

Philosophic Encyclopedia

Concentration, Meditation, and Prayer

Concentration, meditation, and prayer are all efforts of the Spirit in man to rise above mere material consideration, to realize the timelessness of all Good, and to find that vital spark of God within, which is enfolded in every human being.

The ability to concentrate the mind is essential to spiritual progress. It enables one to gain mastery of the desire body and eventually to get in conscious contact with the invisible worlds.

To learn the art of concentration, we must bring our attention to a focus and our thoughts to a point upon a single object or condition. We must realize that thought-force is our principal power, and we must learn to have control of it. This is not easily accomplished, but even an attempt in that direction will have its value. It is imperative that we gain control of our thoughts, for without this control the power flows aimlessly, accomplishing nothing. When we have learned to concentrate on any one thing to the exclusion of all other things, we will be able to increase our thought power and ability to use it effectively. We attain quality by diminishing the often excessive quantity.

During concentration, man's senses are stilled as they would be in deepest sleep, but at the same time the Spirit remains within the

body in full control of all its faculties. The aspirant learns to become absorbed at will in any subject. In the book *Rosicrucian Mysteries*, we are told that it is easier to learn the art of concentration while we are still living in the Physical World. The dense body is an anchor and a shield against the disturbing influences of the volatile, fluidic conditions of the higher Worlds. Therefore, we must develop the faculty of concentration in the Physical World where matter serves as a balancing check. When we have realized the value of the art of concentration, we will be eager to practice it daily. Max Heindel advises us to take the time we spend on public transportation or in similar places, where the mind has a chance to wander, and use it in concentrating on an object or an ideal.

Noisy public transportation, perhaps filled with crowding passengers, would not seem to be the best place to practice concentration, but we are advised that one learns better under such adverse conditions; then, having succeeded under difficulties, one will always find it easier to gather one's thoughts into single-pointedness when the chance for quiet concentration presents itself. As a rule, our minds do not hold any one thought long enough to penetrate its nature and complete meaning. To gain control of one's thoughts is a great achievement; anyone who has mastered this difficult accomplishment has the key to success in any field at his command.

We all, at times, have the urgent need to send helpful thoughts to others, but no matter how great our wish to comply may be, only the concentrated thoughts have the strength to arrive at their destination. They have to be massed in one direction to attain their object, just as the Sun's rays, concentrated in a magnifying glass, ignite and create a fire. The aspirant to the higher life must learn to control and direct his thoughts, and by persistent effort he

will attain the goal — which is perfect concentration of thought at will — at any time desired.

In [The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception](#) it is stated that, "The aspirant to the higher life accomplishes the union of the higher and the lower nature by means of meditation." The sincere aspirant chooses lofty subjects in his meditation which reveal the nature of the higher Worlds to him, showing him the reality of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. His aim is ever to do the bidding of his own Higher Self.

Intense concentration builds a living thought form, a clear and true image. In meditation we learn much about this thought form; the exercise enables us to enter into its relationship to the world. In concentration we put all of our attention on one subject or idea; in meditation we gather all knowledge possible upon this one subject. The mind ponders and gropes, always bringing added bits of information and thereby gaining a new significance and a new understanding. This process, when adhered to for some time, will enrich our own world of thought in such a way that we will be able to reach out into new fields of knowledge and gain new understanding there also. All spiritual truths become clearer when we have fully understood one, and the words of our mouths become wiser as time goes on.

When we meditate on such inspiring concepts as "wisdom" and "understanding" and ponder the meaning and reality of these words, we contact forces that have their home in higher and purer spheres than our daily surroundings. We know that we cannot neglect our duties, and often we must live in the din of a busy world for the sake of needed experience. But no matter what the circumstance, we can and should take time for daily silent meditations. Meditation in silence is a real help in gaining soul

growth. By this practice we are enabled to build within our own inner selves a sanctuary. We can construct this Living Temple not made with hands and enter it whenever we need to restore the harmony we crave.

Much has been written about prayer, for it is universal. All races address a Great Spirit, a Supreme Being, with fear and trembling or with adoration and confidence. The divine origin of everyone makes itself felt, and the divine Spark in man yearns to recognize the high Source of all being.

Man approaches God in confession, supplication, and adoration, but also often feels the need to ask Him for his material sustenance. We sometimes wonder what our prayer should be. The answer is that "we must get away from the idea that every time we approach our Father in Heaven we must ask for something." The earnest aspirant will not ask for material things; he may ask for spiritual illumination, but when that high goal is reached the illumination should be used to benefit others.

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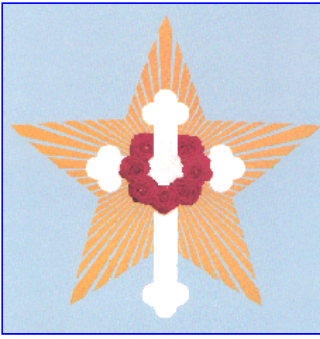
Actually, invocations for temporal things are black magic. We have been given the promise: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Christ Jesus indicated the limit in The Lord's Prayer when He taught His disciples to say: "Give us this day our daily bread."

When we approach the Throne with praise and adoration, we are in the receptive state which brings us nearer to our ideal, where we may experience an outpouring of the Spirit, radiant and glorious. Then we will have learned by first-hand experience that prayer is a powerful method used in perfecting our ability to recognize Divine Light.

When we unite our prayers with those of others who are of like mind, much can be accomplished. Collective prayer in places of worship is helpful when done in an atmosphere of reverence and quietude. But unless we can have this harmony and peaceful cooperation in sacred places, it is better we do as Christ bade us do, "Enter into your closet and pray in secret. "God knows our hidden thoughts and the sincerity of our motives. It is good to pray in the same surroundings, if that is possible. We can dedicate a place in our home, no matter how small, for daily worship. Here we can build the Invisible Temple, adding to the spiritual atmosphere from day to day, and in time this place will be to us a holy place.

If we realize that "all spiritual development begins with the vital body," we will understand why we are told in the Bible to pray without ceasing. The keyword of the vital body is "repetition." The pure and lofty thoughts our mind dwells upon cleanse and purify this vehicle. By earnest, repeated prayer we can acquire the habit of daily communion with God, and we will be lifted up on wings of power and aspiration. It is essential that we put intense earnestness into our devotional exercises. Otherwise our monotonous repetition becomes mere habit, and we are in danger of saying mere empty words. When we dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to the Highest we know, then prayer is the most powerful method of soul growth known to us.

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