparatively small effort raise your level to a conscious state. The more kings you engage, the easier will it be then to keep the conscious state.

Be In the King of Spades At Least Before and After

Through our self-observation we know that the intellectual centre works much more slowly than the moving centre. Therefore, thought has great difficulty in observing movements. We find that if we decide to observe our movements, then we must either make them very slow or give up the attempt at observation altogether. Lots of everyday movements of our organism cannot be controlled intentionally or be observed intentionally at all. Driving a car is an instance. If we tried to observe ourselves while driving a car, we would probably become a danger to other traffic. The implication of what is said here is that the moving centre should be allowed to work mainly mechanically, being supervised only sporadically by the intellectual centre. Mechanical activity in the two black centres (the moving and instinct centres) are nowhere near as detrimental as mechanical activity in the two red centres (emotional and intellectual centres).

Thus the object of this exercise is not to observe the work of the moving centre during the whole process of a certain movement, but rather immediately before and after the movement in question. This may give us the best maximum of control we strive to achieve. Moreover, it

may cause us to refrain from many an action that is unsuitable or deleterious to ourself or others. Notice that speech, too, belongs to the moving centre!

Will What You Do

Or: be present when making decisions. Do not allow “it” to make decisions for you, because then you are only a slave. “It” means false personality, of course. It likes very much to make decisions. In connection with this exercise you should observe the following.

Decisions that you have every reason to regret afterwards are usually made very fast, in mechanical parts of the emotional centre or of the moving centre. It happens so fast that “you” are not even aware of the fact that “you” made the decision. Let us abandon the imprecise language of saying “you; then we say that hearts or spades had already made the decision and managed to carry it through before diamonds noticed. Do not forget that each centre has its own “brain”, its own “will”, its own executive committee, and its own office of planning. The implication here is that each centre makes its own decisions. Therefore, this exercise actually is about raising the watchfulness of the intellectual centre, so that as soon as it “smells” that a decision is being cooked or baked in some lower centre it intervenes as the king of diamonds, preferably together with the king of hearts. Create space for the understanding that all important decisions should be made by the two red kings. Do not forget that understanding is a composite function of several kings: one king = little understanding, two kings = greater understanding, three kings = still greater understanding, four kings = very great understanding. A decision made by only king will not carry weight in important issues.

Be Simultaneously in the Head and in the Heart

To be in the king of diamonds makes it easier to be in the head. To be in the king of hearts makes it easier to be in the heart. Try to be in the head and the heart at the same time. Not just in the one or in the other place. Sense that you are in the two places simultaneously through an interaction between the energies of the two places, so that momentarily the one is stronger, then the other, whereupon it changes again.

Do not make your perception of the “places” too detailed, so that you sense the eyebrow centre and crown centre as separate. Do not separate those two centres. Try to sense them as a unity, one pole, whose opposite pole is the heart centre.

Be Present at the Taking of Three Kinds of Food

Our three kinds of food are food in the ordinary sense, air, and impressions. All of them are food for all the centres. This threefold food has quite a different effect in our system, if we take them in higher states of consciousness. Eat intentionally and consciously, breathe intentionally and consciously, receive impressions intentionally and consciously.

Eat with intention and with presence. Do not talk while eating. Instead try to keep your attention directed to receiving all the fine nourishment there is in the food, not just the gross physical, but also the subtle physical nourishment, the ever subtler ethers. Bless your food while eating it. Thank the Creator for the fact that you may partake of His work, which upholds you for one more day in His creation. Never receive bad impressions while eating. Watching television, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, etc., at meals are bad habits that deprive you of much of the force of the subtle ethers.

Breathe with intention and presence. Be particularly attentive to the air while breathing in, at its direct contact with your nostrils. If you pay unwavering attention to this point and are very still, you will eventually be able to discern a very subtle, very light, a very mild but also a very strong energy. Draw it consciously down into your heart and sense its fine emotional

quality. Draw it consciously up into your head and sense its fine mental quality. This is prana, an endlessly variable, inconceivably rich energy. In course of time, if you do this exercise diligently, you will be able to discern different degrees of quality of prana: increasingly subtle. You will observe that this paying attention to prana affects your state of consciousness. The first thing you will observe is that a great stillness envelopes your whole being. In time you should be able to 1) discern prana, 2) listen in breathing and discern the silence, 3) perceive something of what exists beyond silence. I will not say more here, but I leave it to yourself to discover the exhaustlessly rich being of prana.

Receive impressions with intention and presence. Look for good, beautiful, elevating impressions, such as promote unity, wake you up, afford you energy. Separate yourself from impressions of the opposite character. Impressions, too, are carriers of prana. Why would doctors, at least in former times, recommend their “neurasthenic” patients to travel somewhere to have a “change of air”? The air is the same everywhere. Not the air had to be changed, but the everyday impressions. Why are people of the north attracted to contries in the south? Is it only the warm and sunny weather? Is it not rather the different forms, the stronger colours and smells, different people, not as affected by stress and commercialism? All of this are impressions that vitalize us and charge us with energy.

Trace Unconscious Influences

Vague, unmotivated moods, fleeting shifts of consciousness can be very disturbing, can drag you down from higher levels. There is no reason to identify yourself with such things, to say “I” or “me” about them: “I feel uneasy”, “I am worried”, “I was depressed”, etc. Relax. Close your eyes. Create a perfect inner quiet. Then trace from where this unconscious influence came. Sense carefully. What is this which has forced its way into my being? Where did it begin? In which centre? When did it begin? In nine cases out of ten I will be able to see how it started, objectivize it and so weaken its force.

Be Attentive to Sense Functions

Listen to your own speech. Listen to the sounds in nature, the voices of the birds, the rustle of leaves in the trees, the crunch of gravel under your feet. Listen to the silence and to what is beyond silence.

Watch how your body is moving, how your arms and hands are moving. Watch the expressions in people’s faces, their eyes.

Feel how you are standing, walking, and sitting. Feel how you contact the ground while walking.

We need finer instruments if we are to reach higher levels. We need another way of approaching things, one that only the higher centres can afford us. However, our first task is to make the lower centres work better.

The theme of one day in my life: Try to listen.

Listen to the voice of the silence.

One of my prayers: “Lord, give me to listen that I may hear; give me to see that I may be.”

Objectivize Worry, Fear, and Vague Negative States

None of us believes that his organism is his true self, none of mixes up his organism with himself. Why is that? Answer: we have physical objective consciousness. We can clearly observe our organism as a material, physical form. And whatever we can observe we cannot at the same time be; that is a psycho-logical law. If we had emotional objective consciousness, then we could clearly discern external emotional influences that invade our emotional

envelope and induce emotions and moods of uneasiness, worry, fear, and discouragement. Then we could not possibly be affected by them, but we would brush them off like vermin. Well, how long are you going to wait for emotional objective consciousness just to fall down on you? Start now, by objectivizing – you can always take one or two small steps on the way you will walk anyhow sooner or later. Objectivize, that is: treat these “internal” emotional states as if they were external things, for they are. You have already done this. Or have you forgotten your energy conversion box? In proportion as you objectivize, as you observe these states, in the same proportion they turn into things external, things with which you cannot identify yourself. After that you can go on sensing that worry, or fear, or whatever, but now with a considerable difference. Any such state is weaker, fainter, and is not “within” you any longer, it is not a part of your being anymore. It is not yourself, no more than any part of your body, or any centre where it first arose. Much of what we take to be emotional states has a physiological-mechanical cause, is due to “bad digestion of food”, in the three senses of the word “food”.

Occultations

Like what “it” does not like. Make efforts from within your being, make being efforts. Why: because if there is anything that false personality cannot do, it is making being efforts. The more you make being efforts, the more you make efforts to be in kings, efforts at being intentional, efforts at being conscious, the less space you leave to false personality. Refrain from, eliminate such things as “it” likes, but as provides no nourishment for the soul, for essence. And most important of all: without a sense of inner constraint or renunciation, but cheerfully and unhesitatingly. The best effort is the one made from within the king of hearts, when we go against our self-love and vanity, when we stand the negative manifestations of other people. See also chapter 9.8 of my book *The Explanation*.

Think Intentionally

I save and keep energy by thinking more intentionally, more consciously. I make thinking efforts, reason efforts. I must have longer thoughts, lighter thoughts. Not-thinking whenever I need it. Inner quiet creates a subtler, a finer force.

All of this is the very opposite of formatory thinking. I afford less space to formatory thinking by being more intentional in my thinking. The opposite of formatory thinking is formulating thinking. Formulation is reflection, penetration of a certain problem on the basis of all my knowledge, all my observations of what the problem is about.

I counteract my own formatory thinking successfully if I have collected quite a few good examples of formatory thinking. Observe debates between people (not using, but:) being used by their formatory thinking. No unity is possible or even desired, but all reasonings stop in the middle or before the middle.

In a review of one of Marianne Fredriksson’s books in the Swedish daily *Aftonbladet* in the beginning of the 1980-ies, the reviewer (M.B.-L.) opined that the book conveyed an anti-intellectual message. She based her opinion on what a priest in a Mesopotamian temple told the heroine of the book. “When you stop thinking, you are with god.”

Make Efforts to Remove Internal Considering

Internal considering is a very frequent, completely mechanical phenomenon within us. Its robs immensely much of our energy. Identifying with my feelings and thoughts about how other people treat me; going over again and again what has happened, other people’s (real or imagined) misunderstandings of you; other people’s (usually imagined) low estimation of me,

the gnawing feeling of having got the worst of it, of having been exploited, cheated, not rewarded enough, etc., etc., ad infinitum – such things can thrive only in passive, mechanical states. Deprive it of living-space by expanding your space for efforts. Make some effort! As long as you are making that effort, there is no space for internal considering. Work in your garden, chop some wood, tidy up your garage. Read something that requires much attention, visit a sick relative or friend and engage wholeheartedly in this fellow human being. Only make an effort, and internal considering is gone. Only make an effort, and you can change your state of consciousness.

Make a Threefold Check-Up to Eliminate Tensions

Tensions may occur in all your envelopes of incarnation. They are an important source of energy losses or leaks. Sit down, close your eyes, relax, and breathe very calmly. Then make a check-up of your physical being. If you find tensions in it, then order them to dissolve. When your organism is entirely relaxed, you move on to your emotional envelope. Is there uneasiness, worry somewhere? Eliminate it by tracing its origin in something outside you. Is it something you have forgotten to do and suddenly remember? Then make the decision to do it immediately after this exercise, so that it may leave you alone for right now. Think: quiet, quiet, quiet. When the emotional is calm and quiet, move on to your mental envelope. Wherever you find restlessness, tensions, you direct your attention at dissolving them, at making an unimpeded flow of energy possible.

Receive Suffering Voluntarily

Unconscious suffering defeats us. Voluntary, intentional, conscious suffering helps us to overcome. Enough has been said on this in “The Long Thought on the Will to Sacrifice”.

Do Not “Regret”

Do not regret, but do *metania*, rethinking. Do not ruminate: “why, why, why did I do that?” It is useless. But ask instead: “how could I have done it differently?” Counter all mistakes, all neglects, with *metania*. This is the very opposite of fleeing your mistakes, not acknowledging them. On the contrary, you will see them much more clearly than you do through regretting them emotionally. *Metania* is a positive state, however. You realize what you could have done instead, you make the groundwork for being able to do it differently when you are in a corresponding situation the next time. I did not make the mistake, but “it” made it in me. The mistake was made because I could not do. Because being able to do means not being mechanical, it means being different. This realization helps us to overcome negative states in connection with mistakes we have made. I rethink, I think differently about what I have done, and so I am not such a person any more. You can change now, if you just want to.

Create Inner Space for the Work

You probably forget that all the higher worlds are here and now, that they are all around you and within you. The heavenly ladder is set up within you. The beginning of the way, the nearer abutment of the bridge, is there as well. There are within us such things as are prepared for our ascension to higher worlds. Those things are only the first beginnings, however. You must extend and develop those foundations. Begin by creating an inner space, a very quiet place. There you can be free to do your work, there you can withdraw from bad impressions. This does not contradict the exhortation to work in the external world. There is a time for everything, and there is also a place for everything. Here, in your inner space, you draw strength to work in the outer the more efficiently.

Make inside you a room, where you can see and hear. This room may attract very fine impressions, which you would otherwise be unable to perceive.

Payment and Sacrifice

If I want to grow and develop, I must be prepared to pay. Payment is a very important principle in the work. Nothing is free, and everything has its price. Payment has to be made in advance. I pay by making efforts, useful efforts. By useful effort is meant an effort that is useful not only to oneself, but also to other people. Compare the words of the Gospel about hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold (The Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 13). The first real effort is to take the pains to study and understand what one is given to know, what one reads and hears. In its turn, this creates the conditions of payment on a higher level. If I am not prepared to pay, I may lose also what I have learnt and acquired in the work.

Sacrifice, too, is necessary. There are traces of it ordinary life, and people can understand such things: everyone has something that they gladly forsake to have something better instead. But the similarities stop there. For what must be sacrificed is often such things as they do not want to sacrifice: their comfort, their laziness, their wrath, their mutually conflicting "I"s and personalities. If you want to live in the real world, you must sacrifice your imagination. If you want to do some truly useful work, you must sacrifice games of make-believe.

If you want something you have to sacrifice something else. Suppose you have a grievance, either you are hurt or offended or something. Sacrifice your imagined suffering – negative emotions and negative imagination. It is a great liberation to realize: "I have nothing to worry about. Nobody is guilty."

Do It Now!

Laurency: "Do what little you can. Do it willingly and gladly. Precious opportunities will soon be gone." General Douglas MacArthur: "The history of failure of war can almost be summed up in two words: too late."

From a sermon by Ibn al-Jauzi (12th century): "Brethren, know that whoever works well in his days, his affairs are praised, but whoever does evil in them has lost his life. Whoever falls short will tomorrow regret his falling short. And whoever leaves the work for his future will regret it. And whoever abandons the guidance will weep when he has realized it. For the times are passing in haste, and days are seized and carried away from us. So hasten with your life before you depart, and seize your life before you die."

Call Forth Another Body Type Intentionally

You have a body type or two. This type, or those types, characterize(s) you in everything you do and in everything you do not do. This is inevitable. You must not forget, however, that you have all the other types as well, albeit not to the same extent. Call forth them as you need them. Reflect now and then on the fact that you have them as well, that will make it easier for you in your efforts at calling forth them. You should not be too content with your body type, you should not like it too much. It is a mechanical phenomenon, so one type is no better than any other. You have much more to gain by calling forth another body type intentionally, perhaps even consciously, than manifesting your ordinary one, mechanically, automatically. Precisely because you are a lunar, you should talk more to people, be more salient than usual. What you can contribute is not worth less than what Jovials or Mercurians offer, who are very happy to let us know what they think and feel. Precisely because you are Venus you should demonstrate the force of action and decision, put down your foot and say: "By gosh, I will do this, it's neck or nothing!"