

Exercise A

Find a quiet space in your home. If you can manage an Oratory, or a place which can be dedicated to meditation, so much the better. It should be furnished simply — a chair, a small table, and a candle. You may burn some incense if you like. Make sure there are no pictures of living things (human, animal or vegetable) to distract you.

Now you can begin to discipline your mind for the Great Journey out of the *Forest of Errors*, as Saint-Martin described the general manner of living and thinking.

Put on your alb and cordelier, and don your mask. Darken the room, and seat yourself about four feet from a mirror. Place a single lighted candle between yourself and the mirror. Relax for a few minutes, then ask yourself the question put to you at your Initiation:

“We do not ask who you are, because if you knew, you would have nothing more to learn; but we do ask you whom do you think you are?”

Do not discuss this exercise until you have practiced it several times.

The Martinist Visualization & Prayer

It should be done *daily*: on awakening; on getting ready for sleep at night — and many times during the day.

Be comfortable. Close your eyes if circumstances allow, relax and breathe easily. Visualize yourself in your alb; see it radiantly white; call to mind its meaning — the Original Robe of Glory — purity.

Put on your cordelier, symbol of the Magic Circle and the Traditional Chain. It reminds you of your linkage to your Initiator, to all others in the Chain of Light, and to the Source of Light Itself.

Now enfold yourself in your mystical black cloak. It renders you insensitive to the attacks of the base powers of ignorance. Through its use, you enter easily into meditation; you “go within” and commune with your innermost self, which knows all.

Lastly, don your mask, the most powerful tool for the development of the true mystical personality. Through its use you subjugate the petty ego and protect yourself from the undesirable aspects of your mundane personality such as pride, conceit, vanity, and arrogance.

Visualize above yourself the flaming Pentagram.

Mentally review yourself now, clearly see yourself completely dressed in your habiliments. Actually *feel* them about you. See the flaming pentagram above you and *hear* the flames hissing; *feel* their warmth.

Now, silently or very softly, intone the Name *Ieschouah* (yea-hesh-shoe-wah) one or more times.

After a short period, using your feeling nature, strive to be *en rapport* with the Past Masters and all brethren in the Initiatic Chain. Call to mind someone near and dear to you such as a family member, a friend, or someone you wish to help: a world leader, a nation or group of people. Visualize them fully clothed in the vestments. Visualize the Pentagram flaming above them. Again intone the Name *Ieschouah* one or more times (either silently or softly) and send them thoughts of love.

Remember: the Higher Powers care little for the shallow values of the profane world, but everything for love, brotherhood, kindliness charity, humility, sincerity, beneficence, consolation, and compassion.

Never neglect this visualization exercise. It is a prayer of the strongest potency. Let it be a routine, several times daily — an essential practice of your Martinist Way of Life. Use this Mystic practice as you move through the day, silently blessing all those whom you observe to be saddened, distraught, sick, in need. Your meditations will indicate to you how to use this visualization and prayer in other ways.

Exercise B

Sit comfortably in a chair or lie down on a couch. Relax your body completely, close your eyes and follow, for five minutes, the course of your thoughts, which you will try to remember. At first you will notice that the types of thoughts that will rush upon you involve questions of daily life, your occupation, worries and so forth.

With respect to these thoughts, assume the role of a quiet observer, free and independent.

According to your state of mind at the time and the situation of the moment, you will either find this exercise easy or very difficult. In both cases it is important not to lose the course of your thoughts, nor to forget yourself, and to follow attentively.

You must be careful not to fall asleep during this exercise. If you feel tired, it is preferable to stop at once and postpone the exercise, therewith making a resolution not to be tired next time.

This control of thought must be practiced in the mornings and evenings. Every day you must extend its duration by half or one minutes, so that after two weeks you are able to observe the course of your own thoughts for ten minutes without the slightest deviation. The most important thing is to be conscientious and precise, since there is no need to rush these exercises. This development is individual and therefore different for each person. However, it is of no use to go to the next step until this one is fully mastered.

Prayer for the Dedication of the Home Oratory or Altar

Morel, S::I::G::I::

We humbly beg you, Almighty and Eternal God, by Your Only Son, Jesus Christ, Our Master and Lord, to sanctify *[make cross motion using right hand]* with Your celestial blessing this Altar (Oratory) destined for pure and holy uses. As in the past You received the prayers and respects of Israel, wandering in the Desert, in a Tabernacle to which You gave Your Servant, Moses, the service and care, I beg you to consider this humble Altar (or Oratory) arranged for Your Glory and Your Service. May you, O Lord of the Sky and the Earth, instill the same virtue that You gave in the past to your Saint of Saints, and may Your celestial blessing spread in this instant and this place on him, so that Your servants who will meet around this sacred surface be then sanctified by the Celestial Virtue of the divine mysteries which will be celebrated there, and may they give them protection of their bodies and souls, and view the eternal life. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and

Master, and through Saint John, His servant. Amen. *[make cross motion using right hand while saying, "Amen."]*

The Heart of Love

by Servitor S::I::I::

The Heart of Love is a method of meditation and prayer that works directly with the most profound and powerful teachings of Jesus:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it, that you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

As you have done to the least of these my brethren, you have done to me.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Quite naturally, this method resonates strongly with many of the clearest statements of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin:

For our personal advancement in virtue and truth one quality is sufficient, namely, love; to advance our fellows there must be two, love and intelligence; to accomplish the work of humanity there must be three love, intelligence, and activity. But love is ever the base and the fount in chief.

Hope is faith beginning; faith is hope fulfilled; love is the living and visible operation of hope and faith.

It takes very little reflection to know this method involves everything taught in the quotes above: Love for God and our fellow souls is at once the motive force, the immediate sentiment, and the practical aim of this work. It makes use of our human intelligence in the most graceful and subtle of ways — an internal cultivation of love that stimulates more of the “living and visible operation of hope and faith” in our relationships with others. It puts the Martinist Way of the Heart into immediate practice.

This method is developed through four phases. It is recommended that the first phase be practiced alone for at least a week, and then each phase can be successively added over a period of several weeks until you are finally practicing all four phases in each sitting. Once a working familiarity has been developed with each phase, then the practitioner may place more or less emphasis on various phases, and even rearrange them, as desired. Some people might find this method suitable as the mainstay of their regular devotionals and inner work, while others might prefer to use it less routinely. This method is an excellent practice for anyone who wishes to serve in spiritual healing, for it helps in keeping one’s soul open to the flow of higher energies and tends to infuse one’s healing prayers with the special sweetness of selfless love.

Phase One: The Heart of Love Received from the Exemplar

It is always advisable to begin and end such work with a ritual action such as lighting a candle and perhaps some incense, and performing the Qabalistic Cross or ordinary crossing. After settling

into a centered and peaceful state of meditation, offer a prayer of submission to the Divine Will, expressing your desire to know and serve it through love.

Next, call to mind the image of someone you consider to be a great historical embodiment and exemplar of love, such as Jesus, Mother Mary, St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Theresa, or Rachel the Jewish matriarch. Imagine this person standing in front of you with a loving smile. See within his or her chest a flaming heart, radiating love out through the whole body in rich hues of pink, ruby and golden light, like a splendid sunrise.

Feel the warmth on your face and chest. Let yourself respond emotionally to this great soul's love, smiling in return. Imagine your exemplar reaching out to cup your heart in his or her hands, and the flames of love flowing into and igniting your own heart. If you feel moved to weep with gratitude, allow that to happen as you continue to meditate upon this person as an embodiment of Divine Love, a living vessel through which God loves the world, including you. To accept this love is itself an act of love for God, for the exemplar, and for yourself. You may speak with your exemplar if you wish.

In your meditation, consider that to ancient people the heart was not merely symbolic of emotions, but was also the seat of intuition, inspiration, beauty, peace and harmony. There is much to discover here about the nature of love, which includes far more than our feelings of affection and sympathy. Consider these words of Saint-Martin:

The head of old was subject to the ruling of the heart, and served only to enlarge it. Today the scepter that belongs of right to the heart of a person has been transferred to the head, which reigns in place of the heart. Love is more than knowledge, which is only the lamp of love, and the lamp is less than that which it enlightens.

When you are ready to end the meditation, simply let the image fade. Offer a final prayer of thanks and return your consciousness to the external world, though now infused with an elevated awareness of love.

While most people report this exercise to be positive and uplifting, some people may also find themselves challenged by various kinds of discomfort with the work. For example, feelings of unworthiness, guilt or shame may arise. It is important to simply be aware of all our feelings, both pleasing and uncomfortable, accepting them as indicators of deeper processes occurring within our hearts and minds. In effect, they present us with opportunities to learn more of what we really believe about ourselves and our relationships with the Divine. In response to such observations, it is important to remember that accepting the infinite grace of Divine Love is not about using the head to strategize a path toward righteous worthiness, but is rather about simply opening the heart to the immediate fact of God's freely given mercy and affection. With this understanding, where we find self-condemning thoughts and feelings of self-loathing, we have the opportunity to practice acceptance, forgiveness and healing of our own humanity, as well as truly nurturing ourselves toward more virtuous living.

Phase Two: The Heart of Love Shared with Those We Cherish

Proceed through the previous phase and just past the point where your heart is ignited by the exemplar. Allow the image of the exemplar to fade, and in its place imagine someone among your friends and family with whom you share a deep bond of love. Perhaps this is someone you know to

be in extra need of receiving love at this time. See him or her smiling in the warmth of the pink, ruby and golden light radiating out through your body. Imagine yourself reaching forward to hold that person's heart in your hands. See and feel the flames of your heart flowing through your arms to ignite his or her heart with love. Speak with this person if you wish. Meditate upon the love you have shared, how it has been expressed between you, and how it might grow.

When you are ready, allow that person's image to fade. If you feel moved to do so, allow the image of another cherished friend or family member to arise, and then repeat the entire process. You can continue through as many loved ones as you wish, eventually ending the meditation as before.

As with the previous phase, this can be a very touching and joyful exercise, and yet it can also prove challenging. In focusing on your love for another, you might discover areas of uncertainty or sense something lacking. For example, you might realize that in some way you have not been as expressive of your love and affection as you might be. This could be due to various fears or inhibitions for either or both of you. You might also discover you have resentments, frustrations or other negative feelings about the individual that seem to prevent you from more fully and freely loving him or her. As you practice the exercise with different people in mind, you may become more aware of how your love differs from one person to another. With some people your sentiments might be more affectionate, with others more appreciative or admiring, while for others more compassionate or sympathetic. In any case, this phase of the Heart of Love can help you learn about how you feel, think and behave in your relationships with loved ones, and thus provide you with many opportunities to refine your ability to love each person in your life in a way as unique and meaningful as he or she is.

Phase Three: The Heart of Love Shared with Those Who Challenge Us

Work through the first two phases, and now begin extending your love toward someone you feel has mistreated or offended you in some way, or someone you have difficulty trusting. Give just as freely and energetically to this soul as you did in the second phase. Meditate upon the many pearls of wisdom in loving those we may not find easy to love. Ponder how you might manifest love for this person more outwardly. As before, repeat the process until you are ready to end the meditation.

Phase Four: The Heart of Love in All

After working through all the previous phases, meditate upon the universe as existing within the Flaming Heart of God, the One in whom we live and move and have our being. Recall that your heart is aflame with that same Divine Fire, and that it is actually a spark of that Divine Fire, as are all the hearts of God's children. Allow all the implications of meaning, virtue and action to flow freely through your heart and mind, with neither resistance nor attachment, but with awareness, acceptance and love.