

The Life-Power

All human knowledge is conditioned and limited, at present, by the properties of light and human symbolism. The solution of all human problems depends upon inquiries into these two conditions and limitations.
— Time-Binding, by Count Alfred Korzybski.

WE LIVE in an electric universe. Our bodies are electrical machines. The food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the clothes we wear, the houses over our heads - everything in our world is made of electricity. Our senses tell us we are surrounded by things innumerable: the Ageless Wisdom declares, 'There is only One Thing.' Modern science confirms this ancient teaching. Physicists now picture the universe as a great ocean of pulsing, vibrating electromagnetic energy, and psychologists tell us that this One Thing, electro-magnetism, presents itself to our consciousness in the particular forms which we call "things", because our senses are what they are. Let the range of our senses be augmented ever so little and we should find ourselves in a different world, containing any number of things of whose existence we cannot even dream at present.

Fifty years ago, the philosophy of materialism dominated the thought of the Western world, because the scientists of that day supposed an atom to be the very smallest thing. Today they picture atoms as tiny solar systems. Every atom has a positive electron for its nucleus, or central sun. Revolving at terrific rates of speed around this nucleus, like planets, are the negative electrons of the atom. What makes an atom of gold different from an atom of lead is not a difference in the substance of the electrons. The difference is merely in the number of electronic planets revolving around the atomic sun. In proportion to their size, the distances between these tiny planets are as the distances between the stars.

As soon as scientists began to accept this picture of the constitution of the physical universe, matter, as somebody has said, "melted into mystery." The chair on which you sit seems to be solid, but really the spaces between its constituent particles are like those which lie between the earth and her fellows in our solar system. The chair seems motionless, too, but it is really

a rhythmic pulsation of whirling forces, a dance of electrons which calls up certain images in your mind because your sensory apparatus is pitched, or tuned, to certain specific rates of vibration.

“Matter”, then, is not a reality, not a thing. It is just a word, a name for a mental abstraction which we make from our sense experiences caused by a mysterious “something”. To call that “something” which presents itself to us in such a variety of guises “electricity” is merely to choose a convenient label for a group of our observations as to what happens under certain conditions. It is important to remember that the noun “electricity” is only a label. In other lands and days, the same hidden force was given other names. Now that physicists agree that light is identical with electromagnetic vibrations, we may discover that the medieval occultists were not so far from the truth after all.

They said, “All things are modes of a mysterious force named L.V.X. (Latin for Light).” Nineteenth-century materialists scoffed at this “occult superstition”; but when we say that light is electro-magnetism, and accept the scientific dictum that everything is made of electricity, we simply paraphrase the teaching of those who declared: All things are from ONE and that ONE is L.V.X. Applied science gives us novelties in the field of invention, perhaps, but its boasted modern knowledge is as old as the world. It is really a revival of ancient learning, and some persons among us know why this revival is happening just at this day and age.

Alphonse Louis Constant (better known as “Eliphas Levi”) published the first of a series of books on the occult sciences at Paris, in 1859. The main source of his knowledge, he said, was a symbolic book, the TAROT, which we shall begin to study in Section B of this course. From the Tarot, and from old books on alchemy, magic and the Qabalah (the Secret Wisdom of Israel), Eliphas Levi derived his doctrine of a cosmic force which he called ASTRAL LIGHT.

Levi borrowed this term from the writings of the “Unknown Philosopher”, Louis Claude de St. Martin, but used it in a different sense from that in which it was employed by St. Martin. Modern Theosophy also has a good deal to say about Astral Light, but the Theosophical conception is not quite the same as that expounded by Levi, who followed the medieval teaching about the One Thing named L.V.X. Levi also called this force the Great

Magical Agent, and he said openly that it is identical with the light of the stars, that is to say, with the radiant energy of distant suns. What follows is a condensation of his doctrine, compiled from his various writings:

“There exists a force in nature which is far more powerful than steam, by means of which a single man who can master it and knows how to direct it, might throw the world into confusion and transform its face. It is diffused throughout infinity; it is the substance of heaven and earth, for it is either fixed or volatile according to the degrees of its polarization. This agent is precisely what the medieval adepts called the First Matter of the Great Work. When it produces radiance it is called light. It is substance and motion at one and the same time; it is a fluid and a perpetual vibration. The will of intelligent beings acts directly upon this light, and by means thereof, upon all nature, which is made subject to the modifications of intelligence.

“This force was known to the ancients; the Gnostics represented it as the burning body of the Holy Ghost, and this it was which was adored in the secret rites of the Sabbath or the Temple under the symbolic figure of Baphomet, or of the androgyne Goat of Mendes. (Here Levi does not refer to the Sabbath of the Jews or to their Temple, but to the so-called “Sabbath of the Sorcerers”, a survival of the old mystery cults, and to the rites of the ancient Knights of the Temple. - P.F.C.) It is represented on ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis which twines in a love knot around two poles, by the bull-headed serpent, by the serpent with the head of a goat or a dog, and by the serpent devouring its own tail. It is the double serpent of the caduceus (the wand of Hermes or Mercury), and the tempter of Genesis; but it is also the brazen snake of Moses, encircling the Tau, that is, the generative lingam. Lastly, it is the devil of exoteric dogmatism, and is really the blind force which souls must conquer, in order to detach themselves from the chains of the earth. “By the direction of this agent we can change the very order of the seasons, produce in the night the phenomena of day, correspond instantaneously from one end of the earth to the other, discern like Apollonius, what is taking place at the antipodes, heal or hurt at a distance, and endow human speech with a universal reverberation and success.

To know how to master this agent so as to profit by and direct its currents is to accomplish the Great Work, to be master of the world, and the depositary even of the power of God.

“The Astral Light, being the instrument of life, naturally collects at living centers; it cleaves to the kernel of plants as to the heart of man (and by heart we understand, in magic, the great sympathetic), but it identifies itself with the individual life of the existence which it animates. We are, in fact, saturated with this light and continually project it to make room for more; by this projection the personal atmosphere is created. The settlement and polarization of this light about a center produces a living being; it attracts all the matter necessary to perfect and preserve it. It is the first physical manifestation of the Divine Breath. God creates it eternally, and man, in the image of the Deity, modifies and apparently multiplies it in the reproduction of his species.

“The Great Magic Agent has four properties - to dissolve, to consolidate, to quicken, and to moderate. These four properties, directed by the will of man, can modify all phases of Nature. In making use of the term fluid in connection with this force, we employ a received expression, but we are far from determining that the latent light is a fluid; everything, on the contrary, leads us to prefer the system of vibrations, in the explanation of this phenomenal force. However that may be, the coming synthesis of chemistry will probably lead our physicists to a knowledge of this universal agent. A complete revolution of science will follow, and we shall return to the transcendent magic of the Chaldeans.”

This long quotation abounds in clues to the real meaning of magic. It is also evidence that the strange symbols of the Ageless Wisdom reveal a true science to him who can rightly interpret them. From those symbols Levi learned the secret of the Astral Light, and the knowledge so gained enabled him to make a remarkable prophecy. Every detail of his prediction has been fulfilled through the achievements of modern invention in making use of “a force more powerful than steam”, which is “a fluid and a perpetual vibration”, and which, long before modern theories of the constitution of matter were framed, Levi described as “an electro-magnetic ether, diffused throughout infinity, the substance of heaven and earth”.

Men of science laughed at him in 1886. Today their grandchildren paraphrase his doctrine but ignore his genius. The complete revolution of chemistry through a new synthesis, and the overturn of nineteenth-century “science” as a result of it, have come to pass. The devices of our electrical civilization fulfill Levi’s predictions to the letter. Electricity kills criminals and heals the sick. With it we change the order of the seasons, providing ourselves with heat in winter and ice in summer. Telephones and

telegraphs enable us to correspond instantaneously from one end of the world to another, making us practically omnipresent. Wireless transmission of photographs is the promise of an invention which before many years have passed will enable us to see distant events at the moment they happen. And when one voice can be broadcast and magnified as it is by radio, so that millions may listen to the words of a single man, is not human speech “endowed with a universal reverberation and success”?

Recent investigation of interatomic forces shows what incredible power would be at the command of a man who could release the energy pent up in a few ounces of common earth. It is unlikely that this secret will become generally known until humanity is better prepared to use it wisely. They who possess it now are few, and they are too wise to misuse what they know.

Yet for those who are duly and truly prepared, there are means whereby the tremendous force of the Astral Light may be utilized with safety. Whosoever is willing to comply with the laws of its subtler phases of manifestation, and willing, too, to meet the tests of mind and character imposed by Those who keep the Great Secret, may learn that a man may indeed break up the conditions of his personal world, reduce them to their elemental chaos, or confusion, and then from these same elements, proceed to form that world anew.

Every man lives in a world of his own creation, built in accordance with his own imagined mental pattern. Change the pattern and you change the world. The Astral Light is a blind force only so long as we are blind. As Levi says, “The will of intelligent beings acts directly upon this light, and by means thereof, upon all nature”. It always responds to our mental direction, even when it seems to be working against us. Whatever pattern we impress upon it, that pattern it follows. Thus by the very laws which bring discord and suffering we may enjoy harmony and well-being. What those laws are, and how to use them, is an important part of the teaching of the B.O.T.A.

Levi’s words summarize the doctrine of the Western School of the Ageless Wisdom. We shall now compare them with some of the teachings of the Eastern School. Levi has told us that the Astral Light is the “first physical manifestation of the Divine Breath”. The Hindus also employ a term which

means “Breath” when they describe the fundamental cosmic force. Their term is PRANA, a Sanskrit noun defined by Rama Prasad, in Nature’s Finer Forces, as follows:

“Prana is the life-principle of the universe and its localized manifestation; the life principle of man and other living beings. The suns are different centers of the ocean of Prana, and it is in this ocean that move the various heavenly bodies.”

Consider now the words of the Swami Vivekananda, in his book, Raja Yoga:

“Out of the Prana is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the Prana that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve-currents, as thought-force. From thought down to the lowest physical force, everything is but the manifestation of Prana. The sum-total of all force in the universe, mental or physical, when resolved back into its original state, is called Prana. The knowledge and control of this Prana is what is really meant by Pranayama.

“This opens to us the door to almost unlimited power. Suppose, for instance, one understood the Prana perfectly, and could control it, what power on earth would there be that would not be his?...This is the end of Pranayama. When the Yogi becomes perfect there will be nothing in nature not under his control...All the forces of nature will obey him as his slaves, and when the ignorant see the powers of the Yogi they call them miracles.’

The Eastern Wisdom also agrees with the Western School that the Great Magic Agent is directly connected with the functions of the sympathetic nervous system. The Yogis have developed elaborate physical and mental exercises intended to rouse the activity of Prana in certain ganglia of that system. These exercises, however, are not adapted to the conditions of Western life. They must be modified considerably before they may be employed safely by persons of European stock.

Not a few of the breathing exercises which have been given wide circulation in books and lessons are likely to do more harm than good. Pranayama should never be practiced without a teacher, and we need to make sure that our instruction comes from competent sources. On the other hand, it is impossible to make any real progress in practical occultism without taking

some risks. The Great Magic Agent is cosmic electricity, and he who undertakes to control its tremendous energy must be prepared to face some degree of danger.

Once we have exercised due care and intelligence in our selection of a teacher, we should be careful always to follow his instructions exactly. Practical occultism is emphatically not a study in which the pupil may take what our schools call “electives”. On this point I can do no better than to quote a chapter-heading from Talbot Mundy’s recent story, Om.

“None who sets forth on an unknown voyage stipulates that the pilot must agree with him as to the course, since manifestly that would be absurd; the pilot is presumed to know; the piloted does not know. None who climbs a mountain bargains that the guide shall keep to this or that direction; it is the business of the guide to lead.

“And yet men hire guides for the Spiritual Journey, of which they know less than they know of land or sea, and stipulate that the guide shall lead them thus and so, according to their own imaginings; and instead of obeying him, they desert and denounce him should he lead them otherwise. I find this of the essence of perversity.”

Seekers for the higher knowledge ought to avoid rashness. Ignorant dabbling with unknown forces is sheer folly. Hence the wise advise us to be well grounded in theory before we attempt to perform the Great Work. On the other hand, success is denied to cowards, and there is altogether too much fear-thought in some of the warnings against the dangers of occultism which we hear nowadays. Not seldom the person who tries to scare us away from occult practice is concealing the lack of power and knowledge behind a smoke-screen of words.

Turning now from the Hindu teaching to the more familiar field of the Bible, we find ample evidence therein that Moses and the priests of Israel knew about the Great Magic Agent. Egypt, of course, was the great source of their knowledge, as the Bible tells us. “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.” (Acts, 7:22). “Words”, in Greek, is Logoi, and this is a technical term referring to the power of sound-forms, in the use of which the Egyptians excelled. The Logoi are the same as the mantra of the Hindus. No great penetration is required to read between the lines of many Old Testament passages. Take

for example the Ark of the Covenant, which stood in the Holy of Holies. Judging from the descriptions, it was constructed on much the same principle as a Leyden jar, so that it might give a sharp shock to anyone who profaned it with a touch. Such a shock, intensified by the fear and awe of the one unfortunate enough to sustain it, would be enough to kill. The story of Elijah and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:40) is another instance which hints strongly that the prophet had more than a little knowledge of electrical laws. Even the Hebrew noun translated “spirit” in our Bibles contains internal evidence that the sages of Israel knew the real nature of the Life-Breath, which is the correct translation of the noun Ruach, making it practically identical with the Sanskrit Prana.

Ruach is spelt with three Hebrew letters which we may transliterate into Roman characters as R, V and Ch. The Hebrew alphabet differs from others in that every letter is a word which designates a natural object. Hence we may learn something of the real meaning of any technical term used by the sages of Israel if we consider what is implied by the series of objects named by the letters which spell the particular word whose esoteric significance we wish to discover. In Ruach the sequence R (ר), V (ו), Ch (ח) means HEAD - NAIL - FIELD. We interpret it thus: The Life-Breath is a force having its highest centers of terrestrial manifestation in the head of man, where it is transformed into thought-force (ר).

The Life-Breath, being diffused throughout space (as Rama Prasad says, the ocean of energy wherein move the heavenly bodies), is the connecting link between all things, and the connecting link, also, between thought and external conditions (ו). Those conditions are themselves expressions of the Great Magic Agent, and since all human activities are therefore concerned with its various modifications, we may describe it as the field (ח) wherein we labor, and whose conditions we seek to control, cultivate and adapt for our welfare.

Sunlight is the form in which the Life-Power is made available for our use on the physical plane. This fact, too, is suggested by the noun Ruach, for in the Secret Wisdom of Israel the first letter of that word symbolizes the sun.

All that we see, all that we hear, all that we experience through any channel of sensation, enters our field of consciousness because the sun shines. The earth is a wheel in a machine driven by solar force, and the movements of

matter upon its surface are caused by transformations of the sun's radiant, electro-magnetic vibrations.

The measured heat of waves upon the shore, the slow, majestic progress of a great river sweeping to the sea, the song of a mountain rill running to meet its mates and join its waters with theirs, the bubbling of hillside springs, the fall of every raindrop - these are the watery vesture of solar light and heat.

The wind, driving storm-clouds through the sky, the breeze stirring the curtain, the wild tornado cutting a path of death, the steady trades carrying proud ships on peaceful errands of commerce - all these are phases of the influence of sunlight upon our atmosphere. Every breath drawn by a living creature, and every transformation of that breath into sound, is an expression of the same power. Every prayer and every curse, every word of wisdom and every utterance of folly, is made possible by sunshine. The shrill call of bugles sounding an attack, the solemn organ music resounding beneath cathedral arches - these are the sunlight's garments of air.

Every fire that burns is a flame lit up by the sun. Think what this world would be without fire. The history of civilization is the story of man's progress in mastering and utilizing fire. Almost everything we possess has passed directly through fire, or has been fashioned by machines driven by fire. All the energy of fuel is imprisoned sunlight. And what is more marvelous than this slow fire in our bodies, lit before our birth, which, while it burns, is life itself? We are all pillars of invisible fire - invisible, that is, to ordinary sight, though there are persons who have the finer vision which enables them to see it. The mastery of this vital flame is one of the great occult secrets.

Fire and water and air, with the merest touch of mineral substance (itself composed of points of light or fire) - this is what we really are, no matter what we seem to be. These our bodies, disguised as gross flesh and blood, are forms of living light. Every beat of our hearts, every inspiration and exhalation of our breath, every process of organic function, is a work of sunlight stored in our body-cells.

Furthermore, whatever else they may be, mental states are certainly functions of our brains and nervous systems. On other planes of existence there may be other laws, but here on earth thinking means movement of brain-cells. Our brains change sunlight into thoughts.

Of these thoughts, some are masters and some are slaves. Some are friends and some are foes. Some build and some destroy. The master-thoughts rule our minds and control our bodies. They have brought about every change in human environment. Translated into action through muscular activity, they become the seeds of civilization - of science, invention, art, philosophy and religion.

Yet not one of these master-thoughts could have emerged from a human brain, nor could any of the actions which have changed the face of the world have sprung from them, but for the shining of the sun. The sun prepared the stage of the world for man. It raised the mountains and leveled the plains. It carved the water-courses and hollowed out the basins of the seas. It covered the earth with vegetation, and peopled it with animal life. And after the long, slow process of evolution had, in man, produced an organism for expressing sunlight as creative thought, the sun, working through man, built the first rude shelter. So began the art of architecture which raised the Pyramids, carved the Sphinx, and covered the globe with human habitations. Sunlight has built every house, carved every statue, painted every picture, danced every dance, uttered every word, written every book, and shaped every invention known to man. And because we know that solar force, working through human brain-cells, takes form in states of consciousness, we know that it is, potentially at least, a mental force.

Thought at our end - the expressing end - of the cosmic play of light vibrations, implies a mental quality at the source of those waves of living light.

Our sun, moreover, is but one among a host of similar centers of electromagnetic force. Throughout infinite space are scattered countless points of expression, great and small, for a power which, because among us men it produces the phenomena of consciousness, must be supposed to include the power to know among its manifold possibilities. We live day and night

in the presence and through the activity of a universal radiance which manifests itself through suns. These are like dynamos, sending out the motive-power which drives the planets of their respective world-systems.

Material science ignores the mental potency of the Great Magic Agent. The Ageless Wisdom has always recognized it. Matter is the effect produced upon our senses by certain forms of the Life power, but physicists explain the constitution of matter in terms which lead straight to the conclusion that all things are expressions of a purely immaterial power. Atoms are made of electrons, and electrons are points of energy. A point is defined as having neither length, breadth nor thickness.

If you object that some scientists are always insisting that electrons are bodies, and not points, the fact remains that the stuff these “bodies” are made of is not matter. There is nothing material about it. It is energy, and “energy” means simply “working power”.

An immaterial power expressing itself as light, as the force producing all vital phenomena, animating every living creature - an invisible, impalpable, yet real, force, which sets worlds dancing through space, and upon them plays the drama of life. Science pictures this. Science itself is the working of that same power through human brains - an aspect of the cosmic process of self-revelation whereby the Life-power eternally makes Itself known to Itself.

Call it electricity, Astral Light, Prana, Ruach, or whatever you please. No name can define It. Names are only designations. What the Life-power is in Itself we do not know, nor may our finite minds hope to comprehend that mystery. Yet may we apprehend It as subsisting by Itself, independent of every mode of existence. This is the L.V.X. of the Western School of occultists, a name in some senses equivalent to the AIN SOPH AUR, “Light Limitless”, of the Qabalists. This is the One Thing whence, according to the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, founder of alchemy, all things proceed; yet is this One Thing No-Thing, because the Source of all things cannot possibly be any of the things which spring forth from Its limitless subsistence. Hence the innermost essence of that L.V.X. is everywhere described in paradoxical terms, such as “Radiant Darkness”, or “THAT which is neither Aught nor Naught”, or “The Soundless Sound”. In these lessons It will usually be called either the Life-power, or L.V.X.

Always Itself, absolutely one, complete, whole and perfect, L.V.X. is formless, indivisible and changeless. Jacob Boehme called it the Ungrund (Foundationless), the subsistence behind and beneath all forms of substance, the rootless root of the energy which gives rise to all movement, the Causeless Cause of the life of every creature.

Limitless, infinite, It has no boundary. Hence, as more than one seer has declared, Its center must be everywhere. This mathematical truth is a key to many secrets of the Ageless Wisdom. It means that the Limitless Light is the central reality, now and always, of every thing, of every creature, of every person. Because L.V.X. is the essential principle of all activity, It is the Being of all that you are, the Thinker of all that you think, the Actor in all that you do. To help you to realize this truth, instead of merely believing it and talking about it, and to show you how to make this truth a practical working principle in your daily life is one aim of this course.

As an aid to this end the Founders of the B.O.T.A. have formulated a series of affirmations to be used every morning and every evening by our affiliates. In the morning the series should be said aloud, beginning from No. 1. In the evening the reverse order should be followed. Face East in the morning and West in the evening, not because of any special occult virtue which may reside in either direction, but because your subconsciousness knows, if you do not, the age-old symbolism of the places of the sun's rising and setting. In short, the position you take stimulates certain important associations of ideas which help to put your personal consciousness in harmony with the rhythm of cosmic life-currents.

These statements formulate the truth about yourself, no matter whether you comprehend that truth in all its details at this time or not. Recited from 1 to 10, the affirmations are a series of logical deductions corresponding to the path of the descent of the Life-Power into the conditions of Name and Form which constitute the world we live in.

This order is therefore observed at the beginning of the day, to impress the whole organism, before attention is engrossed by the details of the day's events, with the true relation of personality to its invisible Source, the Life-Power. At night we use the reverse order, corresponding to the path of

return from the conditions of Name and Form, because this prepares the mind for union with the L.V.X. while the personal consciousness is extinguished in restful, dreamless sleep.

The affirmations correspond to the ten aspects of L.V.X. which we shall study in the final lesson of this Section. Learn them truly by heart, not merely by rote, and dwell upon their meaning as you recite them. Every word is significant. Not one has been chosen haphazard.

When you recite the series in reverse order, keep in mind the difference of meaning which is effected by changing the order. In the evening recitation the first change of meaning is in the eighth statement, which then points the mind upward toward the Primal Will, which is the Eternal Splendor or White Brilliance of the Limitless Light. “Looking forward” then refers to that first manifestation of L.V.X., not to its perfect expression in the Kingdom, as in the morning recitation. In like manner the words, “that Will”, in the seventh sentence carry the mind up and back toward the Primal Will, considered as the goal or objective of the path of return.

The grammatical reference of the pronoun “its” is also altered when this order is reversed. In the morning recitation the pronoun refers to the creative and sustaining Will. At night (in the third, fourth and second sentences), the same pronoun refers to the undeviating Justice. This is important, because one reason for the evening recitation is to help you to recognize that Justice at work in the events of the day which has just passed.

Due attention to these distinctions of meaning will prevent mechanical repetition of the words. Feel their import as vividly as you can, and the results will be better. Understand from the very beginning that the affirmations contain many subtleties of which you will not become aware until some time after you have begun to recite them. Be on the watch for the deeper sense of the statements, and you will get far more out of this exercise.

Preface the recitation always with the phrase, “This is the truth about the Self”. The noun, Self, is capitalized, to emphasize the distinction between personality and the I AM of which it is the mask and instrument.

Affirmations

1. I am a center of expression for the Primal Will-to-Good which eternally creates and sustains the universe.
2. Through me its unfailing Wisdom takes form in thought and word.
3. Filled with Understanding of its perfect law, I am guided moment by moment along the Path of Liberation.
4. From the exhaustless riches of its Limitless Substance, I draw all things needful, both spiritual and material.
5. I recognize the manifestation of the undeviating Justice in all the circumstances of my life.
6. In all things, great and small, I see the beauty of the Divine Expression.
7. Living from that Will, supported by its unfailing Wisdom and Understanding, mine is the Victorious Life.
8. I look forward with confidence to the perfect realization of the Eternal Splendor of the Limitless Light.
9. In thought and word and deed, I rest my life from day to day upon the sure Foundation of Eternal Being.
10. The Kingdom of Spirit is embodied in my flesh.

Recite the affirmations in the morning before dressing. Say them at night just before you go to bed.

Adhere strictly to these directions, and to others that you will find in these lessons. This teaching doesn't represent merely the personal opinions and methods of Paul Case, although he prepares the lessons, and has been delegated to conduct the external work of the Builders of the Adytum for the time being. You have had confidence enough in the value of our work to assume your share of the expense of extending it among seekers for Light. Begin now to be a true Builder by resolving to do your part of the undertaking in exact accordance with the plans laid out on the trestle-board of these lessons.

What have you set out to build? Our name tells you. The Builders of the Adytum are dedicated to making human personality (and through its activities, human environment), what the Bible calls “the secret place of the Most High”, what the Chaldean Oracles describe as “the adytum of god nourished Silence”. Just as the building of a house takes material gathered from various places, and assembles it according to a plan, so the work of building the Adytum takes the raw material of human experience, and shapes it in a particular way. The end sought is to make man actually what he has always been potentially, a conscious expression of the Cosmic Will. To attain this end is to become a Master of L.V.X., and as Eliphas Levi says, “the depositary even of the power of God”.

The building of the Adytum, therefore, requires us to control our bodies, to direct the life currents playing through them, to equilibrate the forces of the emotional life, and to master the modifications of the mind. This undertaking is well named the Great Work, and as you begin it, you will do well to pause to consider how serious an undertaking it really is.

You are not simply taking up a study which interests you more or less. You are not trying to gratify your idle curiosity. You have been called, have felt an urge to respond to that call. Whether or not you have chosen to be one of those who complete the work depends largely upon yourself.

The Great Work is not easy. Time after time you may be assailed by doubts, and by impulses to give it up. Yet they who persevere to the end will surely enjoy the bliss of the liberation which comes through realization. This we know, we whose part it is to lay the plans before you. None of us claims to be a Master of L.V.X., but many of us have made progress enough to be able to assure you, not only that the Light does shine, but that its power is available for human use.

We do not pretend to have completed the journey, but we have followed the Path of Return long enough and far enough to know that what has been said of it by the Brothers and Sisters in L.V.X. who have gone on before is strictly true, so far as we ourselves have checked and tested their reports.

We have learned what little we know because we have followed a long line of Builders whose plans and specifications of the Work have been preserved throughout the ages. You may attain to the same certainty. Simply follow

directions, and remember that the essence of them all is expressed in the old fourfold injunction:

KNOW, WILL, DARE and BE SILENT.