

Program of Orientation¹

Lesson 1

This series comes to you as the answer to your need for a series of lesson material which will provide you with practical methods of procedure applicable in the field of service. After having studied the *Creative Thinking* and *The Nature of the Soul* series, the student finds himself still at somewhat of a loss insofar as service is concerned. This is because he has had no practical experience in the field, plus the fact that he has had no training, either specialized or general, which has been related to service activity alone.

He has acquired knowledge of the Wisdom which he did not have before. He has been introduced to the concept of service. Now he finds himself in the position of the probationer disciple, ready to put what he has learned into right use. He is a bit foggy as to how he can put it to the best possible use in service to mankind.

To help the earnest student, this series of instructions is being projected. It is suggested that all probationers who are considering the entry into a field of service give this series their attention first.

What differentiates a probationer from an aspirant or an accepted disciple?

An aspirant is one who is consciously aspiring to and training himself for the path of discipleship.

An accepted disciple is one who has, because of an already established self-initiated service activity, merited the aid and the cooperation of his Master. He has arrived at a vision of the Plan, related himself to it, put into manifestation some activity which furthers the Plan, and as a result has earned the support and protection of an Ashram. He no longer works alone, but serves with his brothers as a member of the White Brotherhood. He can be depended upon to put the good of humanity before himself to recognize that good, and to give right direction to his quota of energy at all times.

A probationer is one who is initiating that activity which, if rightly oriented to the need of the times and free from personality distortion, will be accepted by an Ashram as a part of the Divine Plan activity. He is, then, in the process of earning acceptance into the White Brotherhood. He does not come empty-handed into the Ashram. He must initiate a service activity which

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merits recognition and invokes Divine aid before he can take his place as a brother in the White Lodge.

There are in the world today many who fall into this class. They stand midway between the group of aspirants and the group of accepted disciples. They are the probationers on the outer periphery of an Ashram. They have come to a sort of impasse insofar as their own development is concerned, and it is for them that these lessons are written.

This series seeks to do five things:

1. Bring before the probationer a recognition of his service potentials.
2. Show him how to develop those potentials.
3. Train him, through a program of practical application, in the ways of service.
4. Bring him to the actual test of discipleship.
5. Help him to pass that test, and safely take his place upon the path of discipleship.

Because we have entered into that period in the evolution of humanity which is to be characterized by group consciousness and group service activity, this series will be of more value if studied and put into practice by groups, rather than by individuals working alone. The student working in a group is rewarded by greater impetus, since Divine Will Impulse works more easily through an integrated group, than through an individual.

It is suggested, then, that wherever there are two or more of you studying the series in the same locale, that you work together in group form. Remember the words of Jesus Christ: "Where two or more of you are gathered together in My name, there am I amongst you. " It is suggested that as you meet, you do so with this in mind, taking the time (at least 3 minutes of silence) in which to establish the presence of the Christ.

If you are a member of a group studying this series, begin your service by first recognizing and accepting the fact that you are a probationer. Too many aspirants and probationers are today claiming, and believing the claim, of accepted discipleship within an Ashram.

Realize, first of all, that unless you are one of the comparatively few who have already initiated a service activity which has proven itself, and is an influence for good in the world, that you cannot as yet claim discipleship. More harm is done in the world by the misguided (usually by themselves), would-be

disciples than by all the rest of humanity put together. The disciple must have proven himself, must have come through the tests and trials of initiation and been purified by the fire of Divine Love, before he can claim the rights and prerogatives of an accepted disciple.

Do not be afraid then, nor ashamed to accept and stand in that place where you are. By taking that stand, and going on from there with your eyes open, you will have begun to build into yourself that harmlessness which characterizes the true disciple.

You are in the process of taking the initiation of discipleship; you have not yet taken it. The light is shining upon the door; you have yet to take the steps which will carry you through it. Recognize this, and take your first step.

I should like to discuss with you this subject of initiation, since it is one which is greatly misinterpreted by many today. An initiation is not something which occurs in minutes or hours, via a ceremonial form. Initiation covers a long period of time (usually several incarnations), during which the individual meets and overcomes his trial in the experiences of every day living. In meditation he observes the ideal, his Divine Prototype, and he realizes to a greater or lesser degree, that truth, which he is in reality. In the world of everyday living he proves his realization. He overcomes the limitations of the little "I"; he masters the form nature and little by little takes initiation, which is after all, the successful completion of a program of Soul imposed discipline.

Initiation is, then, a two-fold process. There is first the realization in consciousness of a greater field of awareness, that awareness including the ideal—the perfected expression of Divinity—toward which the individual is striving.

It is then for him to work this quality out into a manifestation of its expression within his own life and affairs. He must express Divine Love, which eliminates criticism, intolerance, resentment, jealousy, etc., from his outer nature. Just realizing or knowing on one level is not enough. His consciousness may be crammed with all sorts of realizations of a higher nature; but until he has embodied and is expressing them through the form nature, he has not completed the initiation, though he may be in the process of taking it.

Let no one, then, who has not proven his realization in the oft-times heart-rending work of the everyday life, claim the title of initiate. The true initiate will not, nor would he need to, claim such a title. His life will convey the reality much more perfectly than words ever could.

Let us then manifest the Divine Purpose underlying this first lesson by reorienting ourselves to Truth. Recognize where you are and why, by looking into

yourselves (both the consciousness aspect and the outer expression), and by observing what yet needs doing in the effort to become oriented to the path of discipleship.

As probationers, take stock of yourselves. Write a list of the realizations which have been attained to and still require outward expression.