

*Chapter 4* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Spiritual Hindrance By Family and Friends**

**M**UCH observation indicates there is a principle, operating largely through psychokinesis, that strongly resists the effort of the individual to step from the path to which his feet have long been accustomed. Almost as soon as the neophyte resolves to do some particular thing, or not to do something which to him is customary, he finds this resolution challenged in no uncertain terms. And this challenge, if what he contemplates is something different than his associates do, not infrequently comes from friends or members of his own family.

Nothing is to be gained by insisting that any marked effort to lead a spiritual life is nearly always met by severe opposition. Nor is any good end served by citing examples, which are multitudinous in number, that have come to notice where a neophyte has decided to take some step on the path toward adeptship sometimes an important step, and sometimes an insignificant one—only to find his plan thwarted by fierce and unexpected opposition. But a discussion of how to handle such situations has value, because they are of such frequent occurrence.

It is an instinct older than the human race for the herd to demand that all its members shall live as the majority of the herd do. We witness the same rigid curtailment of liberty of individual initiative among gregarious birds and mammals. It is the conservative element which ever exerts its influence as a brake upon progress. The person who dresses differently, who eats differently, who lives in any manner differently than his fellows, is marked for disapproval.

Likewise, the invisible intellectual forces which surround our planet are chiefly conservative. We witness on earth various political systems in which some advocate progress but others with a more numerous following are determined that government and its agencies shall be run in the future just as they have been run in the past. Things have been organized in our industrial life, in our economic life, in our political life and in our religious life here on earth; and those who are willing to struggle and fight to maintain the conditions that have existed in the past most of the time are more numerous than those who are willing to permit some beneficial change. And the inner-plane realm about our planet, the immediate astral environment, is just as completely filled with reactionary intelligences as the surface of the earth itself.

Consequently, when the neophyte decides to break away from his old and established methods of living, no matter how unsatisfactory they have been,

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he is apt to stir up these reactionary forces both on earth and immediately adjacent to the earth. I am not talking about black magic, or things of that nature; for such are of rare occurrence. Instead, I am referring to backward intelligences who feel that what was good enough for them while on earth is good enough for anyone. What they did and what they knew is the measure of their opinion of what those now on earth should think and do.

On the high-velocity inner-plane where the mind at all times dwells one intelligence is not separated from another intelligence by three-dimensional distance. Nor does one intelligence have to express its thoughts verbally or in writing to make them known to another. The method of communicating thoughts on the inner-plane is through the extrasensory faculty of telepathy.

Inner-plane intelligences—and the mind of man on earth is an inner-plane intelligence attached to and manifesting through a physical body by means of psychokinesis—are related to each other as the thought-cells of an individual's finer form are related to each other. They are related to each other through the psychological Law of Association, which is explained in Chapter 2, Course 5, *Esoteric Psychology*. This means that intelligences having similar thoughts or similar desires through the energy of these thoughts or desires tune in on each other. They are thus, through synchronization of vibratory rates, as close to each other in so far as ability to communicate is concerned as are two people on the physical plane occupying the same room.

Two people in the same room on the physical plane may, or may not, communicate their thoughts to each other, and they may, or may not, try to influence each other's point of view. But they have facilities for doing both. And those on the physical plane and those on the inner-plane who have had similar thoughts and held similar views, through these points of Mental Association, have facilities for communicating thoughts to one another and for influencing each other's views.

I am not here assuming that any great number of those who set their feet upon the exalted path will meet with serious opposition from unseen intelligences which they have previously contacted who wish to prevent them from thinking and doing differently than they did in the past. Yet the neophyte should be aware of the source of such opposition should it appear. Minds influence other minds far more importantly and far more often than is generally recognized. And such influence does not necessarily confine itself merely to presenting arguments in favor of some view. Psychokinesis may be brought into play as a coercive force the impact of which may be considerable. And while he need not contact them, the neophyte should understand that on the inner-plane there are gangsters and racketeers and selfish and crafty individuals who, even as such on earth, are opposed to all progress either by the individual or by the community.

In addition to unseen intelligences, and the influence of family and friends, there is a third hindrance always present to proper progress. It is the thoughts built into the thought-cells of the unconscious mind. The thought-cells have become conditioned to do certain things and not to do other things. Often they are energized by strong emotions, and thus are able strongly to resist any innovations. Old habits of thought, old habits of feeling, and old habits of action vigorously resist being displaced by new and better ones.

Furthermore, thought-cells which have been highly vitalized with emotion, or by receiving energy of a progressed aspect, are able to use psychokinetic power to bring into the life the things they desire, which may be conditions and events which tend to thwart the change the neophyte has decided upon.

A resolution to change something about our personal life has to meet and overcome, or reconcile, other factors within the unconscious mind. It is a thought about some situation or condition. And as the mind is centered on this situation or condition the psychokinetic energy of the thought-cells is directed toward the particular situation or condition thus thought about. And the stronger the feeling about the situation or condition the more psychokinetic energy is generated to attract it, and therefore the surer and quicker is the situation or condition attracted.

But whether it is due to inner-plane entities, due to the influence of family or friends, or to the psychokinetic power of factors within the unconscious mind, whenever he resolves to change something about his life in some rather marked manner, some opposition is almost sure to develop, and usually it will develop at once. Whenever he makes a decision to take any upward step, that decision sets forces in motion that bring to him a situation which tests the genuineness and power of his decision.

The severity of the obstacles imposed to the fulfillment of the new manner of doing something which has been decided upon depends upon the harmony or discord which has been built into the finer form by the thoughts and experiences with the circumstance, and the energy of the old habit-system to be replaced. But I am sure the neophyte will not have long to wait, if he will be observant, to be convinced that the resolution to live in a manner differently, or to do something in a markedly different manner when the situation again arises, quickly attracts into the life the opportunity, if not the necessity of either carrying out what he had decided or failing to do so. The thought about the matter attracts the situation, and thus soon is the strength of the resolution tested.

Because a resolve to take a definite upward step is so soon brought to test, and because failing to live up to the resolve is so weakening to the will, it behooves the neophyte always to weigh all possibilities before deciding upon such a change, and having once decided, to stick resolutely to it.

Invisible opposition has already been rather thoroughly treated in Course 18, *Imponderable Forces*, and the opposition of the unconscious mind can be handled by the proper formation of new habit-systems as detailed in Chapters 5-7, Course 14, *Occultism Applied to Daily Life*. But just how to handle friends who have one's welfare at heart, and in particular just what one's attitude should be in this respect toward the immediate members of one's family, are often problems of great intricacy which tax the powers of discrimination to the utmost.

As a broad and general proposition it may be stated that no other person has the right to interfere with one's spiritual progress. The Constitution of the United States recognizes this broad principle in granting religious liberty to the people of this country. This country was settled extensively by people seeking freedom to worship according to the dictates of their conscience. Religious tolerance has remained a cardinal principle, cherished by the American people, and upheld by law.

On the other hand, in religious fanaticism we cannot completely disregard the material obligations which we owe to those who, perhaps, have made great sacrifices for us. A husband or wife has some obligation to the matrimonial partner, children owe some deference to their elders, and the sensibilities of close friends are not to be wounded with impunity. We cannot be callous to the desires and feelings of those close to us without exhibiting selfishness.

Of course the true solution of this all too frequent home problem is to

## Carrying Out a Resolution

invoke the perfect moral code. Of all the ways of handling the difficulty, which will, in the long run, CONTRIBUTE MOST TO UNIVERSAL WELFARE? If you make your decision correctly with this universal moral code as the basis of your judgment, you will always decide upon the best possible course open to you. The real difficulty, especially when pulled and hauled by contrary emotions, is to decide what course of action will thus yield the most in terms of universal progression. All too often the decision is really based upon selfish desire to do as one pleases, or upon the other equally fatuous extreme, the willingness to sacrifice one's own aims and desires, even if they are to the best interest of all, to the less considerate desires of some other person.

To apply the universal moral code the desires and whims, both of ourselves and of others, must not weigh in the scales of decision. The whole matter must be weighed with a long vision to future developments, rather than on a basis of immediate effects. The ultimate result of each course of action open should be thoroughly considered, peering into the future probabilities as keenly as possible. The probable ultimate effect upon ourselves, and upon each person influenced, should be taken into account with a view of determining, in the sum total of all effects, how much would be contributed by each course of action to the detriment and welfare of society as a whole.

### Needless Antagonism

Viewing the matter thus, one of the most frequent errors made by those who for the first time come in contact with The Religion of the Stars and other lines of advanced thinking, is to stir up needless antagonism. Carried away by enthusiasm for their new perception of truth, they not merely energetically and forcefully enter upon new manners of thinking and living, but they start a veritable crusade to convince their family and friends that their own views are far superior, and to induce others, who in reality may not be ready for so drastic a step, markedly to change their manner of living.

Let us always remember that man is merely a highly evolved animal. He is not a finished product, but still in the process of development. And his past experiences, the state to which he has at present reached, may or may not, as the case may be, fit him to discern and live by a more advanced moral code. He may still be in a state where the worn platitudes and sophistries of orthodoxy are as much as his soul can assimilate. Even if he is a member of our immediate family does not, by virtue of that fact, raise him to an evolutionary level where he can comprehend the higher, more spiritual aspects of existence.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated thousands of times that new ideas and conceptions of how man should live cannot successfully be forced down the throats of people. People are not convinced by aggressive arguments. There is a right way in which to get an idea over to someone, and a wrong way in which to try to do so. Aggressive and combative tactics are the wrong way. The right way is set forth in detail in chapter 5. It embraces four distinct principles which should be understood and applied.

We are all of us responsible for having a better manner of living and a higher type of religion easily accessible to anyone who has reached a point where his old beliefs and old manner of living no longer satisfy. It is our job to see to it that all the people of the world are familiar with the chief tenets of The Religion of the Stars. These tenets should be so widely disseminated that they will attract those ready for them. And the details should be so readily accessible that no person will have much difficulty in gaining them.

But it is not our responsibility to compel anyone to accept these teachings. It is only our duty to see that they are brought to his attention and that he has facilities for learning them. When we can give another an advanced thought in a constructive and harmonious way we should take advantage of the opportunity to do so. And we should not condone the shams and obvious errors of other religions. But the neophyte who sets out by means of argument and destructive criticism to convert all and sundry to his way of thinking is not apt to do much that helps universal progression. Tolerance of thoughts, opinions, state of development and viewpoint of others is a prime requisite of the neophyte who is to arrive at adeptship.

The easiest way, in so far as it is feasible, to overcome the hindrance of family and friends to one's spiritual progress is not to draw their attention particularly to what one is trying to do, if there is likely to be antagonism.

There has been even a court ruling that so long as speech and action are proper, a husband or a wife has a right to think and feel, not merely about religious matters, but also in regard to personal matters, as he pleases. Whatever may be the opinion as to the completeness of freedom of speech and freedom of press as granted by the constitution, as yet there has been no encroachment, at least, upon freedom to think. And only those who do much thinking on their own, instead of accepting it ready made, will ever arrive at adeptship.

I am not here suggesting even the slightest hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, and any form of untruth, are to be sedulously avoided by the neophyte; as deceit tends to attract to one entities which favor deceit. Candor and truth should mark all the neophyte's utterances. But all of us think many things we do not say. We may, for instance, think that our neighbor is a liar; but we do not take pains needlessly to tell him so. Even should someone ask our opinion of our neighbor, we are quite justified, in the interest of neighborly harmony, in saying that we prefer not to talk about that particular person. Just because we think someone is the meanest person we have ever known does not signify that we must publish such an opinion, or even express it if asked. We have many thoughts which we do not talk about, because to mention them would stir up strife that would be harmful, and would accomplish no good purpose whatsoever.

So where husband or wife, father or mother, or close friends are quite sure to be antagonistic to our religious beliefs, to our knowledge that there is a life after death from which we on earth can, under certain circumstances, receive communications, to our knowledge that the inner-plane weather mapped by astrology has a profound influence over human life, to our knowledge that proper thought through psychokinetic power can markedly improve the conditions and events attracted into our lives, it may prove of greater benefit to the cause of universal welfare not to parade our ideas and beliefs before them. Seed should be planted, to be sure, in even spot in which there is any chance of it taking root. Initiative and ingenuity should be used to find ways of disseminating The Religion of the Stars. But where it is sure to arouse nothing but antagonism it is better not to sow the seed, not to mention the Stellarian religion. There is a time and a place and a proper manner of approach for such work.

From observing the lives of many thousands who have set their feet upon the upward path, I find the commonest cause of antagonism from family and friends to be religious prejudice. We have had husbands and we have had

wives, who here in Los Angeles have told their marital partner that if he, or she, took up the study of astrology, if he, or she, attended The Church of Light classes, if he, or she, read certain books, that action would be taken to get a divorce. And from students scattered all over the world have occasionally come reports that the domestic partner has threatened such a course if they took up the study of astrology, psychology, or the study of The Brotherhood of Light lessons.

The problem presented by such an attitude of the marital partner is, indeed, serious. Marriage is not a condition lightly to be assumed or lightly to be ended. And in some of the instances of which we have had knowledge, the one who wished to take up advanced lines of study was not entirely free from blame. His enthusiasm and zeal for the new line of thought and life was so energetic, and consequently made such a marked change in his life, that it is little to be wondered that the marital partner thought that he was becoming unbalanced.

People who take up any fad are apt to go to extremes. Fasting, diet, health exercises, and even bridge, as well as various religions and metaphysical cults, gain advocates who carry their ideas to such a length that conservative people are justified in thinking them cranks. And the husband or wife of such an extremist, or the father and mother, or the close friends, can hardly be blamed for trying to bring considerable pressure to bear in the effort to restore sanity.

But the student of The Religion of the Stars who has progressed far enough to realize what the teachings of this religion are, if he puts them into practice, is apt to impress no one as a fanatic or extremist. And if he is associated closely with a family, or with friends, who have strong prejudices, he should be unusually careful not merely to avoid giving the impression that he is going off at a tangent, but he should also take pains that others shall observe that his life is more well ordered and that his character is more admirable than before taking up the new line of thought and endeavor.

The Religion of the Stars teaches that each individual should be tolerant and kind to others, that each individual should be considerate of family and associates, and that each individual should be a good citizen. And if those who arouse antagonism would at start take pains to air their views less radically, and to show that the Stellarian teachings are conducive to a kinder disposition and a better ordered life, much of the antagonism would never develop.

Certain it is that no one should hastily create a cause for discord in the home, and that no one should lightly consider the possibility of separation or divorce. Usually certain concessions can be devised by each such antagonistic element, by which neither feels he is relinquishing his right to spiritual progress, or his right to domestic concord. That is, instead of a dogmatic, unbending attitude, usually there can be found a means by which the difference can be composed without either feeling that he has been deprived of just rights.

## The Sex Problem

It is not permissible to discuss the problem of sex which often, due to changing views, is a cause of difficulty between married people when one or the other takes up some line of metaphysics. Any number of totally erroneous and misleading ideas are taught in certain occult circles regarding this subject. One can hardly blame the partner who is uninterested in occult matters for feeling highly aggrieved when his mate changes the affectional attitude toward him markedly as the result of some teaching. He feels, and usually he (or she) is right. that the other has become imbued with much nonsense due

to such studies. He feels that this nonsense is breaking up his home, and he feels justified in trying to stop it.

Many instances have come to my personal notice of the gross selfishness of one type of person who thinks and claims he is seeking to be spiritual. There are various cults which teach celibacy. And if an individual is convinced he must be celibate to be spiritual, that is for him to decide. But to expect a marital partner who definitely does not believe in celibacy, and married on the assumption celibacy would not be forced upon him, to continue financially to support a spouse who has turned celibate and spurns affection, and demands that he shall not seek affection elsewhere, is something I have witnessed on various occasions. To such self-centered people it seems never to occur that fair play and a square deal are related to spirituality. They seem to have no concern as to what happens to the other person so long as they get what they want. Pretending to themselves they are being spiritual, in reality they are merely being callous and selfish.

However, there are many people who have never heard of occultism who are abysmally ignorant of the problems presented by marriage, although public libraries now contain books elucidating such matters. And in Los Angeles, and perhaps in other cities, there is a Marriage Clinic which attempts to educate people who have erroneous notions about marriage when these notions threaten to bring separation and divorce. The report on the first three years of the existence of this Marriage Clinic shows that, as a result of such education, 5,000 couples who were ready for separation and divorce were reunited, with a very much better chance for domestic harmony than they had before.

Among those who get notions from the many metaphysical and occult books that cause them radically to change their attitude toward sex and marriage, and thus stir up trouble, by far the majority, after a year or two find, from personal experience, that the results they expect from the new manner of life are not forthcoming. Consequently they decide that the way they were living before is really more sane than the method which, in their enthusiasm, they adopted and thrust upon their partner in the home. They conclude that, after all, the life they previously lived, in this respect is preferable. And fortunate they are if the husband or wife has not been completely estranged in the meantime.

This is said in no effort to condone discord in marriage. It is said in the hope it will induce earnest neophytes to come to decisions on such important matters without haste, and only after they are fully convinced they understand the matter in all its aspects. Selfishness, and a cold disregard of the needs of the other, is as apt to manifest among those who make a study of occult forces as among those more matter of fact. Yet kindness and consideration of others, including those within the domestic circle, are requisites to true spiritual progress.

As to how much we should permit those associated with us in the home to dictate what we shall study and what we shall do must, of course, be determined by a full consideration of how much society will be served by permitting such dictation, and how much society will be served or injured if we make a stand for greater independence. We are not warranted, in the home or out of it, in causing society to suffer merely for lack of firmness and backbone on our part. Firmness, however, can always be coupled with kindness, and with a full consideration of the viewpoint and the feelings of others. Domestic problems arising from divergent views could be solved, far more often

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than they are, by the exercise of kindness, tact, and understanding the needs and viewpoint of the other.

Emotions are among our most valuable possessions, but they are a great hindrance to clear and unbiased thinking. When there has been a spat with another over something, it is almost impossible to form an unbiased opinion about the matter until enough time has elapsed that the emotions have entirely subsided. And if, when you think about a situation you feel emotion about it, or feel hurt that someone has taken a given attitude, you will find that your judgment is distorted accordingly. Therefore, before deciding the right or wrong of a domestic issue, or before trying to decide what is the best thing to do about it, await such a time and place as will insure freedom from feeling and emotion.

Then set about understanding the matter by putting yourself in the other person's place. Take into consideration his educational and emotional background. Endeavor to perceive just why it is that he opposes your thinking and doing as you desire. You must try to discern what he feels and why he feels it, about the matter. And very often, with a clear comprehension of this, it will be possible to devise a method by which your own progress will not be impeded, and yet overcome his objection to your course of action.

But if such a plan cannot be devised by which the contending elements can be harmoniously composed, think of just what it means to him (or her) and how it will influence his life, if you continue your contemplated plans. Try to think the whole matter through, to discern how his life, and through it still other lives, will be affected. Will the course of action you have in mind retard him? Will it, through his reaction to it, have a detrimental effect upon others; and how many others will it influence in a derogatory manner?

Then consider the influence of the course of action upon yourself. Think of just what may be expected through it, and whether or not, and to what extent, this course of action will benefit others. Will it place you in a position where you will be able to be of greater service to others? Will the amount of service to others more than compensate for the detrimental influence that such action will have upon those in your home? Will the effect upon those in the home life lead them to actions that will influence still others, and if so will this influence be as great a hindrance to the forward movement of society as your new efforts are an aid to it?

It is, indeed, difficult to get a clear and unbiased picture of all possible effects when the question of liberty to live one's own life is involved. Perhaps it is true, as is so often stated, that any person should have the right to live his own life in the manner he sees fit, provided in so doing he injures no one but himself. The trouble with this attitude is that no person can live to himself. Almost any thought or action on his part is sure to influence, directly or indirectly, the lives of others. And before making any important decision in regard to his life, he should consider how various persons will be influenced by the decision; and then act according to the perfect moral code, taking the course that will yield the most benefit to society as a whole.

On the other hand, we have those who are narrowly selfish, yet think they are the world's elect who, regardless of the effect upon others, or whose feelings they hurt, smash ahead to live their lives just as they conceive it. That such a course may crush other lives weighs little in their plan of things. Then also, and quite as pernicious to human welfare, are those who, perceiving how they might be of great assistance in the upward swing of universal life, permit narrow minded relatives to work upon their sympathies and dissuade



them from it. In the attempt to be kind to a handful of relatives they are truly unkind to thousands who might benefit by their wider usefulness.

The surgeon dislikes to cause his patient pain; yet if the removal of some part is beneficial to the whole organism he can neither consider the pain of the patient nor the desire of the organ to remain intact. And the individual who has the ability to serve in a wider field than is afforded by his immediate relatives should, in the interest of the whole of humanity, be permitted to exercise his talents. But, certainly, before any decision is made which causes pain to another, there should be absolute conviction, carefully arrived at that, in some way this decision is in the direction of increased usefulness. It is far too easy to permit desire to rationalize the actions into a semblance of greater usefulness, or to permit sympathy with others to rationalize the actions into an effect upon them that in reality would not exist.

Commonly those who wish to study advanced things can find opportunity to do so, at least during short intervals, at times when it is not likely to stir up opposition. It is much better to do a little reading and much thinking about what has been read, than to do much reading and only a little thinking about it. Most people can find at least fifteen minutes a day for reading without creating a disturbance. And if this system were followed with regularity, and what was then read were thought over carefully at other intervals during the 24 hours, the individual would make better progress in his studies than most students actually do.

On this much publicized plan of fifteen minutes of reading a day, he could finish one of The Brotherhood of Light lessons in four days. As in the complete system of 21 courses covering all branches of occult science there are 210 regular lessons, the complete set of 21 courses could thus be read in less than two and one-half years. I am assuming here that time is taken each day to assimilate and understand what has been read. An hour while yet in bed before rising in the morning, an hour before going to sleep at night, half an hour at lunch time for such thinking by the office girl. Very few people are so situated that others can control their thinking 24 hours of each day. And people cannot object to one's thinking if they do not know what one is thinking about.

In addition to the reading for fifteen minutes a day for two and one-half years to cover the 210 regular lessons, there would be the Award MSS. to read, and there would be some extra time that should be devoted to astrological practice. You will understand that I am not implying the fifteen minutes a day reading is all that is required; for this fifteen minutes must be supplemented by plenty of thinking about what has been read. This thinking can be done while engaged in routine work at home, in the office, on the way to work, before retiring, and at various intervals whenever the mind is sufficiently free from necessary application to other things. But if the reading for fifteen minutes a day were thus supplemented by thought at those times when such thinking can be done without disturbing the life or neglecting the ordinary duties, I feel safe in saying that the average individual in three years of such application could successfully complete the whole of the 21 Brotherhood of Light courses of study, including the becoming of a fairly good astrologer.

Because the reading of a book, or of one of the Brotherhood of Light booklet lessons is apt to attract attention if done in the presence of others, the opportunity for such reading is more difficult in the home where interest in progressive lines is apt to be opposed than is the opportunity for practice in extrasensory perception and psychokinesis.

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A daily exercise in concentration, meditation, or extrasensory perception should seldom last over half an hour at a time, and fifteen minutes is long enough if properly utilized. And one can thus exercise the mind or extrasensory perception almost anywhere and almost at any time without attracting attention. Of course, deep meditation or the use of the transition technique of extrasensory perception are not suited to practice on a street car or motor bus or at the dinner table. But, if one is not too tired when one goes to bed, he can awaken in the night when refreshed, and carry out the desired mental exercise or inner-plane extension of consciousness without arising or disturbing anyone, and then go back to sleep. Many busy people have found this the most successful time to develop the inner-plane faculties.

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But study and the development of extrasensory perception and psychokinesis will not of themselves lead to real spiritual progress. Spirituality is a method of life rather than an intellectual or psychic attainment. Spirituality implies the raising of the dominant vibratory rate through living a richer life. And because there are so many erroneous notions as to the nature of spirituality, the neophyte, ever so often, should review what is said about the subject in Chapters 7-9, Course 17, *Cosmic Alchemy*.

One can hardly imagine an environment in which the neophyte struggling to develop spirituality— which is measured by the dominant vibratory rate— would be prevented from being helpful to others. The truly spiritual life is the life devoted at all times to such thoughts, feelings and actions as will most help others. This is not a life of self abnegation. On the contrary, it is the exact opposite; for no person who permits the unworthy desires of those in his environment to dominate his existence can do much to help people. And while there are other ways of raising the dominant vibratory rate, the effort to contribute one's utmost to universal welfare is the most successful method.

To permit one's family always to have their own way about everything is ruinous to their character. It is not in the direction of helpfulness. To permit a child, or other associate, always to take, without giving something adequate in return, is to foster and develop selfishness. In our effort to be unselfish, we must be careful that we do not cultivate ungenerous habits in others, or an attitude of dependence which will thwart the development of sturdy attributes.

Not only, in living the spiritual life, must we realize how important our attitude toward members of our own family is in the development of their characters, and that character development is far more valuable to them than the gratification of physical desires, but we must also keep in mind that our own progress and development, in many ways, is not to be considered as a selfish ambition, but as necessary steps toward the wider usefulness we thus can attain.

### Domestic Discord

It is only the rare home in which any serious opposition will develop to the neophyte adopting The Religion of the Stars as the religion by which he lives, in which much opposition will develop toward the study of the occult sciences, or toward sane and sound development of extrasensory perception. But in many, many homes, and in many circles of acquaintances, there is the ever-present problem of discord.

Such discord arising from close association with others, and which if not properly handled may hinder spiritual progress, chiefly manifests through three different channels.

There may be some one whose character vibrations are so antagonistic, aside from any particular thing that is said or done, that it causes a sense of irritation or almost nausea. Companionship between people who thus affect each other adversely, or when one of them is made uncomfortable by the presence of the other, is a disadvantage. Like a slow poison, it decreases efficiency and hinders progress.

People who thus affect each other should not be compelled to live together under the same roof or in the same office. But economic necessity or other circumstances often compel such distasteful associations. And when such an individual cannot be avoided, one plan is to build an impervious wall around oneself. There should be no antagonism felt, no radiation. Just an armor of protection which will not permit the radiations of the other, or the thoughts of the other, to reach the finer body. This process, and the details of even a more desirable technique are explained in Chapter 2, Course 18, *Imponderable Forces*.

But there is a second kind of poison which may have an adverse influence, that may be administered by one toward whom there is deepest affection. The fact that there is a deep sympathy aids it somewhat in its destructive work. I refer to gossip in which the character of someone is blackened, to stories of a decidedly spicy content, and to lewd and vulgar jokes. Members of the family, or friends who in all other ways are admirable and lovable, may have the pernicious habit of wallowing thus in mental filth, and of smearing this mental refuse on all other minds they contact.

Prudishness is merely an ignorant refusal to face and recognize the facts of existence. Prudishness is not in the direction of the perfect moral code. It is not that we should refuse to recognize that other people live in filth of mind and filth of body, but that no good end is served by contacting that filth. Because refuse and moral garbage exist in certain sections of our community does not make it necessary for us to hunt it up and soil our minds with it. Smutty stories, salacious gossip, and other mental filth should be shut resolutely from our minds. Spirituality is a high dominant vibration which for its sustenance requires refinement and richness of life; and mental corruption, such as we have been considering, is a corrosive influence that not only pollutes the objective consciousness, but poisons the soul and lowers the dominant vibratory rate.

One may be so situated that it is impossible not to overhear conversation of the nature here described. Economic necessity, or even one's cosmic work, may take one among people who are coarse and vulgar in their mental tastes. Some otherwise very dear people are gossip addicts. But it does lie within our power, and usually we can do it without giving offense or arousing antagonism, to pay no attention to such conversation. When heard, such conversation can "go in one ear and out the other.,, There are always many fine things to think about, and one never need dwell on the festering themes of degrading conversation.

The third kind of mental poison, and the most prevalent type, is that of mental conflict between associates. People, especially those close to us affectionally, have many traits, such as argumentativeness, or as chronically opposing what we wish to do, or continually finding fault and criticizing, or raising a row ever so often, that stirs up within us discordant emotions. The jealousy, hate, spitefulness, irritability, crossness, and other mental traits of those in the home, may be such as to tend to arouse in us also retaliatory emotional states.

Discordant thoughts and emotions are not spiritual and not in the direction of the perfect moral code, because they poison the body and build within us discords which cause the thought-cells so influenced to use their psychokinetic power to bring into the life unfortunate events. Unfortunate events detract from our efficiency to benefit ourselves and to benefit society. Therefore the neophyte should persistently and energetically adopt a plan in which he recognizes each stimulation toward an emotional discord as a definite problem which he is called upon to overcome. Knowing, from association with family and friends, the kind of occurrences which are apt to arise to cause him discord, he should plan a definite attitude which he will always assume under each of these circumstances.

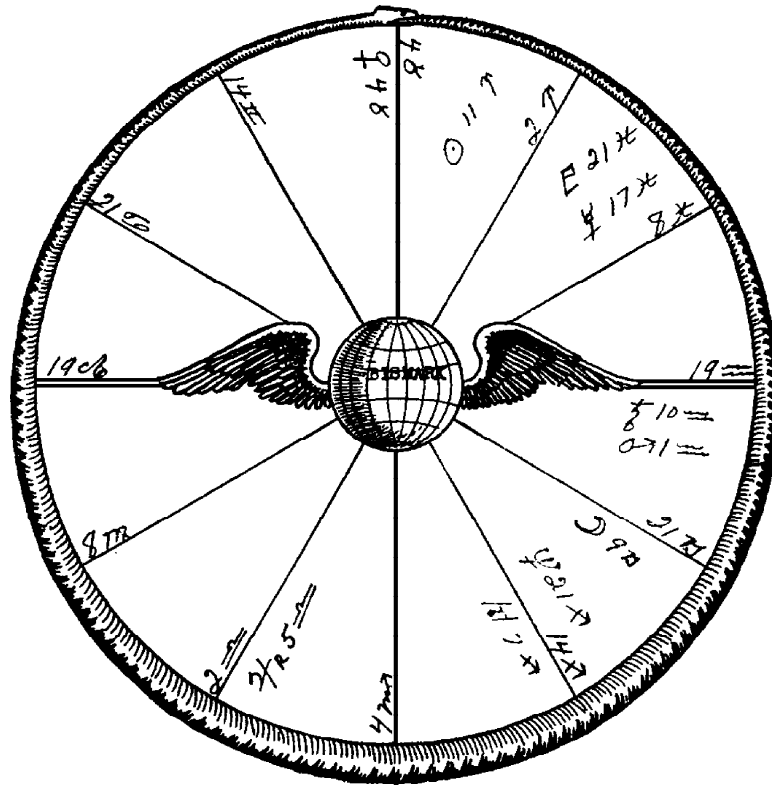
Action is always toward the image which at the moment gains most attention. It is the function of directed thinking to hold in the mind, especially while under stress, the image of the predetermined course of conduct. Due to conditioning, the unconscious mind presents certain thoughts to the attention and releases certain emotional energies, under definite types of circumstances. But instead of thus being the slave of habit, we should learn to hold before attention the predetermined image. This image is that of the attitude we have decided to maintain. And to insure that it is not displaced by the previously conditioned one, it should be reinforced with as much pleasure as possible, according to the principles and instructions set forth in Chapter 4, Course 5, *Esoteric Psychology*.

No matter what someone else does or says, by resolute practice the neophyte can develop the ability always to remain calm and well poised. When we depart from the completely constructive attitude, and permit mental or emotional discords to develop within ourselves, we should recognize the real fault does not lie with some other annoying person, but with ourselves. We are annoyed, or otherwise emotionally disturbed, because we permit it.

Because the emotions are so closely tied up with those in the domestic life, the hardest tests of the permanently constructive attitude commonly occurs within the precincts of the home. But anyone who remains harmonious within himself, in spite of what others say or do, is sure to gain their respect. Under no circumstances can either thought or action function to better advantage while stimulated by a discordant emotion. Nothing is gained by it, and much is lost.

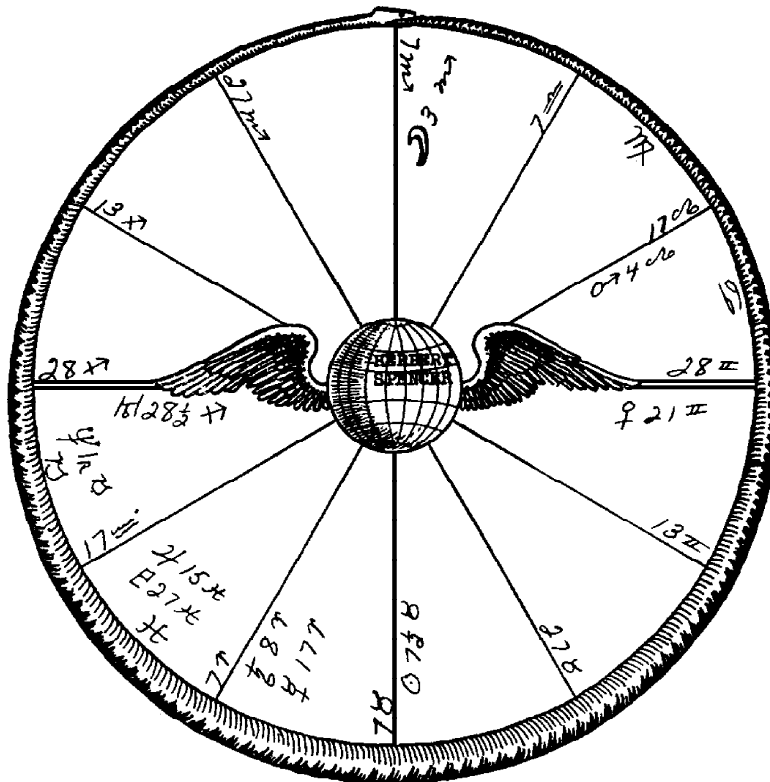
As a matter of observation, the situations which develop in domestic life afford the best of all training for a wider field of constructive endeavor. Cheerfulness and harmony in the face of such contending factions as often develop where a number of persons must live together in close association, indicate that the neophyte has made marked advance on the spiritual path and, due to this acquired spirituality and ability, is ready for larger undertakings.





BISMARCK  
 April 1, 1815.  
 Chart from 1001 Notable Nativities.

- 1847, attracted attention in Prussian Parliament: Venus sextile Mars p.
- 1851, diplomatic career commenced: Jupiter trine Mars r.
- 1859, saw opportunity to free Germany: Mercury sextile Mercury r.
- 1862, ambassador to Paris: Venus square Jupiter p.
- 1871, dictated terms of peace to France: Sun trine Jupiter r.
- 1884, inaugurated Germany's colonizing career: Sun square Mercury r.
- 1890, March 18, fell from power: Sun square Mars p.
- 1898, July 30, died: Sun square Jupiter p.



HERBERT SPENCER  
 April 29, 1820.  
 Chart from 1001 Notable Nativities.

1837, because of aversion to languages refused college education and became railroad engineer: Mercury trine Uranus p.

1859, Darwin's Origin of Species gave him scientific basis for his speculations: Mercury sextile Mars p.

1860, announced the issue of a System of Synthetic Philosophy: Sun square Jupiter r.

1896, finished his System of Synthetic Philosophy which embraced first principles, biology, psychology, sociology and ethics: Venus inconjunct Jupiter r.

1903, Dec. 8, died: Mars semi-square Moon r.

