

## 16 SELF-REMEMBRANCE

### 16.1 *Self-Consciousness is the Truly Human Consciousness*

<sup>1</sup>Man does not possess self-consciousness, but he can acquire it. Self-consciousness is actually the truly human consciousness, that which separates man from the animals. Even animals have functions: emotional, instinctive, and moving functions; the highest animal species even have certain simple intellectual functions. But animals do not even have the possibility of self-consciousness. Man has it, however, and when he is not living self-consciously, he is living below his true level. He has a right to be self-conscious.

<sup>2</sup>Rare glimpses of self-consciousness occur spontaneously in the lives of most people. All of us probably have experience of such moments where we have felt immensely present in what is happening to us and around us. In such moments all impressions are strong and vivid; light and colours, sounds, touches, and smells can be almost intrusive in their realness. From early childhood, we have some few strong and vivid memories that stand out clearly against long, grey stretches of oblivion and unconsciousness. Those are memories of moments when we were self-conscious. The fact that such glimpses occur particularly in childhood is explained by the fact that our inner centre of emotional functions is very alive at that age.

<sup>3</sup>Moments of strong happiness and joy can be accompanied by self-consciousness. A young mother, feeding her first-born baby, is thinking, “Now I really know what happiness is; I will never forget what I am feeling right now.” In that moment, perhaps, she experiences self-consciousness. Be it as it may, she cannot keep that state. Later she will only remember that she had the experience, but the feel of it is gone.

### 16.2 *Self-Remembrance*

<sup>1</sup>Is self-consciousness possible only in the form of rare, spontaneous glimpses? No. Man can create intentionally moments of self-consciousness, and working purposively he can make such moments last longer and longer. Such created self-consciousness is called “self-remembrance”, or “remembering oneself”. This term may be somewhat misleading, in the sense that it really is not about remembering or recalling anything that was, but, on the contrary, being intensely present here and now. “Self-remembrance” as a term connects with the corresponding term in Buddhism, *sammāsati*, which is translated as “right recollection”. “Right recollection” is said to be one of the eight elements of the Buddha’s noble eightfold path, *ariya atthangika magga*. Early Christian authors, too, writing in Greek and Russian, treated self-remembrance as a path to spiritual awakening. In Islamic sufism there is a corresponding experience and term, *dhikr (zīkr)*, a word meaning “remembrance”.

<sup>2</sup>Self-observation is not self-remembrance, but self-observation can lead to self-remembrance, if you do it while understanding the purpose of the exercise: “I am not conscious, but I want to become conscious.” Remembering oneself means the same as being conscious of oneself – “I am”. It is a very strange experience. It is no function, no thought, no feeling, but another state of consciousness. It comes of itself only for short whiles, usually when you are in a new environment, when you wake up in the morning after having spent the night in a strange house, for instance. Then you perhaps say to yourself: “How strange. I am here.” This is self-remembrance, in that moment you remember yourself.

<sup>3</sup>Another way of describing self-remembrance is as attention in two directions. Usually we are hardly attentive at all or our attention jumps about, staying very briefly at different objects without being directed or controlled by our intention. At other occasions our attention can be attracted by some object that captivates, fascinates us, an exciting film, for instance. Our attention is seldom directed from within ourselves. This directed attention is the most valuable kind, however, and it is only when it occurs in our functions that they will be able to do work

of any higher quality, whether in the realm of thoughts, feelings, sense perceptions, or movements.

<sup>4</sup>Self-directed attention is not self-consciousness, however. Directed attention can come about with self-consciousness and without self-consciousness. Mere directed attention without self-consciousness can be pictured as an arrow having its point directed at the object of attention. If, simultaneously as you direct your attention at an outer or inner object, you direct your attention at yourself, then you have doubly-directed attention. Then you “remember yourself”, then you become self-conscious. This can be represented graphically by an arrow that is pointed in both ends.

<sup>5</sup>It has to be emphasized that in all essentials man, both in his outer and in his inner life, is a machine, that things “just happen to him” without his willing or controlling it. Mechanicalness thus is his being. An equally important truth is that mechanicalness and self-consciousness are mutually exclusive states: when he remembers himself, when he is self-conscious, he is not a machine. And conversely: when he is mechanical, acts like a robot on impulses not his own, then he is not self-conscious. Therefore, man can reduce his mechanicalness by striving to be self-conscious, as often as possible, even if it will be only for brief moments, at least in the beginning.

<sup>6</sup>Man lives below his rightful level, because he is not conscious at the point where he receives impressions from without. At this point, where external impressions enter, he should create self-consciousness, the presence of himself.

<sup>7</sup>Actually, it is most amazing that the teaching of self-remembrance, which has such an important place in the fourth way, has escaped the learned people of the West almost completely. Probably, this is due to the fact that in the West we have an unreal division of all kinds of studies and training into theoretical and practical subjects, a division in which theoretical studies and those pursuing them are considered to be better. Self-remembrance is a practical thing, which you can understand only if you who have some practical experience of it, and the better the more extensive your practice is. You must have experienced it, not just once, but many times in different connections, various situations, so that you have a sufficiently large material of experience of it. Only then will you appreciate, in a deep way, beyond a mere shallow fascination, its immense significance. People who are too theoretical in their ways of looking at things cannot take any interest in it. Just a few half-hearted attempts will not lead you anywhere. But even the serious efforts you make at the beginning are necessarily weak, quite simply because you are a beginner and have too little experience to do it right. Precisely because intentional self-remembrance often yields so small and feeble results in the beginning – actually the mere realization, “I do not remember myself” – makes it quite improbable that some lone individual, in a grey distant past, would have discovered, by accident, self-remembering as a path to higher consciousness. Only people who have reached the higher two states – self-consciousness and objective consciousness – can understand the vital importance of self-remembrance as method. It is from such individuals – teachers of esoteric schools – that self-remembrance as an idea and as a method has come. It has not arisen through the ordinary turnover of ideas in human philosophical speculation.

<sup>8</sup>As you make the effort of remembering yourself, many times a day, not just in quiet moments but above all in all situations of everyday life, you will find, with time, that it will be an increasingly deeper perception, that it will be possible to retain it longer, that you will be able to possess the perception of “I am” in connection with more functions.

<sup>9</sup>It is important to stress that self-remembrance, if real, does not in any way hinder or impair your ordinary intellectual, emotional, instinctive, and moving functions. Whatever hinders a function can only be another function: thinking of remembering yourself is not remembering yourself, no more than thinking of eating is eating. Functions are one thing, states of consciousness are another. Self-remembrance is “above” those functions, does not detract quality

from them but, on the contrary, adds quality. You convince yourself of this fact by observing yourself.

<sup>10</sup>It takes some time to find the knack in self-remembrance. In a way it is like acquiring other skills, such as learning to ride a bicycle. Every normal person can learn to ride a bicycle; it is impossible to do it at once, but all of a sudden the skill is there. The important difference in self-remembrance is that you have to regain the skill every time you remember to remember yourself. And it takes some time to learn to tell the difference between real self-remembrance and mere imagination. Real self-remembrance has an aspect of heightened aliveness, impressions being more vivid. Other recurrent descriptions say that vision becomes clearer as though a dimming veil had been drawn aside from things. The ancients had a word for this, the Latin *serenitas*, often used in this connection with *tranquillitas*. Self-remembrance is also accompanied by a calm though strong optimism, like the insight of the mystics that “all is well”.

<sup>11</sup>Under certain circumstances, self-remembrance can lead you further, into higher states of consciousness that in some respects correspond to “union with God” as described by mystics, or to what some people have called “cosmic consciousness”, actually a misnomer. Descriptions and designations are unessential, however. The only essential thing is the fact that it is quite possible for man to reach such higher states. But, as said, it is possible only by making many strenuous efforts with your consciousness. Consciousness can grow only from consciousness, never from some mechanical function.

### *16.3 Self-Remembrance is the Heart of the Work*

<sup>1</sup>All exercises given to those who wander the fourth way actually are one single exercise: the method of creating self-remembrance. This is the heart of the work, its essence and centre: the effort to create moments of self-consciousness. All other exercises should be entries to that centre, entries to self-remembrance. For example, in the exercise “being intentional” you should move on from intentionality to self-remembrance.

<sup>2</sup>The exercise of observing yourself in different intellectual, emotional, sensory, and moving functions is intended to lead up to self-remembrance. If you remember sometimes during the day that you should observe yourself, then you should be able to remember also that this exercise has an aim: to help you move on to doing self-remembrance. “Of course! Self-remembrance!” The same is true of all the exercises: stopping thoughts, not showing negative emotions, observing your own and other people’s identifications, being in balanced active self-expression, etc.

### *16.4 There are Many Degrees and Stages of Self-Remembrance*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning of the work self-remembrance does not contain much, actually only the realization of your mechanicalness: “I have not remembered myself.” This realization is necessary, however, and must be repeated, for man believes in his own consciousness, and this belief hinders him from acquiring consciousness. If he goes on striving, he will probably be able to create self-remembrance more and more often, sometimes making it stronger, making it last longer and go deeper. Then he will see, on the basis of his own experience, that self-remembrance has many degrees and stages, degrees of quality in an ascending scale.

<sup>2</sup>There are also many paths to self-remembrance. But they are all based on the perception that there is something else, something more, something more important and greater than just this life that we all live. Since my “self” is not unitary, is not the same at different moments, the path to self-remembrance, and even self-remembrance itself, must be different at different times. The skilful man knows this. He does not always practise the same method. To do so would amount to trying to reach a non-mechanical state in a mechanical way, and what is mechanical is useless for the work. So the skilful man does it now in one way, now in another

way. He experiments, notices what is no longer efficient, and then invents some other way. He “gets out of his own way”, allows something to arise which he has been hindering by his mechanical functions and reactions.

### *16.5 The Daily Practice*

<sup>1</sup>The most important part of the work is self-remembrance. In each act of self-remembrance lies one of the great inner meanings of the work for self-realization and esoterics in general. All other work on oneself ultimately depends on self-remembrance.

<sup>2</sup>You must remember yourself at least once a day. If you cannot remember yourself once a day, then you should try to remember yourself three times a day, in other words: make a bigger effort. Thus: at least once a day, but not more than a short while. Self-remembrance need not last longer than half a minute to be valuable.

<sup>3</sup>When trying to remember yourself you should do it willingly from yourself, not from an outer compulsion, to please the teacher or the group.

<sup>4</sup>Observe carefully what inner states and outer circumstances tend to favour episodes of self-remembrance. Such things may be different for different people. For example quiet moments, being out in the countryside, by the sea, may favour some people, while others find it easier to do it in crowds, among people who are particularly mechanical in their behaviour, display obvious herd behaviour.

<sup>5</sup>Do not think about self-remembrance, but do it! At first it is best to do it at some definite time that you decide upon, but soon enough it is better not to make self-remembrance dependent on such external factors.

<sup>6</sup>The first sign that you are doing it right is that you have a distinct perception of force entering you, as if something had opened in you. Immediately you feel this, stop instantly, and do something else. After a while you may do it again.

<sup>7</sup>Another way of self-remembering is making an inner stop in oneself. This is done in connection with self-observation. For example you observe that you are beginning to talk in a certain mechanical way, or that you are getting annoyed with somebody. You then make an inner stop, but this must be made completely, as if you cut it off. It does not matter if later the things you are trying to stop come back.

<sup>8</sup>All self-observation should be accompanied by some degree of self-remembrance. You should not just observe yourself, but also try to remember why you do it. If you remember it, you should be able to remember yourself, too. It is self-remembrance to feel the presence of the work in your thinking while you are observing yourself.

<sup>9</sup>Start from your memory of previous episodes during the day when you remembered yourself but then lost it. “Where did I lose it?” Make a new attempt and observe once again where you lost it! Continue in this manner until you can make two episodes close to each other and try to shorten the gap of forgetfulness and unawareness in between.

<sup>10</sup>The attempt at self-remembrance can be practised in many different ways, from sitting quietly, passively relaxing the body and mind, becoming aware of the breath gently moving the chest, to a more active one where you exercise self-observation repeatedly during your everyday work. There are exercises that appear, at first, unimportant and easy, but are in fact very difficult to perform.

<sup>11</sup>A few examples of exercises: make an effort to remember yourself when you look in the bathroom mirror while shaving or at your dresser making up your face. Attempt to remember yourself sitting down at the breakfast table, both legs on the floor to make contact – feeling the warmth of your coffee or tea cup and enjoying consciously what you eat – being aware that this is food of the first kind for which you should be grateful.

<sup>12</sup>Try to remember yourself when you handle your car keys, your door keys, when you take them out of your pocket or handbag, when you start the car, pull the key out, lock the car or

the door of your home; stay with self-remembrance for a few moments in these small actions!

<sup>13</sup>Invent “alarm-clocks” for self-remembrance! Use them daily! But also change them before they become useless habits! Be also aware of one great trap: you may become convinced, “now I am remembering myself”, while instead you are merely repeating the phrase mechanically, because in that case you are identified with the exercise. Self-remembrance means separating yourself from mechanically working “self”, creating a vacuum for really seeing yourself.

### *16.6 Right Understanding of Self-Remembrance*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning of the work people are continually asking what they should do or should not do. The best answer to such questions is: “Remember yourself! You can do what you like as long as you remember yourself.” Superficial, formatory thinking easily misunderstands this as if it meant “everything is permitted provided you remember yourself when doing it.” But that is not what it means. On the contrary it means that by being in states of self-remembrance you can refrain from many things, for example yielding to bad impulses.

<sup>2</sup>One can arrive at a right understanding of self-remembrance by asking: “Which self do I want to remember?” Which self do I want to forget?” We should both remember ourselves and forget ourselves. The “self” referred to in these different connections is not one and the same. It is equally correct to call self-remembrance “self-forgetfulness”, for in self-remembrance you forget false personality, that bundle of mechanical, meaningless reactions.

<sup>3</sup>All normal human beings who have the right attitude and some understanding of esoterics can start practising and understanding self-remembrance, even though in the beginning it is usually weak, incomplete, and seemingly without content. Full self-remembrance is a higher state, but there are many lower degrees that are steps on the path to that state. Obeying the laws of the work at a decisive moment is a kind of self-remembrance, not doing so is forgetfulness and a kind of sleep.

<sup>4</sup>Self-remembrance can never be a mere intellectual exercise. It may begin in the intellectual centre, but must include the emotional centre and the physical centres if it is to have the desired effect. The intellect is only a very small part of our being. Mechanical states, states of sleep, are characterized by our being restricted to a very small part of our being. Therefore, conscious states must comprise a much bigger part of our being.

<sup>5</sup>The act of remembering yourself precedes the state of self-remembrance: the initiative that starts the process and the result of the process. The initiative, the effort, has its origin for the seekers in their inner need to live on a higher level. To reach this higher level they must pay with a qualitative effort, an effort from within what is best in their being. Without effort, no higher state.

<sup>6</sup>Very often we forget to remember ourselves. We wonder what to do, but forget to remember ourselves. Perhaps we think of it but we do not try to do it. Perhaps we often think of it but yet do not try to do it. Only thinking of it but not doing it – is it not better than forgetting about it altogether? Perhaps we imagine it is, but in practice there is no difference. It may even be worse, if it turns into a habit. Anyhow it is necessary to overcome this distance between thought and action, between apathy and will. Because moments of self-remembrance are not just moments of consciousness, but moments of will, too.

<sup>7</sup>Self-remembrance cannot have the result that the personality is strengthened, its self-conceit, its self-justification, its excuses are increased. If this happens it is because you remember a false self, and that is a mechanical act.

<sup>8</sup>The work cannot start from the fullness of the personality. The work must start from the thinning of the personality, from your realization that you are not what you imagine, what you pretend to be.

<sup>9</sup>In the work for self-realization it is necessary to come to the point where you see your own

utter nothingness. This is mercifully delayed and it is not something you can arrive at by artificial means. You cannot pretend to be nothing.

<sup>10</sup>To remember yourself simply as you are now is not self-remembrance. Self-remembrance comes down from above, and full self-remembrance is a state of consciousness in which the personality and all its pretences almost cease to exist and you are, so to speak, nobody, and yet the fullness of this state, which is really bliss, makes you, for the first time, somebody.

<sup>11</sup>Can you become nothing to yourself even for a moment? Can you intentionally lift out sense reactions, emotional reactions, thoughts from yourself so that “nothing” remains? Can you, when “nothing” remains, become aware of the intensive reality of yourself? Can you stop your own noise, your own babble, even for a moment? Can you feel your own presence in everything you do, even for a moment? All these things are various ways of remembering yourself.

<sup>12</sup>Self-remembrance as a power that comes down from what is “higher” (whatever we mean by this) is an idea that must never be lost. This idea contains implicitly another idea, namely that this “higher”, too, has a “higher”, this in turn a still higher, and so on, thus affords the possibility to understand the existence of a kind of staircase or path leading upward. And to understand this idea right you must realize that as a human being and in your present state you can see, at the utmost, the first step of the many steps of the staircase, and that this step is the lowest one in all respects, the lowest one qualitatively, and that you cannot understand the essence of the staircase or the path, cannot know what it means to walk it upwards, what the higher steps or stages of the walking mean, except by the scanty information we have received from those who have gone before us. The ordinary human way of judging things “from below up” is hopelessly misleading in regard to all esoteric matters. Of course this is true of human attempts at assessing self-remembrance and self-consciousness as well. If we attempt to assess it in its entirety, with all its possible ever higher stages, on the basis of the small and relatively insignificant parts of it we have experienced, then we shall be in grievous error. Man is only at the first, tottering beginning of his experience of life. This is a truth which no human arrogance in the world can invalidate.

### *16.7 We must Receive Help*

<sup>1</sup>Self-remembrance as an idea and as a method comes from esoteric schools. Therefore it cannot be understood without esoterics, cannot be understood by people who are unfamiliar or out of sympathy with esoterics. And the most important insight that may reach man, so that he can begin to understand the idea of esoterics is: truth – knowledge – help comes “from above”, from superhuman and divine sources. Why? Because what man is able to do, even at the highest stage of understanding and capability, does not suffice. A man should always remember himself, but such as he is he has not the power to do so, and he cannot even remember that he should remember himself. Therefore, if he wants to develop he must trust to higher, greater powers than his own. And he can receive such powers, if he has the right attitude and makes the right effort; if he goes halfway to meet those higher powers. Thus man must turn to “God” – Augoeides, the elder brothers, the planetary hierarchy.

<sup>2</sup>If a man does not accept that there are higher powers than his own, he can never remember himself right. Those higher powers are above all his own superconscious, the possibility of a permanent self. The objective basis of the superconscious is man’s causal envelope, his envelope of immortality. The causal envelope has its centres, which are always awake, whereas man himself is mostly asleep. Then there are higher beings such as the Augoeides and the planetary hierarchy. Without their existence, their self-sacrificing work, we had never become human beings, we had never received causal envelopes. In addition there is the entire systemic and cosmic organization, 49 worlds filled with conscious beings. But if a man believes that the cosmos or nature came about of their own and do not have a meaning, then

he can never remember himself right, because he has the wrong “belief” – better: the wrong attitude – that is to say, that there are no powers above him.

<sup>3</sup>According to esoterics, man can be transformed into a conscious being on a much higher level than that on which he now lives. However, if man is content with, and proud of, his present being, he cannot develop.

<sup>4</sup>If man obeys the rules and laws of the work against his own self-love and self-will, then he can raise the level of his being. And if he can listen to what the work bids him to do, then it can be shown to him how he is to work at himself to transform his being.

### *16.8 Difficulties of, and Hindrances to, Self-Remembrance*

<sup>1</sup>Why is it so difficult to create moments of self-remembrance? There are many reasons for this. Forgetfulness. The habit of living in mechanical states. The habit of not using higher parts of centres. Centres in the mental and emotional envelopes work poorly, there are too often wrong functions in them. We are too sluggish and too dull. And first of all: we are too identified with our temporary mechanical states.

<sup>2</sup>When one is very much identified with mechanical life, it is difficult to remember oneself. It is also difficult when one has a wrong attitude to the work. Again, it is difficult to understand anything about self-remembrance when one is identified with oneself. When you have made a practice – note this: practice, not habit! – of self-remembering every day, you begin to be aware of a continuity running through your life. Then you become aware also when this continuity is lost. When you sense this continuity and the loss of it, you have reached a certain point: the first awakening of the conscience of the work.

<sup>3</sup>A man who is identified with himself cannot remember himself, since he cannot perceive anything beyond his temporary mechanical state, anything higher than this. As long as he is identified there is to him only that with which he is identified, and in this state self-remembrance is impossible. That is why liberation from identification is an important and necessary step towards self-remembrance. If you can observe your own identifications afterwards, see how ridiculous, useless, harmful they are, much has already been gained.

<sup>4</sup>There is a certain feeling always connected with self-remembrance. You cannot just make up your mind to remember yourself starting from your ordinary state. It is necessary to get into a certain state to begin with, a certain frame of mind, and then do it from there. Reflection on “cosmic ideas”, esoteric truths, may create such a state. On the other hand, it is quite possible to observe oneself without starting from a special preparatory state.

<sup>5</sup>If you have no faith, do not “believe”, in some higher power, you cannot remember yourself. It is to be expected that in the near future esoterics, particularly hylozoics because of the mental clarity and order it affords, will attract the interest of the intelligentsia at the stage of civilization. However, these people generally have no understanding of such a higher power, no understanding why it is necessary that man loves, serves, and venerates this higher power to be able to approach it. They are too proud, too arrogant, too full of themselves to feel humility and the desire to serve, to bow to a power that is greater than they are. They say that they are “skeptical” of the idea of the planetary hierarchy, the elder brothers. Little they suspect how skeptical the elder brothers are of their prospects of consciousness development. It is typical of these self-glorious people that they cannot understand self-remembrance, precisely because in their pride they do not recognize any power above themselves.

### *16.9 Why should Man Remember Himself?*

<sup>1</sup>Man should remember himself because only in moments of self-remembrance, self-consciousness, can influences of a higher order reach him, influence his being, and so help him go forward. Without this help man can do very little, actually only effect one thing at the expense of another equally important or even more important thing.

<sup>2</sup>You will have to make your own experiments to convince yourself why it is better to self-remember than not to do it. You will then find that the best method is to compare states of consciousness: you are always moving from a state of relative wakefulness or self-consciousness towards a state of relative sleep or mechanicalness, or vice versa. For example, ask yourself about a thing you regret having done: could I ever have done it in a state of self-remembrance?

<sup>3</sup>In true self-remembrance, many mechanical intellectual and emotional functions are quite impossible: hatred, anger, irritation, discontent, envy, malicious joy, and other negative emotions can exist only in mechanical states, never in states of self-consciousness.

<sup>4</sup>All mankind is asleep, and this is what causes all these horrors, all this suffering that mankind experiences. Sleep is the absence of consciousness, of self-consciousness. If people awakened, if they gained even a few degrees of higher consciousness, everything would be improved, much of the evil we now see surrounding us would be impossible.

<sup>5</sup>Unless a man can lift himself up by self-remembrance he does not receive help, and unless he receives help he cannot reach a higher level of being. But at the same time, unless he prepares himself by means of self-observation and trying to separate himself from wrong functions, such as he has been taught what they are, he cannot receive the influences coming from higher centres. Man has to prepare his lower centres so that they can hear and obey what higher centres tell them. Those higher centres, centres of the causal envelope, are always speaking, try to reach us and influence us, but we do not hear them. You feel the absence of the influence of higher centres in the sense of uncomfortableness as if you had forgotten something you once knew.

#### *16.10 Remembering Esoterics and the Work is a Help to Self-Remembrance*

<sup>1</sup>A great help to self-remembrance is to remember esoterics and your own work in connection with it, your work for the development of consciousness. All true self-remembrance begins with something that has to do with this work. When you remember yourself, you should always try to remember your aim, and your aim of course is such a one as has to do with the work and not with the egoistic endeavours of the separative, mechanical self (“power, reputation, money”). It is said here “remember esoterics”, not “think about esoterics”, because even those who are deep into esoteric studies in a formal sense may wander about in everyday life for hours and days without devoting the slightest thought to esoteric truths, as if they had completely forgotten them. Suddenly, right in the middle of everyday cares, remembering such a truth can make them somewhat more conscious. From this remembrance they can move on to become even more conscious: “Esoterics! Oh yes! There is another Reality behind this plastic replica which I and all the others following like sleepwalkers. I am an immortal monad. How could I forget?! And being an immortal monad I have a work to do that is quite different from that of the sleepwalker. I have an assignment: to try to wake up, become conscious.” And then pass from this understanding to action: do it, do self-remembrance, even if for half a minute only.

#### *16.11 The Abode of Immortality*

<sup>1</sup>If a religion is not to be without meaning, it must afford people the hope of individual immortality.

<sup>2</sup>If an initiatic teaching is to be a genuine esoteric one, it must afford this hope, too, but must not stop there; it must go far beyond that: It must explain why the hope for immortality is well-founded. In other words, it must afford something that does not merely quiet the heart’s unrest but also gives an explanation that satisfies the intellect and so dispels its doubts.

<sup>3</sup>But not just an explanation. An initiatic teaching cannot be a mere theory, but must be as much practice. In other words, it must indicate the method of the attainment of immortality.

This presupposes an initiatic organization: a chain of teachers and disciples, foremen and workers.

<sup>4</sup>It is useless just talking about immortality and not working to achieve it. But it is equally useless working to achieve it if you do not know how to work. And nobody can begin working until he has received help, teaching on how to do it, from those who are older and more experienced in the work. During long time after he has started this work he will need this help and teaching.

<sup>5</sup>This is the very basis of the existence of schools. Schools are only the first beginning of the initiatic work, mark the nearer abutment of the bridge, so to speak. The very bridge must be built by the disciple himself. It is the bridge of life between the mortal first self and the immortal second self: the antahkarana.

<sup>6</sup>Immortality is not an absolute condition, however, existing out of man's reach in his present state.

<sup>7</sup>The teacher explains that the disciple can achieve it temporarily through knowledge and effort, also in his present condition. The disciple attains it by making efforts from within his being and so creating self-consciousness. Moments of self-consciousness created through self-remembrance are moments of immortality as well. Why? Because moments of self-consciousness are moments of causal consciousness even of the lowest kind in the beginning. And the causal envelope and its incipient self-active consciousness is the first essence and vehicle of immortality.

<sup>8</sup>In a school, even in the simplest school, and in school teaching, even the most elementary one, the disciples are taught a variety of procedures, methods, for the activation of consciousness. All those methods or exercises have one single nucleus: self-consciousness, constant watchful attention to what is within and what is without.

<sup>9</sup>The Teacher said: "*My teaching has one single all-pervading principle.*"

<sup>10</sup>The wisest of the disciples present: "*Yes, Teacher.*"

<sup>11</sup>Thereupon the Teacher left the room.

<sup>12</sup>The other disciples: "*What did he mean?*"

<sup>13</sup>The wisest disciple: "*Our Teacher simply meant this: as to what is within us constant watchful attention, and as to what is without us constant consideration for people, and those two are one and the same.*"

<sup>14</sup>If disciples work conscientiously, diligently, and zealously according to school principles and school methods and obey school rules, then the school can become an abode of immortality to them. What is meant by this is that through school work the false personality can die and the work personality after many transformations can become an actual being of immortality.

### *16.12 The Voice of the Silence*

<sup>1</sup>Self-remembrance may come about when the constant inner babble has been put to silence, even for a few seconds. When constant occupation with small and big worries, the inner harping on all the vexations of everyday life, the constant fascination of the senses with the stream of outer impressions, the constant commenting on these impressions by the inner or outer babble machine, when all this ceases, is stopped, and when in an intense moment there is perfect clarity and quiet, as if those nonsensical things never existed – then self-remembrance, too, will come. And it may come with power and with joy.

<sup>2</sup>The "voice of the silence" is the symbolic expression of the fact that inspiration from Augoeides can be apprehended by anyone who is able to disengage his attention (or even his consciousness) from the physical, emotional, and mental. To such a person, phenomena in the

worlds mentioned can no longer hold his interest. The “silence” is the symbolic term for the mental quiet ensuing when man has set himself free from that urge which like a slave-driver’s whip compels him to pursue all the chimaeras of ignorance. In that stillness the higher mentality (47:5) can take part in the revelation of causal intuition. The voice of the silence is the “voice of the soul”, intuition from superconscious causal consciousness. In their language, the great mystics have said the same about the pertaining experiences.

<sup>3</sup>Disciple: “How may I come to the supersensual life, so that I may hear God speaking?”

<sup>4</sup>Teacher: “When you can throw yourself into THAT where no creature dwells, though it be but for a moment, then you hear what God speaks.”

<sup>5</sup>Disciple: “Is THAT where no creature dwells near at hand, or is it far off?”

<sup>6</sup>Master: “It is in you. You reach it by ceasing, even for a moment, from self-thinking and self-willing and stopping the wheel of the imagination and the senses.”