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By
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CONCENTRATION

Concentration is an art. To be an artist implies skill. Skill is the result of practice, exercise, training. There are no artists who reach the heights without a knowledge of the technique in the field of their artistry. The "born" musician, actor, painter is a misnomer, except in so far as a native tendency toward a particular art is found in conjunction with ex - perience in artists who have become great. The embryo musician plays his score over and over again, until he has implanted the seed which develops into the flower of genius. He works, and he works hard. The harder he works, the more he realizes that there is "No royal road" to success. He learns to concentrate on the elements of his art.

THE TERM CONCENTRATION.

The term concentration as used in metaphysics has been very greatly misconstrued. It has been mis-understood, and efforts to utilize the true power concentration produces have proven futile by the majority of persons. To this majority the term is indefinite since it has had no instruction in the technique of concentration. It is a mystery, since it has observed that a small minority have accomplished results which it has been unable to accomplish. It is a magic talisman, since it has been taught to regard it in that way.

DISCUSSION OF QUERIES.

I have had many people ask me, "What do you mean by concentration?" And I know that these same persons have asked many others, "What do you mean by concentration?" The answer to these queries have been many, and varied. What "you" mean, and what another "you" means are, unfortunately, quite a different story. And yet, it should not be so. There is but One Truth, and there is but one concentration. We are not, at the moment considering the methods by which we may acquire precision in concentration. We are concerned that the student shall know the true significance of the term as divorced from the "What you mean" or the "What I mean," or what any person means. We are concerned with what It Means. And further, that knowing what he aims to do by concentrating, the student may at length actually experience IT and then he will TRULY KNOW.

CONCENTRATION DEFINED.

The word itself gives us a clue as to its significance, since con means with, and centra means center. The idea to be conveyed, then, is, "The act of bringing the thought to a center." Such an act involves the con - sideration of the mechanism through which thought operates, and the conditions under which it may be made effective. We deal, then with the human mind. The question arises, "Can the human mind be centralized upon a single point, the central point, so as to absolutely regulate all action?" Upon the definiteness of this control depends the making of an exact blueprint for the future.

Upon this blueprint depends our success in life.

NEED FOR CONCENTRAION.

It is a fact that before we can gain the objectives of our desire we must know how to concentrate. Of the thousands of thousands of persons, each has his own particular desire, but too often fails in its realization because of the fact that he has been improperly trained. We must examine these im - proper teachings in order to understand why he has failed in proper, concrete thinking.

The opposite to the concentrated mind is the dissipated mind. One whose attention touches so lightly and so briefly upon a multitude of subjects, and indeed, upon elements of a given subject, that no one of them is thoroughly comprehended. Such a mind resembles the wreckage of a ship, with all its spars and masts, its ropes and canvas tangled and in disorder. The individual with such a mind is as unprepared to journey successfully through the experiences of life as is the wrecked ship to carry safely across the deeps of the ocean. To combat this disorderliness of mind through EFFECTIVE concentration is the essential first step in the ability to accomplish one's need and one's desires.

MORE REASONS FOR WHY SO MANY FAIL.

Customary religion, while it teaches the awakening of the good part (that is, to say, the heart) of man, and the value of applying spiritual insight in every action, neglects to stress the importance of intelligent and practical reasoning to one's problems. It is through this neglect that no beneficial results come from such teachings. Now, since the subconscious mind (which is to be explained later) is filled with the errors of this teaching, and because the average man has a tendency to follow the lines of least resistence, just as the driver of a speeding automobile finds that the easiest going is to drive straight ahead, he often falls prey to the notion that there is some "magic" which can bring him the fulfillment of his desires without effort on his part. He attempts this by "Beseeching God". Even though the form of prayer is immaterial it does not have the expected results with many people, because they are looking for things to drop into their laps through channels of some mysterious nature.

RESULTS OF IGNORANCE.

What we want to make clear to you as students seeking a true understanding of life is, that there are many truths which have been known to the few, and which have been deeply and darkly hidden from the many. These have been withheld for the purpose, perhaps, of bringing you, the rightful owner, to the position that you are obliged to follow the direction of a certain group, teacher or organization. They are known to those who intend to make a monopoly on human thought, human action and human lives. For so long have these important truths been kept hidden that ninety per cent of the peaople are unable to do their own independent thinking, and the responsibility for their actions falls on the shoulders of the other ten per cent. If you find their is a lack in your own life, you must not blame it, necessarily, on someone else, but you must accept the responsibility yourself, as you have not used due diligence and intelligence in examining your own personality, and have not unlocked the power and effectiveness which belongs to you, and which should be used in your every action. This lack of the necessary power and intelligence brings dissatisfaction, and ultimately a chaotic condition which places you as a mere tool in the hands of some-

one who exploits you. Now, while, as we have said, you yourself may be in the blame, that very fact proves your opportunity to win freedom. The moment you determine to take the right and proper course of action, there is no one who is able to stop your upward progress.

CONTRASTING EXPERIENCE.

Can you imagine that God has given faculties to one that he has not given to all? That he plays favorites? As a student of Truth, as a Christian, or as a believer of any faith, I trust that you have found that in God all may find equality, and that to every individual is given the same opportunity for expression, happiness and abundance.

Why then do we see among men so much apparent inequality of rank and of opportunity - one loaded with possessions, another starving - one with a healthy body; another ridden with disease - one with brilliant faculties; another dwarfed or crippled mentally? If you question wether there can be found a real justification for all these differences, if you should ask whether God is a Being who distributes and gives with the sly hand of favoritism, I would answer, "No." God is most just. Where then, are we to find the causes for these inequalities? How are we to do away with them?

THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEMS IS IN THE SELF.

Those who have received personal instruction from me know already that the cause of all our sufferings and failures is to be found in ourselves as we realize that we are, at present, in the exact place where we belong and will stay there until we know enough to get out, since it is clear that the mind governs all material substance, including our own bodies. We are the expression and manifestation of our minds, and if we go through a distorted experience, or act in a distorted way, it is because of some distorted concept which our mind is harboring. Those who do not accept this as a fact are either mentally lazy, or have been improperly taught; they are those who show weakness with regard to the true responsibilities of life. Of this last category there are many. Oh, how easy it is for many to WISH for and to IDEALIZE a G$_o$d who will shower them with every good thing, at a mere incomprehensible word, prayer or affirmation! It is the mental condition of such which permits a vast exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous and often ignorant men. Those who accept the position must pay the price for it.

MAN OPERATES THROUGH LAW.

Contrary to the popular superstition as stated above, we recognize that the human mind is the expressing factor, governed by what we call the spiritual or super-conscious mind. Man is not separated from God, nor is he foreign and apart from the laws of anture. He is one with all. Man is the microcosm; God the marcocosm. Man is God individualized. Through man runs the whole law of the Universe. Therefore within man are all the requirements necessary for power, and for the good of his own life. Doubtless you want a further explanation, so that you may understand more clearly, see more clearly, and through this understanding and this visions, be equipped to act more intelligently.

THE THREE PHASES OF THE HUMAN MIND.

The activity of the human mind may be divided into three general phases. The first of these (1) is called by religionists, the Super-Conscious Mind, which is the true spirituality of man. The second (2) is called by psychologists the Subconscious - or Habit Mind, and is referred to by us as the Person-

ality. The third (3) is the Conscious Mind which is the intellectuality; it is the seat of practical reason. These three phases of mental activity are domiciled in three separate centers enclosed within the skull. When these three centers are operating in proper, harmonious coordination, perfection and happiness are experienced in the individual life.

A word may now be said with reference to how these three phases act with relation to each other. The superconscious mind, which is the cause of all expression, is linked and identified with the conscious mind, In other words, SPIRIT ITSELF descends into matter through the medium of the intelligence. The subconscious mind is like a reservoir, into which is constantly being poured the experiences and accepted conclusions of the conscious mind. To some students the matter will be still further clarified by stating that the superconscious mind is of solar quality; the conscious mind of lunar quality, and the subconscious mind of earthly quality. The first illumines; the second reflects and decides, and the third is the embodiment of the individual. When the conscious mind thoroughly realizes each experience and conclusion that falls into the subconscious mind,then there is true personality expression; but if the conscious mind (because of a darkened condition) only reflects, unrealized, what is in some other's mind,then there is personally suffocation.

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IN NATURE.

All manifestation is constantly flowing from one condition into another. We are able to conceive of this flow in terms of the contrasting qualities of positive and negative, which brings about the polarity of all substances, and which is called the "Law of Duality." Through his contact with Spirit man has the urge to expansion; through his contact with nature he feels the sensation of substance. When these two experiences, the first POSITIVE (or productive), the second NEGATIVE (or receptive) come face to face, it is the human mind which makes the decision as to the outcome.

Let no one fancy that he can frustrate universal law by saying,"I will not deceide." Action is the universal imperative, impossible to avoid. Otherwise the question of concentration, proper thinking, and consequent correct acting would be of no importance to anyone.

DESIRE AND CHOICE.

May I ask you a question? When you are hungry, do you beseech God to satisfy your hunger, or do you go into the kitchen and prepare a meal? Obviously the reasoning person will do thelatter. This same reasoning applies to life in general. The solution of each problem must be in terms of that problem's nature and requirements. Spirit urges us toward an interest in the permanent and durable values of life, and thus our minds are stimulated into a consideration of the fundamental problems concerning our present life. We may say that any wholesome desire which comes to the mind is prompted by the direct action of spirit within us. It is the inner urge to do more and to be more. While it is cosmic, it is also individual. It is Mind in action, operating through its only channels, the self. But Spirit will never prompt us with an urge which limits our power of choice. We can take it or leave it at will. And Spirit never leaves us helpless, when it blessed us with right desire. Spirit empowers us (through the super - conscious mind) with that discernment whereby these problems may be solved; these choices may be realized.

DESIRE AND WILL - POWER.

As we begin to realize these truths, will-power begins to develop. This is the outcome of our growing awareness of Spirit's omnipotence. When we are fully convinced, this will-power becomes invincible out to the very limits of our own legitimate desires. From this moment, our mental energy permeates every physical center, so as to bring about physical action for whatever we have decided to do. From this point we move forward with full cognition of definite results, results that cannot be defeated by any obstacle which we may find in our way.

DESIRE AND INTELLIGENCE.

From the foregoing it is not difficult to understand the reason for our failures, or our successes in life. We understand that God is not to blame for our sufferings, nor is He to be blamed by us. All that is necessary for their removal is for the individual to apply himself in intelligent action. If you lack the God-power as applied to your every-day life, you must suffer. Hence the reason for this lack as above given should be sufficient to awaken you to action. First,permit an IMPELLING desire to possess your very being; become INTELLIGENTLY aggressive in thought and action. You cannot fail to have as a result a complete realization, because of the three-fold mental co-ordination of your being.

MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL DESIRE.

In giving you this lesson, I want to make sure that I do not leave the impression that we teach you the development of your intellect at the expense of your inner and spiritual self, I fully realize that it is of the utmost importance especially in these United States, to awaken in the heart of every American the conviction of spiritual ideals. It would be highly dangerous to overdevelop the conscious mind, with all its mechanical and inventive aggressiveness, and to leave underdeveloped the superconscious mind with its ideals of a spiritual and lofty character. Yet along with this awakening of spiritual insight, I intend to take care not to impose upon, neutralize the value of, or neglect the development of your conscious mind. To see the results of this neglect, we have but to turn to the pages of history. If we stop to analyze the present conditions in the nations of the world, we can easily detect among the various causes of the confusion which obtains in them, certain religious teachings which have over-emphasied the fact of spirituality (so called), thus bringing whole masses to the point of fanatical, idolatrous worship. These teachings have ignored the threefold nature of man; have put him out of step with the material world, the remarkable changes that are taking place in it, and unfitted him to cope with problems with which he should, and might have been, thoroughly familiar. This is a condition of religious domination without the possibility of individual realization, and such a condition is inevitably bound to end in explosive and open rebellion.

The development of all three of the phases in mind referred to, in equal proportions is the all-important matter. In this country the spiritual ideals of the superconscious mind are often overlooked. In fact, I say to you that the present school system of this country teaches our children only the crude and primitive side of life, those few parts necessary for physical attainment, and nothing for the truly spiritual aspects of life. So do not forget that it is necessary to unfold co-ordinately, neither overstressing nor understressing the importance of the three phases of mind.

From now on, pray to God, indeed, but do not expect that a desired answer will fall automatically from some unseen world. Expect, rather, that the inspiration which you have received from this prayer must be industriously applied in every-day life. You may say to this, " It is much easier said than done, " and ask if there is any particular METHOD in this development. The answer is, "There is a method, and it will be given to you."

MENTAL TRAINING.

We must now ask you to refer again to the first paragraph of this lesson, at which point we begin again. We repeat that concentration is an art, and an art can be acquired.

Before we can expect to use the mind in thoroughly concentrated thought, we must realize that it is necessary to exercise the faculties to a point where their functions are well trained. Only in this way can we attain the desired results. The same principle applies to the mind as applies to the physical body. A weight-lifter does not lift a 200-pound weight above his head without practice, and yet as he engages in this practice, beginning with the smaller weights, he gradually builds up his muscles to handle the 200 pounds. This building up process comes only as the result of exercise, and the presence of suitable building material. So it is with the mind. What exercise is necessary to bring about mental efficiency in concentration? What is the secret? The truth about this is the magic key which God has placed in your hands. Learn to use it properly and you will be singled out from the masses of men, as being especially blessed; you yourself will realize that you have a satifying power, and that you are, indeed, a different being than those whom you meet and associate with.

PREPARATION. THE SECRET REVEALED.

First we must learn the secret of mental relaxation - that is the complete cessation of active and conscious thought. You have had the experience, in common with every other person in the world, of your mind whirling around like a squirrel in a cage. (Perhaps with even less direction), so that you were unable to calm your thoughts. This quieting of the thought from the disturbing conditions about you, and from your own internal turmoil, is the essential preliminary to focussing the mind on A SINGLE THOUGHT or SUBJECT. But, you say, the mind is constantly filled with thought, and is never a complete blank except in the natural process of sleep. This is true. Still, the mind needs relaxation when not in a sleeping state. How can this be achieved - this thinking of nothing, yet not being asleep? The ancient Masters were well acquainted with the system whereby it is possible for the mind to enter into a realm which, from a waking standpoint we can only call the "neutralization of conscious activity." The secret is in the identifying of the mind with the breath. Preliminary to the practice of this art, however, you must learn correct posture. The following exercises deal successively with Posture, Breath, and Concentration upon a subject. It is to be borne in mind that they are definitely and necessarily involved in the complete act of Concentration; they form together the whole, being as it were the component parts of a highly important action.

EXERCISE 1.

Cover the seat of a medium height chair with a woolen blanket. Then sit upright on this chair. Cross your feet resting flat (also with a blanket or some other woolen material under them and the floor), hands resting on the thighs, palms up. Do not stiffen or tense yourself, on the contrary relax so far as is consistent with maintaining this posture, and try to remain in this position for not longer than ten minutes. Should you feel yourself growing tense within the ten minutes, discontinue the exercise and try again the next day, until, for fifteen days - ten minutes each day - you are able to sit in this position, remaining motionless, yet feeling perfectly comfortable and at ease.

EXERCISE 2.

Continue with Exercise (1), adding the practice described as follows: Let the mind become focussed upon and identified with your breathing. This does not mean that you should in any way attempt to force or control your breathing. Breathe naturally and normally, just as you have in Exercise (1), only place the attention of the mind upon the breath so completely that it absorbs the whole thought. As you gradually, day by day, become familiar with this practice it will grow more easy and satisfying, and during the exercise you will find yourself becoming unconscious of everything exept that of the breath. You should be able to practice this exercise for a ten-minute-interval (or longer) each day, continuing for fifteen days. However, it is important that you stop the exercise period the moment you feel any sensation of discomfort, stiffness, tiredness or dullness of the mind. The body must be poised, yet comfortable, and the mind alert and keen at all times. Remember you are forming a NEW HABIT, and that any deviation from the correct principles, necessary to profitable concentration, may easily become a fixed habit of which you might possibly be unaware, and which might tend to lessen the value of the exercise, and later the effectiveness of the periods of concentration.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF A SUBJECT.

Before giving you the third exercise, I would like to explain to you in a brief way some things about the SUBJECTS of concentration. A student may concentrate upon anything which the mind can conceive, yet the subject will contain one or more of these four elements, - Form, Fact, Quality, or Action. There is a relation between the three phases of mind and these four elements, in this respect: - that while the three phases of mind are inseparably linked and interblended, yet it can be said that Form is most typical of the subconscious mind; Fact is the most typical of the conscious mind; Quality is most typical of the superconscious mind and Action is typical of the three phases coordinated and working in unison. It is not my purpose to go into a long and detailed explanation of this subject. The foregoing will serve to show you certain fundamentals, and to state that while Form is the simplest of these elements, and the most primitive, Action is the element which is probably of greatest interest to you. So with this in mind we will proceed to the third exercise.

EXERCISE 3.

When it becomes easy for you to fall into the practice of Exercise (2), you are to continue according to the following instructions. First, de - ceide upon some subject about which you wish to concentrate. Let us assume that

you need a new car, and that so far you have failed in solving the problem of how to procure it. The"how to procure it" is the subject which emphasizes the element of Action. Now, follow the practice of Exercise (2), and when you are fully established in it, bring into the mind this single objective of procuring the car. Practice this at the intervals already stated until the particular objective fills the whole thought as completely as the thought of breath did in Exercise (2). At the close of the exercise, after you have returned to the consciousness of everyday affairs, dismiss this thought completely for a time. Later on it will recur to your mind, and, if you have performed the exercise correctly, you will find that the whole problem stands out with a clarity never before attained, and your mind will perceive the necessary ways and methods for achieving the objective. What actually takes place is this: - during the exercise your conscious mind becomes wholly identified with the subject of your concentration. When the thought is dismissed at the close of the exercise, it drops into the subconscious mind as a ripened seed falls into the earth. Then, as a sprouting seed reaches out with its tiny rootlets to grasp all those substances necessary for its growth and maturity,so does this thought in your subconscious mind reach out to draw to itself all those related conditions and facts which are necessary to bring about its fulfillment. And then, when the thought or subject is again considered by the conscious mind, it comes up clustered about with all those requirements needed for its realization. Frequently, at this stage, it is possible that the student might realize that he or she does not really need the car at all. In which case it is clear that the objective was not a practical one, but merely an idle wish.

CAUTION AS TO PERSISTENT PRACTICE.

The beginning student must realize that it is vitally important to follow the foregoing instructions implicitly and patiently if the desired results are to be obtained. Some may be so intent upon immediate results, which to them may seem to follow upon Exercise (3) that they may tend to rush through the first and second exercises, beginning the third unprepared, and lacking in the necessary mental poise and discipline, which can be provided only by rigid adherence to the first two exercises. In such a case the concentration will not be perfect, and this will mean that the result will be imperfect and unsatisfactory to the student. So I must beg of you to take patience and care, and see to it first of all that you have a thorough understanding of just what has to be done, and then do it in the way in which it has been outlined. Proceed step by step, and do not try to run until you can walk.

CAUTION AS TO BEING PRACTICAL.

The beginning student must also prepare himself to undertake these exercises with a practical mind. He must use good common sense. He should consider this subject with the same kind of attention as that of any other science. The modern Western sciences, such as electricity and chemistry, illustrate the method that I mean. While they may defeat themselves in the end by failing to realize that the one God is behind all, they at least show that one essential to progress and development is to secure facts, to make observations and to judge each advancement in knowledge by answering the question, "Do things actually work that way?" And so it is with all things. We must watch for the facts and the details which show us the way, and which will later prove that actual results have

been accomplished. So do not merely concentrate upon some large, vague or general thought. The most valuable asset of the conscious mind is its ability to focus upon practical facts and details, and these, in addition to the general nature of your desire, are absolutely necessary for the achievement of the results you desire.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

In reference to lesson "Breathing Polarization" 51 - 52: Perhaps there are some confusing points in your mind in regard to the positive and negative pole of our body. From a spiritual standpoint, the left is positive and right is negative. From a physical standpoint left is negative and right is positive. The reason for this is because the heart is directly linked with the Pineal gland, therefore the heart is an organ of the closest relationship to human spiritual entity; expressing as emotion, characterization, ideals and principles. (Location of the heart, left side.) Second: The right side is the opposite,where the spirit finds its contrasting point so that the condensation of an idea comes into manifestation (action), and action is negative from a spiritual standpoint but positive from a physical thinking standpoint.

Third: In whatever need we may find ourselves, whether it may be for health, success or anything that concern our immediate physical life, we must first breath through the left nostril in order to accumulate spiritual energy. Breathing through the right nostril we direct this mental energy already stored into the needed part of our physical body if it is for health, or throughout the body if it is for the accomplishment of a certain definite purpose.

Hoping that this will straighten out and clarify anything that might have been misunderstood. With blessings, yours,

HAMID BEY.