

# IN DEFENSE OF THE ASHRAM

*By Brett Mitchell*

Every member of the ashram has the responsibility of defense. Everyone chosen by the Custodians of the Plan has the responsibility to fulfill their obligations. These obligations are not readily recognized by those aspirants in and out of the ashram -- who believe that to be a part of an ashram is to receive benefits rather than incur costs. Yet there is a heavy price to pay to belong to the ashram; the cost of defending it against its enemies, its friends, its members, and one's own personality. This article seeks to identify the responsibilities of defense.

## **The Need of Defense**

An ashram is formed of a multitude of human and deva units. From the angle of the Master, it is the means by which he contacts the worlds of dense form, just as the personality is the means by which the soul contacts the three worlds. A human being expresses through a threefold personality vehicle composed of a mental elemental, an astral elemental, and an etheric elemental. These units are perfected together, and upon their coordination constitute together a personality elemental. The indwelling soul has the problem of gathering the material for these elementals, refining their substance, and coordinating their expression. The end result of this process is what we call the third initiation.

A Custodian of the Plan performs a similar process with what we call -- from our limited perspective -- an ashram. The Master expresses through a sevenfold ashramic vehicle composed of personalities on each of the seven sub-rays of the ashramic ray. These

personality units are perfected together, and upon their coordination constitute together the initiated ashram. The Master has the problem of gathering together the members of the ashram, stimulating their progress, and leading them to coordinated service. The end result of this process is what we call the seventh initiation.

Hence the ashram is to the Master what the personality is to the advanced disciple. There is an interesting and strong parallel between the personality and the ashram. This is a hint that interested students may follow up.

While each human being has the responsibility of furthering their own personal development, entrance into the ashram adds the responsibilities of coordinating with the other members of the ashram in united service, achieving a conscious response to the Plan, and defending the ashram from all harm. If there were more recognition of the responsibilities of the members of the ashram, disciples would more readily take them up upon their entrance, and the progress of the Initiates upon the Way of the Higher Evolution would be stimulated.

There is, so to speak, the *glamour of the ashram* that hinders a clear understanding of ashramic responsibility. Disciples coming in to the ashram often seem to have unrealistic expectations about what entrance into and participation in the ashram implies. There is the idea of closeness to the Master, an increased sensing of love and joy, and a communion with fellow disciples. Reality is often far different.

Instead of closeness, there is often an increased separation from the Master, at least outwardly. The closer one moves towards the center of the ashram, the further away is the Master, in terms of the daily activity of the disciple. The Masters must make special effort to reach the consciousness of the materialistic and selfish of attitude, and frequently must reach them via the physical plane through physical appearance. This method is being used a great deal in the externalization effort. Those aspirants and disciples with a higher sensitivity may be reached through the medium of the mind, and their contact with the Master is through books and inspired speech. At a still later stage, contact is telepathic and intuitive; hence there is no need for the Master to be *present* at all. In addition, the consciousness of the disciple is moving away from the idea of contact with the Master in the first place. The advanced disciple is too preoccupied with world need and the Plan to be concerned with contact with the Master. The *cry of humanity* is sounding in his ears, and that cry demands a response from the disciple.

Love and joy are too often interpreted from the angle of the personality. There is a definite increase in love with entrance to the ashram, but it is love of a higher kind. It is love of the Plan, love of humanity, and love of God that preoccupies the members of the ashram. There is a definite increase in joy as well; the joy of service, of struggle, and of sacrifice. These are not usually the kinds of love and joy the aspirant entering the ashram expects. From the personality angle, there is a definite increase in stress and the development of a point of tension from which the disciple works. The problems of the outer and inner groups become apparent, and new needs hitherto unforeseen must be met and dealt with. The personality is thus under extreme pressure to deal with personality problems rapidly and effectively, to deal with the protection and defense of the ashram, and to respond to the *cry of humanity*, which is no metaphorical term but is as real, actual, and painful to the pledged disciple as a physical wound is to the

physical body.

Instead of an increased communication with fellow disciples, there is often an intense outer sense of loneliness, isolation, and separateness. The personality, always materializing the esoteric concepts, expects that the ashram is a physical group or an assembly of personalities in training to live as souls. Instead, the training is incidental to the service to be performed, and the group the personality desires to blend with is nowhere to be seen in the three worlds.

It is said that the awakening of the sense of responsibility is the first sign of soul infusion. It could also be said that the awakening of a sense of responsibility towards the ashram is the first sign of participation within the ashramic life. When the disciple begins to be consciously aware of his responsibilities and duties within the ashram, he becomes aware of the need to defend it. This awareness is innate within the ashram. Just as the physical body seeks to protect itself from harm, instinctively withdrawing from a flame, so does the disciple within the ashram instinctively (and on this level intuitively) protect the ashram – the manifesting *vehicles* of the Master – from harm.

### **Defending the Ashram Against Its Enemies**

When we consider the defense of the ashram from its enemies, it is easy to think of the Dark Lodge and its longstanding opposition to the work of the Hierarchy. However I do not seek to deal with that matter here. The defense of the ashram against the Dark Lodge is a matter for the Masters to deal with, and not normally a matter for individual disciples to handle.

It is also easy to fit the idea of defense into a 6th ray light, where warring magicians and mysterious secret societies fight metaphysical battles for world supremacy. As usual, the distortions of the astral plane have removed all truth from the visioned image, and it is necessary to reformulate the presented attribute.

In order to clearly see how the ashram is constituted for defense, it is necessary to decentralize the view of the Master at the center of the ashram. An ashram is constituted in order to carry out a particular aspect of the Plan and impart a certain quality. It is focused around a Master because that Master has been assigned the responsibility of fulfilling that purpose. Thus the ashram is focused around a purpose or intuitively held idea, and not specifically the Master who holds the purpose.

Within each ashram is at least one individual who is under training to fill the Master's place. That individual is being trained to wield power and potency such that he can perform the same service function that the Master now serves. One day that disciple will *fill the shoes* of the current Master of the ashram, and the Master will be freed to perform greater and higher work. Hence the position of the Master of an ashram is an *office* and not an individual. Therefore it becomes apparent that the ashram is much more than a group that is assembled together by a Master; it is the focal point of a particular purpose, held within the mind of Sanat Kumara, the Lord of Shamballa. The Purpose of Shamballa is worked out through the Plan, and makes its impact upon humanity by means of the ashram. The ashram implements the Purpose of Shamballa and all that is in opposition to that purpose constitutes the *enemy* of the ashram.

To put it another way, a typical group in the outer world is formed around an idea, a potent thought-form that has been strengthened to the point where it is a controlling factor in people's lives. A sacred book, a holy temple, a business, a government, and a work of art are all ideas in expression. On the inner planes, the ashram is the manifestation of an idea held *in the Mind of God*. The Master has, through meditation and service, identified an aspect of the divine Mind that needs working out, and has formulated a plan by which this may be accomplished. This plan manifests as the activity of the ashram.

Thus to defend the ashram is to defend a divine idea that is in process of manifestation. This defense is accomplished not by counterattack against some imagined enemy, but by living in accordance with the expressed ideal, by speaking the Truth, by merging one's individual mind with the divine Mind, and by taking responsibility for the expression of that divine idea.

### **Defending the Ashram Against Its Friends**

Perhaps the most difficult task of defense is the need to defend the ashram and the outer group against the service activity of the inexperienced aspirant. Having in some measure come in to the light, the aspirant seeks to express that light within himself, but does not see truly because he is still largely controlled by glamour and illusion. This may be considered to be a fundamental cause of the current outpouring of messages from the masters, channeled teachings, and other misinformation concerning the Hierarchy. The aspirant is seeking to express the truth as he sees it, and he does indeed see a measure of the truth. Knowing that truth, the aspirant is keen to accept his spiritual responsibility and present that truth to the world. But this truth is still seen through a veil of personality desires and dearly held ideas, leading often to tremendous distortion. This constitutes an attack on the ashram, for the ideal that the ashram holds and seeks to express is being veiled by the personality limitations of the well meaning aspirant.

All that can be done in these cases is to avoid lending the power and support of the ashram to these individuals and groups, to present the Hierarchy as it truly is, and to stand in spiritual being until such time as the glammers and illusions fall away from the aspirant through sheer attrition.

It should be stressed that defense of the ashram is never accomplished by counterattack. A total harmlessness pervades the entire effort. Consequently even when a fellow disciple inadvertently attacks the ashram through manipulation of others,

through criticism, or through misguided action, it is always the intent of the defending disciple to achieve the greatest and highest good of all. The defense is performed in a spirit of love for those who are attacking, and with complete impersonality. No personal animosity, hostility, irritation, or desire enters in. No harm must be done to the attacking individual or group.

Defense is accomplished by healing, not by hurting the attacker. The attack is treated as a wound in the group life, and healing energies are rapidly sent to correct the matter. The defender works consciously with those healing energies, judiciously applying them with great care. This may result in the healing of the ashram, the attacker, or both.

Defense is accomplished by letting in the light, not by driving out the darkness. It is accomplished by the deliberate inflow of radiant energy as authorized by the ashram. There is nothing in the defending disciple that sets up an opposing energy on the part of the attacker.

Defense is also accomplished by psychic sensitivity. As was stated by the Tibetan regarding one of the stages of discipleship:

*Disciples... put no aspect of the divine manifestation outside their range of experience... He has to be prepared for all experiences and to face the fact that eventually all disciples have to become psychics, both higher and lower, as was the Christ...*

*I am not asking you to cultivate psychic powers, but I do ask you to hold yourselves in guarded readiness to see and hear on all levels of service, and to know what you see and hear, interpreting it correctly, unblinded by prejudice and fear. The Path of Discipleship is not an easy one but its compensations are adequate. Psychic sensitivity is involved in the understanding of this phase of discipleship. (DNA I 741-742)*

This psychic sensitivity is used to relate the disciple to the ashram and assist in its

defense. These are not the usual psychic powers of psychometry, clairvoyance, or clairaudience (though they may be involved) but are instead the ability to wield light energy, to direct quality, and to *move the devas*. It involves what is called having *power on a ray*. The development of these powers is a natural and inevitable result of spiritual development.

### **Defending the Ashram Against the Members of the Ashram**

The most damaging effects on the ashram are from those inside of it, who essentially fail to appreciate the Master's situation and ignore the divine idea. While there are many types of problems, the following two types of attack should be highlighted at this time.

a. Through inappropriate meditation. Many disciples are unaware of the effect of their meditation work upon their own centres and the centres of others with whom they are working. They occasionally employ meditation formats that are wholly unsuitable, and thus damage the larger group. To use a well known example, it is clear that meditation on the base of the spine centre is dangerous due to the possibility of premature arousal of the kundalini. This is not only potentially damaging to the individual, but also to the ashram. As the disciple is an integral part of the ashram, the meditation upon the base of the spine also stimulates the base of the spine centres in other members of the ashram, endangering all. Less rare are instances when the disciple, through sheer ignorance, uses a meditation that is detrimental to himself. The disciple becomes over stimulated in the wrong way, and the whole ashram suffers until some more advanced disciple intercedes, the disciple realizes that a mistake was made, or the disciple stops using the meditation through sheer inertia.

Most disciples would be amazed by the extent of the protective power surrounding them. Eager to make progress, they forge ahead as best they can, and attribute many obstacles to environmental circumstances or

their own limitations. Instead, these obstacles may be placed in their way in order to prevent premature progress and to protect the ashram. Many disciples are kept from the use of dangerous meditation formats, yet they themselves attribute this to a *lack of self-discipline*. More likely they do not use the meditation because they should not use it, because they are not ready to use it, because of a lack of self-perception, or because of a refusal to accept responsibility. Their own soul, recognizing these limitations, defends itself from these dangers by what the personality attributes to inertia and laziness.

b. Through a controlling attitude. The ashram can be severely damaged by the attempt of one disciple to control the actions of others. This is a frequent problem at this time, for many disciples are forming their own groups and are leaders and teachers of large numbers of individuals. They have moved further along than the majority of these they work with, and see what has to be done with a clarity that aspirants cannot match. Hence there is a great temptation to direct or control the aspirants for their own benefit. However, this infringes upon the free will of the aspirant. No matter how pure the motive of the controlling disciple may be, to control is inherently an attempt to defeat the forces of evolution and return mankind to the consciousness of the unthinking, Atlantean devotee. It must be stressed that any attempt, by any disciple, to affect or control the activities of others is totally contrary to the spirit of brotherhood and synthesis represented by the ashram.

This controlling attitude is expressed in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes disciples impress their ideas on others in a manner that partially takes over their thinking processes. Sometimes group leaders automatically take those who follow them into their aura and seek to direct their actions along certain lines. A few disciples, through an inherently powerful etheric vitality, unconsciously sweep those around them into conformance with their will. Sometimes meditation groups deliberately

meditate upon another disciple, directing that disciple towards a specific course of action. All of these actions are contrary to the purpose of the ashram.

The disciples who are asked to defend the ashram must deal with these problems, sometimes in a drastic manner, for not even the Master may infringe upon the free will of the disciple.

For the individual disciple, the defense against this controlling attitude is a profound and real humility, a recognition of the uniqueness and value of each individual regardless of where they may be on the path, and a close and constant consideration of the use and misuse of energy in all of the vehicles. When these are awakened, the disciple will not control and cannot be controlled.

### **Defending the Ashram Against our own Personality**

The development of dispassion, harmlessness, and love is a keynote in the development of the disciple. The awakening of a conscious awareness of energies and how they are used is a fundamental tenant of esotericism. The cultivation of personality qualities, high motives, and purity of nature constitute the foundation of the work of the disciple. They are also the keys to the ashram, for without a certain measure of personality control, entrance is not permitted.

Even after entrance into the ashram, personal feelings, extreme emotions, strong attachments, cherished ideas, selfish ambition, and a sense of power can stand in the way, preventing the disciple from unifying his consciousness with that of the ashram. The more advanced members of the ashram must spiritually offset this personality force until such time as the disciple has mastered his own particular situation.

A multitude of books have reiterated the requirements of the path of probation, and there is no reason to repeat them here.

### **Requirements for Defense**

The first prerequisite for defending the ashram is a perfect harmlessness. There must

be absolutely no intent to obtain personal gain through the act of defense. Just as the psychic powers may be used to defend the ashram, so might they also be used to harm it. Anyone with any tendency to use these powers for personal gain or in a selfish manner will not have these powers awakened. Anyone with the desire to control others, to manipulate others to any end, or to infringe upon the free will of fellow disciples will not be entrusted with the task of defense.

The second prerequisite is an appreciation of the Master's problem. The Master seeks to manifest the divine Idea, and in doing so encounters natural resistance from the environment. The defending disciple must be in a position to recognize those opposing forces in order to deal with them.

The third, prerequisite is practice in dealing with the personality, and defending the ashram against it. This is usually accomplished upon the path of probation and the early phases of discipleship.

The fourth prerequisite is to be asked to the work of defense by the ashram. This presupposes a certain development of the esoteric sense. While all members of the ashram must of necessity deal with their own personal reactions and difficulties, only a subset of the ashramic group is involved with defending the ashram from other disciples, groups, and entities. As usual, when the disciple is ready he will be seen, recognized, and put (often unwillingly!) to work.

Upon meeting these prerequisites, the power to defend the ashram will unfold and the methods of defense will become known. May each of us rapidly move to the place where we may take up this responsibility.

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