

Lesson XXI

CONCENTRATION AND PRAYER

Concentration is a centralizing of one's 1
forces to a given interest. To concentrate the
forces of mind to spiritual ideas is a mode
of prayer. Prayer is communion with God; 4
this is promoted by keeping the mind stayed
on spiritual ideas and principles.

Prayer passes through phases of progres-
sion; from supplication to declaration of 8
Truth, from realization to reality of being.
Concentration is the centering of the atten-
tion of consciousness to Principles of Truth,
to the exclusion of all other thought or feeling 12
forces. It is the capacity to make every
thought and feeling align to a given idea or
Principle of Truth. For example: One may
concentrate the attention to the spiritual 16
idea, "I am receptive to the unfolding Christ
Principle," but immediately forces of an
adverse nature arise. One then proceeds to
handle these forces, reversing them with the 20
Truth, until one can remain centered in the
central idea without being disturbed. When
one can do this concentration is effective, and
prayer may be entered into. 24

Concentration is preparatory to prayer. It

1 involves mastering the forces adverse to the
ideas and principles concentrated upon. When
one is centered in the primal Idea or Prin-
4 ciple, one can rest in silent communion with
God, which is true prayer. Prayer in its
spiritual sense is not a matter of words or
declarations of Truth, but one of spirit com-
8 munion. This is to say, it is a certain spiritual
attitude that invites the action of God. Words
and thoughts, things and feeling, associated
with prayer, are only incidental to preparing
12 the consciousness to pray. When one prays
he does so in Spirit and in Truth. This is the
true worship and devotion.

Concentration, the centering of one's atten-
16 tion to specific spiritual ideas and principles,
is essential to true prayer. To give all the
forces of consciousness in a central way is to
receive all from the Center of Being. The
20 capacity to perfectly concentrate is dependent
upon thought-control. When thought-control
is not present, concentration is not possible.
The opportunity to master the adverse forces
24 is incidental to concentration. Hence, con-
centration is a matter of discipline, until one
can center to a given Idea or Principle, free
from all interference from the forces of the
28 mortal mind.

Concentration is not entirely a matter of 1
mind. One can practice concentrating to the
work at hand, to the conversation expressing,
and thus develop the capacity to concentrate 4
spiritually in prayer. "This one thing I do,"
is a good word to center in when performing
one's daily duties, thus bringing to bear
upon it all the forces of the consciousness. 8
This form of concentration conserves the
energies, coördinates the faculties of con-
sciousness, and makes for substantiality and
efficiency. To devote attention to a given task, 12
duty or idea, to the exclusion of all other
influences, makes for harmonious growth and
unfoldment. It enriches the consciousness
and invites the needed good. A great deal of 16
the inharmonies that beset mortals are the
result of wasteful thought and feeling;
uncontrolled thoughts and emotions. These
are objectified as all kinds of lacks and priva- 20
tions. Man invites in the without that which
is equivalent to his inner unfoldment.

After one has mastered the letter of con-
centration one comes into the spirit of it. This 24
is the capacity to easily center one's attention
to anything, or to refrain from so centering.
To refrain from giving attention to that which
does not promote a harmonious influence is 28

- 1 protective and constructive. Yet, when one
has advanced to the capacity to understand
the evil forces, they are genuinely wiped out
4 and their influences are destroyed. The spirit
of concentration, when coupled with spiritual
ideas and principles, leads to the capacity to
pray, free from all material forces.
- 8 The spirit of prayer is the capacity to be
silent before God within, and to partake of
the influence of the inner Principles of Being.
Prayer is of the spirit and is effective whether
12 one sits or kneels, walks in peace or in
anguish. Kneeling in prayer indicates humility
and receptivity and is a form of discipline.
It is good for man but not necessary to God.
16 Neither is prayer essential to God, but to man.
Man prays that he may become in conscious-
ness an outlet to the powers of God. An ego,
aligned to the Principles of Being, is beloved
20 of God, for it is a joyous attainment to both
God and Man to come together in unity and
Truth.
- There is a spirit in Man that is the reality
24 of kneeling in prayer. When this spirit has
been gained by kneeling, it can be attained
without this evidence of devotion. Physically,
kneeling in prayer invites an influx of ener-
28 gies, when one attains the spirit of prayer,

that is not possible in any other attitude of 1
prayer. Yet, prayer is something more than
the kneeling or the words expressed. It is
the spirit of devotion by which man lifts his 4
love to the Love of God, and so receives of the
inner Spirit in Truth. The forces received
become qualities of consciousness and mani-
fest in forms of expression in the life of man. 8

One does not need to voice anything in
prayer. Yet, until one has stilled the forces of
self-thought and feeling, it is well to lay hold
of words, conveying spiritual ideas and prin- 12
ciples, by which to pray. Words relate to
the energies underlying them. To hold in
Mind the idea of God or Christ is to be opened,
when the spirit is akin to the spirit back of 16
the words, to the energies the words indicate.
These energies are from the inner thrones of
being, and when one is silent before God, they
may be felt pouring into the consciousness. 20
But whether they are felt or not, receptivity to
them, developed in prayer, invites them into
action, and their effect is felt in the life of
one so praying. 24

One prays to develop his capacities of
receptivity, opening to the inspiration of the
Almighty, from whence cometh understand-
ing and love. It is a means of contact by 28

1 which one comes to be taught of God. Prayer
is not for the things that one can get but for
the Spirit's sake; a means by which the spirit
4 of man is subjected to the Spirit of God, and
the forces of consciousness are changed. Sup-
plicating God in prayer, as though one were a
beggar, implies lack of understanding of the
8 real nature of Man and his relation to the God
of his Being. Realization that all is already
present in Principles of Being, and giving
thanks for needed good in this spirit, is the
12 true form of prayer.

When one advises God as to what one
needs, or tells Him about what he should do
for oneself or a friend, or how to adjust cer-
16 tain situations, as is common with those who
ignorantly pray, it is an abomination before
the Laws of Being. These Laws demand com-
pliance with their principles and spirit before
20 they can become effective in the life of men.
Supplicating or begging God to do this or that,
as though man knew the business of the Crea-
tion better than God, is an absurdity, bred in
24 ignorance of the Law of Prayer and the true
concept of the nature of God and His relation
to man. Righteous prayer does not consist of
begging or affirming.

28 God is not a person that is hard of hearing,

that needs to be addressed in loud and 1
pompous tones. The author recalls how very 2
ungodly the prayers she heard in a Presby- 3
terian church sounded after she had come 4
into the science and spirit of answered prayer.
It seemed the most wicked thing she had ever
contacted—and performed by a Presbyterian 8
minister! Jesus' "Ye blind guides, that strain
out the gnat, and swallow the camel!" can
well be applied to these religious leaders who
will not be instructed into the ways of true 12
prayer, by those in whom the Principles of
Being have unfolded; establishing a Light
unto those who sit in darkness.

One does not get the answer to prayer
through concentrating upon it. The methods 16
of concentration, developed among many of
the newer religious societies, by which they
hypnotically wrest some good to themselves,
are as wicked as the prayers of supplication, 20
offered by those of the old religious school to
a God in the skies. Anything not conforming
to the Principles of Being is wicked, when
developed for selfish purposes. 24

Concentration is for purposes of discipline
by which the faculties of consciousness may
be coördinated, and mastery taken over the
adverse thoughts and feelings. To concen- 28

1 trate upon money, with the idea of getting it,
or upon people with the idea of their doing
something one wishes, is black art and a
4 violation of the Laws of Wisdom and Love.
Everything that comes into the world has a
right and a wrong aspect. It is not until one
is opened in Truth that both the right and the
8 wrong of anything is mastered, and all things
are understood. One woman concentrated
upon money; her aunt died and left her some
money. Later, when she came to know more
12 about the ways of Truth, it was a grief to her
that she may have let her thought wander to
her aunt in her concentration, and so helped
to effect her death. All selfishness is destruc-
16 tive, and people still in its entanglements are
never permitted to partake of genuine Prin-
ciples of Life, or of the Truth. It is only as
one dies to self-thought and desire that one
20 is accounted worthy to be opened to the
Principles of Being, and to make genuine con-
nection with Christ within.

MEDITATION

1

This one thing I do. I am unmoved by outer influences.

I am the concentrated qualities of Being, 4
conscious of Omnipresence.

I pray in faith and in understanding, receiving the good needed.

