

# Meditation Group For the New Age

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## **Part I**

### **Meditation Group For The New Age**

#### **The New Age**

We stand at the gateway of a new era and a new world outlook, and the question that thinking people are asking today is where are we going in the future lying immediately ahead, and what can we do to ensure it will be a time of better, more constructive living?

Our gradual progress throughout the ages has brought us to a stage of civilization where the complexity of our lives and the impacts on our sensitivity have reached an almost maximum point. The happenings in the farthest corners of the world repercuss on us today and concern us personally, either physically and economically or emotionally and mentally. And while we can see historically how humanity has always progressed through crises, never before has the entire world population been involved together. So we stand at a unique point in the long series of tortures and triumphs of the human spirit, all of which tell the story of human beings up to now and emphasize that growth must proceed. There is no standing still for humanity, and we are stepping into a new age as old forms disappear and new ones take their place, as has happened many times before.

The next step therefore is our very real concern and our responsibility. Two forces—materialism and spirituality—face each other, and the present and the next decades will be decisive, for fantastic power is in our hands today and circumstances have been created which make a new unfoldment of spirit essential - a new rule of the soul.

Realization of responsibility is one of the characteristics of the present time and people are wondering what they can contribute to the common good. No matter what our convictions are, we see that the approaching age depends on us, and in the search for ways and means to take up this challenge we find that our *inner possibilities* are the clue. We find that we have power through our minds to work with subtler influences and to use energies of far-reaching strength, and this discovery reveals that our creative and constructive potential is much greater than we realize. It also

means that as we learn to use our minds, instead of being used by them, we begin in a real and definite way to create the world we hope for and need, and to take our places - no matter who we are - among the builders and the workers who are bringing in the New Age.

### **Spiritual Laws**

This New Age and this new world order must be founded upon spiritual laws and principles. For too long we have wrestled through the ages with each other and ourselves because we have been out of line with divine laws, and have not ordered our lives in accordance with their principles, although time and time again we have been directed to them by the great Law-Givers of God. We must begin to live in harmony with spiritual law; the recognition and acceptance of this is essential to bring right balance into the human situation. Spiritual laws and principles have directive power which cuts through human complexity and confusion. Like pathways through the jungles of life they help us to find clearer trails and come eventually to the uplands of greater freedom, simplicity, and truth. They signpost the way at all stages. The Laws of Nature, which protect and direct on the physical plane are, we know, inviolable except at our cost, and in every type of laboratory in the world more and more of the perfect economy with which they work is being discovered and the beauty of the pattern they reveal is seen.

Evolution has unfolded through the agency of law and each age and race has had the needed laws given to its people. To mention the best known: the Commandments which Moses brought down from the mountain, the Noble Eight-fold Path of the Buddha, the Law Christ gave for the Christian era—the Law of Love. And as we look around for guidance today in the bringing in of a new world order based on spiritual values, we find that, while these may be formulated in various ways, they may be summed up in three Laws and three Principles which are universal, and which can be adopted as a platform whatever our convictions or beliefs.

They are—

- The Law of Right Human Relations

- The Principle of Goodwill
- The Law of Group Endeavor
- The Principle of Unanimity
- The Law of Spiritual Approach
- The Principle of Essential Divinity

The *Law of Right Human Relations*, the great linking factor between person and person, is receiving considerable emphasis today from those concerned with human welfare and world peace, and so also is the *Principle of Goodwill*, basic intention to good. The importance of these two fundamentals is already widely realized and their cultivation is being recognized as vital for the solution of our problems, whether in family life or in the political, economic or social fields. Relationship is a science still in its infancy, but its study and promotion through psychology, through the social sciences and the many other branches of world work with which it is connected are bringing the power of right relationship and goodwill into new perspective.

The *Law of Group Endeavor*, or of cooperation for the common good, and the *Principle of Unanimity*, the cohering force, are also bringing about some of the major trends of the New Age. We can see effort everywhere to work together in groups and in unison, although the influence of this Law and this Principle is often distorted and results in outer regimentation and enforced uniformity, resistance to infringement of the spiritual Law of Freedom is also increasing. The value of both the individual and of integration with the group is being recognized, and the blending of the two, without overemphasis on either, is being seen as the desired goal. Groups are increasingly being held together by inner united purpose and aspiration rather than by outer, enforced rules, and they may be found functioning in this way in many fields today, with the strength of a freely accepted unanimity.

The *Law of Spiritual Approach*, which links us with our greater "Being," and the *Principle of Essential Divinity*, the spark of God in every man, open up to us our participation in a life greater than our own. They show that there is no real gap between man and God and bring our realization that we can discover this not only

through religious experience, but through recognition of our place within the “Whole.” Daily, through every branch of science, discovery is being made of our relationship to one great Life, and of our interdependence as parts of the whole within that encompassing Reality. Among all the wonders being opened up to us none is more revelatory and inspiring than the identical nature of microcosm and macrocosm, atom and star.

These Laws and Principles form a fundamental code for our life in the New Age. They ring out the note of our higher possibilities, and if we will work with them they can establish those conditions upon earth, which will truly build a new and better world.

### **Creative Thinking**

How can we “work” with these Laws and Principles? There are two ways—outer action and inner action.

*Outer action* is easily understood. It means bringing these Laws and Principles into all our daily attitudes and activities and relating them to every occasion; it means general cooperation with their influence and bringing to the world the awareness that they are essential foundations of our daily living and are the guarantee of peace.

*Inner action* is more difficult and consequently needs more explanation and study, but its importance will be realized when we remember that the “inner action” of thought is something that we use all the time, even though we may not notice it, and that thought lies at the back of everything we do: building our attitudes, our relationships and our whole way of life. In the world of the mind are born the practical beginnings of everything that eventuates on earth. From the architect’s thinking before he makes his blue-prints, the industrialist surveying his markets and the things he will produce, to the scientist seeking a new formula, from the world statesman to the teacher in the little school, the warp and woof of everyday life is being woven out of *thinking*.

In this way the world of tomorrow is hourly being born; thinkers are all the time building the pattern of things to come. But each one of us can also use creative thinking and can build with it the inner structure of the world that is to be—the new world outlook

based on spiritual values and on universal law. For it is not only the thought of the inventors, the scientists and the nations' leaders that is bringing into being the circumstances and the conditions that we shall have tomorrow. Each of us can play a constructive part in this if we so choose.

The mind is a great creative instrument as well as a vital "activator." Its vision links us with our higher possibilities and through it we are able to probe the outer rim of our existing knowledge and catch sight of the world of meaning and values. This enables us to gather in the higher ideas of the true, the good, the needed, bringing them down to everyday recognition and making them part of the fabric of life.

Creative thinking is a definite stage of objectifying ideas and higher concepts; and because thought is an energy we can use its power to develop the qualities, the attitudes, and the conditions that we think should prevail. If we use thought consciously and creatively, we can bring about changes in ourselves and our lives, and also can contribute to changes on a wider scale in our environment and in the world.

But thought often plays through us unconsciously and haphazardly, and frequently it rides us instead of our controlling it, bringing worry and depression and sweeping us along with its own force. If we use it selfishly it can even be destructive. Therefore, at the same time as we realize the power of thought we must see the vital need for *right* thought, for right motive behind thought, and for right understanding of its subtle processes. The mind will increasingly dominate in the era ahead. Already psychology is highlighting its nature and its uses, and as this knowledge becomes more general it will become more and more necessary to learn how to think creatively and build with true vision the world that we need.

Throughout the ages prayer has been a lifeline between the inner and the outer worlds, and it has formed a magnetic channel for the sustaining force that people have needed. But while prayer will always be a foundational approach, the present day development of intellect demands for many a more mental form of "inner action"—meditation of a creative nature, which is a positive and scientific method of working with law.

Meditation is not an abstract activity, as it is frequently considered to be in our extroverted western civilization with its emphasis on the tangible and the external and on seen results. It entails concentration, reflection, understanding, a clear conception and formulation of ideas or thoughts, and then consideration and visualization of the ways and means of bringing them to outer expression. Meditation is a definite type of *action* and of service. The usual contraposition of meditation on the one hand and of action on the other is misleading. They constitute two successive phases of conscious, purposeful action, and meditation is the “building without hands.”

The value of group meditation should also be realized. Whereas the isolated individual often feels ineffective, and consequently becomes despondent, many people meditating on one theme multiply the power of each individual by an extra factor—that of the common purpose and concerted endeavor. An interplay of mental energy is set up, and strength is gathered in to the united effort by the diverse contributions each one makes—a strength which is also felt by each one in the group.

### **Outline of the Group Work**

*The Meditation Group for the New Age* has been founded upon these basic assumptions. Its specific purpose is to increase knowledge and appreciation of the three Laws and three Principles mentioned, through study of them, meditation on them and practical cooperation with them. It should be reiterated that effective work is always a combination of *inner and outer* action. While outer action necessarily—even if not consciously—begins within, so must inner action not be limited to aspiration and invocation, but must work out in practical demonstration for its purpose to be fulfilled.

The work of the group therefore, while basically meditation, is specifically directed to anchoring these Laws and Principles in the world. They have been called the Laws and Principles of the Kingdom of God, and their building into the fabric of our lives can create those conditions which will bring a true rule of the soul on earth.

This is a common purpose which links those of many different ways of thought, and the worldwide group is simply an affiliation of those who are concerned for humanity and eager to help in the great forward going, and who, with this in mind, will work through thought, meditation, and prayer with these precepts. *This spiritual project is not suggested as an alternative to any form of service already being followed, but is offered as an additional way of working which can be utilized by each within his own field.*

To bring the strength of simultaneous meditation to the Laws and Principles, focus is given by the worldwide Group to each one in turn—for two months every year—as follows.

The Law of Right Human Relations...	January and February
The Principle of Goodwill...	March and April
The Law of Group Endeavor...	May and June
The Principle of Unanimity...	July and August
The Law of Spiritual Approach...	September and October
The Principle of Essential Divinity...	November and December

This year's course will consist of booklets on each of the Laws and Principles and on the technique of meditation in its various phases of concentration, reflective and receptive meditation, visualization, prayer and other aspects. There will also be an Outline of Meditation for daily or twice-weekly use.

If you would like to join in this form of inner service we will be glad to send you these booklets and to have you working with us. There are no fees; the work is supported voluntarily by each member, and there are no obligations except to give these Laws and Principles such creative thought and cooperation as we can. The Meditation Group for the New Age is a free association of those who believe in, and are willing to serve through, the power of the mind, of the heart, and of the will. There is no charge for these

**booklets, but your support by a tax-deductible contribution to help with printing and mailing is greatly appreciated.**

## **Part II Meditation**

- Inner Action
- The Process of Meditation
- Preparation Leading to Alignment
- Concentration
- Concentration and Right Relationship

### **Inner Action**

Everyone is building in thought all the time, whether they know it or not, and before we begin to study meditation we should realize that our desires and thoughts are continually filling the inner world with “thoughtforms.” A thoughtform is a creation of the mind, charged generally with desire. It has a tangible form in the comparatively subtle areas of the thought world, and its strength, quality, and duration depend on how we create it and maintain it.

One of the reasons for the present world turmoil is the myriad of negative, conflicting, and destructive thoughtforms with which humanity is filling the ethers. The increase of mental activity as the average person begins to use the mind more is, of course, a progressive step, but temporarily it is producing a worse situation than before. Therefore it is a first responsibility to learn to control the mind and, instead of adding to the confused or destructive thoughtforms in the ethers, to think constructively.

The realm of the mind is a comparatively uncharted area, but we are all stepping into that dimension quite rapidly today, and the adventurous minds pioneering there are discovering the possibilities lying in that field. All of this indicates the broad background of meditation and suggests that, as well as being a technique of training the mind, meditation is the art of taking up our heritage in the inner worlds.

Most people have only a vague idea of what meditation really is, and we need to clarify how it is accomplished, how it functions, what it achieves, and the service it can give. Such an understanding is basic to our use of it in connection with the Laws

and Principles of the New Age, and also will contribute to the general concept of meditation.

Thought is an energy, an unseen but real power, and through meditation we can focus it to build, to feed, to maintain an idea, a quality or a rule or law of life. To put it simply, meditation is inner action—action in the inner worlds. There are many kinds of *inner action*; all thinking, hoping, imagining, all aspiration and desire, are activities of this type, but they are generally carried on without conscious intention and without a sense of responsibility. Meditation, on the other hand, is conscious, deliberate use of thought to fulfill a specific purpose.

Every outer human action is the result of some inner activity. All too often it is our desires and uncontrolled thoughts which drive us, and this can bring about all sorts of difficulties and even have harmful consequences, both for the individual and for humanity in general. This is why it is essential to become the masters of our own inner realm, creating in this subjective world only what we consider to be right and constructive, and contributing to the common good on these inner planes as much as we would in the outer world.

First we learn to do this in our own area of the inner world, that area for which we are responsible, and then begin to contribute to the general realm of inner living which we share with all humanity. In this connection the dangers of individual and mass suggestion must be pointed out, we must realize that just as we are creating thoughtforms all the time, whether we know it or not, we are also “open” to influence in varying degrees. This is another reason why it is not good to be negative and vague on the inner levels, and why we should develop a positive inner life.

We have only to think of the clever techniques employed in advertising—the “hidden persuaders”—to realize how big a part psychological influencing is playing in life today. Those working in the business field and with material interests are much more familiar with its principles and skilled in its uses than are those in the more spiritual fields, and this is a situation which should be changed. All who are really concerned for humanity and spiritually oriented should be at least as purposeful and skilled as the

successful executive in handling and utilizing thought, imagination, motivation, and emotion.

This presents everyone with a challenge and a field of usefulness which is within reach, no matter what our outer situation. Constructive thinking is something we can all do, and do in all kinds of spare moments, wherever we may be. Of course real meditation needs privacy and quiet at first, but using odd minutes for constructive thinking is good practice in learning to control the mind. Before long we find that we can do this at what might seem quite unfavorable times, such as in trains, when waiting, or even while carrying out simple things like household tasks.

Quite often we do two or three things at the same time without realizing it, but then usually we just dream or let our thoughts drift uselessly, regretting the past, fearing for the future, or not really thinking anything at all. Instead we should keep our minds functioning constructively, and with some practice this is not so difficult.

At this point the time factor should be mentioned. This is a problem that everyone comes up against. Nearly all feel that they have so much to do, their lives are so complicated, there is so little privacy today and the demands of work and family leave so little spare time or energy, that, although they realize the value of a time of meditation each day, they feel that they cannot undertake it. These difficulties are real. The whole organization and machinery of modern living take no account at all of the rights of the inner life, and so the whole trend at present is against it. But in spite of these formidable problems, if we feel the value of the inner life strongly enough and really intend to give it some time, we can usually find a way of making room in the day for at least a short meditation. Ten or fifteen minutes is not a long period to fit into a twenty-four hour program.

It is plain, however, that it is almost impossible to have ideal conditions for this in modern life, and any quiet time that we find in the day is an oasis to be used. A good rhythm to establish is that of meditation in the same place first thing every morning, before entering into the melee of the day. Regularity is most valuable, but we should not be dependent upon such rhythm and, even if it takes longer to attune ourselves to the inner work and is more

difficult, it is better to learn to do this quite independently of our surroundings. Each of us have our own problems on this and each has to solve them as best we can.

There is a further value in the inner action of meditation which is not generally realized. Meditation is *redemptive* both in quality and in effect. In our own psychic area and also, if done with others, in ever widening circles, it redeems the cloudy psychic atmosphere in which we live. It clears and transforms it, and is a definite method of cooperating with the redeeming forces. Most of us have too abstract a concept of redemption and are inclined to think that this is something which only the great Beings can bring about, but in fact it can be, and should be a continuous undertaking in which each one of us participates.

The reality of the thought life, its effectiveness and its potential creativeness cannot be stressed too much, and all these realizations of the value of thought reveal that we each have a part to play. They show that we have a power of which we have not been aware, and consequently have not used correctly. If we so choose, we can help in a very real way to establish the Laws and Principles of the New Age.

The art of meditation is still undeveloped in our Western civilization, and therefore, a series of articles dealing with its various aspects should be helpful to the work on the Laws and Principles which is the central purpose of this Group. During the year six sets will be sent to members on the following aspects of meditation—

Meditation	What it is and the right preparation for it
Concentration	The first stage of meditation
Meditation	Its more definite sense
Reflective Meditation	The mental stage of meditation
Receptive Meditation	Inner silence, contemplation and the awakening of the intuition

Prayer	The function of feeling, definite inner energy
Imagination	Perhaps the most effective force in inner action and which is used chiefly through <b>VISUALIZATION</b>
Affirmation	The use of the will
Invocation and Evocation	The synthesized action of our whole being to “call down” something higher (invocation) and the response from above to this demand (evocation).
Creation of a Complete Thoughtform	Built by a balanced fusion of thought, feeling, imagination and will
Utilization of Thoughtforms	For the benefit of humanity on two levels: on the inner level as telepathic radiation and in the outer world as manifestation or the outer effects of the inner work

### **The Process Of Meditation**

The phrase “conquest of the inner space” describes well what we endeavor to achieve through meditation—exploration of the inner worlds and the use of our minds to conquer new dimensions.

The first thing to be realized is that there *are* inner worlds, and that we are living in them all the time through the emotional and mental aspects of our nature. The psychological life has a tangible existence in these worlds of energies and qualities, and it should not be thought of as entirely subjective, abstract, and formless, as it has generally—and erroneously—been regarded.

The inner worlds, where this part of us has its life, are those of cause and meaning and are, in fact, more real than the so-called visible world for they are more effective. In their domain originates all that later precipitates in the outer visible world, and everything that happens around us is the outer expression of the activity or interplay of energies in these inner realms. The material world, as modern physics has shown, is very different in nature from what it appears to be to our senses, and realization of the

inner worlds lying behind the outer tangible aspects gives us a picture of the whole pattern of life that brings new understanding.

We can get a good idea of the different kinds of action and their definite stages, which we propose to master in meditation—our exploration of the inner worlds—from the analogy of a rocket being sent into space, pursuing its course and returning to earth. A corresponding cycle takes place in the meditation process.

The first stage is that of *projection*. The propelling energy of the rocket conquering the downward pull of gravity projects it upwards; in the same way we can project our center of consciousness upwards to the inner worlds. Through the sphere of feeling and imagination we penetrate to the world of thought and even further—to spiritual levels. Our propelling energy is that of aspiration, which has aptly been called “fiery aspiration,” and we direct it—as in fact we must direct the whole meditation process—by the great unrealized potency of the will.

The second stage for the rocket is its entry into the gravitational field of another center of attraction. This corresponds to coming into contact in meditation with some higher center of energy or life, some realm of thought, or some specific region in the inner worlds.

The following stage is the delicate one of balancing the downward pull from the earth and the upward pull from the other center. If this is rightly achieved, the self-propelling energy still existing in the rocket will enable it to circle around the new center, keeping in orbit. The same is true of the individual consciousness in penetrating to higher, inner levels. It has to attain the region towards which it is directed, but must maintain its freedom and not become a prisoner of it. It must remain in that area only as long as is required for its purpose, that is, the experiencing and registering of whatever can be gathered from the center with which rapport is being made, or from the region of thought attained. Then we should bring the meditation to a close harmoniously and intentionally.

The receiving of information from the instruments in the rocket corresponds to our registering and rightly interpreting the ideas that we find in the higher realms; and, finally, all of this has to be

utilized and integrated into our existing knowledge and experience, as is the information obtained from the rocket.

There is still a further point in this analogy: control of the rockets from their starting point, the earth, is aimed at throughout their whole course. So it is with meditation, conscious control should never be lost. It is quite possible to fall into a state of trance or unconsciousness, but projection to this extent is wrong and dangerous. Meditation must always be a *conscious* process, we must remain fully aware the whole time, and from this point of awareness—here, where we are—direct the whole process, watching it, controlling it, and regulating its extension and duration.

### **Preparation Leading to Alignment**

Much of the success of meditation depends upon right and careful preparation. To begin with, as quiet a place as possible should be chosen—at least until we are used to meditating—where we can feel that our privacy will not be disturbed. We should sit in a comfortable position. While the Eastern way of sitting cross-legged has the advantage of keeping the spine erect, it is a difficult posture for those who are not accustomed to it, and is not necessary. An effective introduction to meditation is to read or study something connected with the theme we will be meditating on, and if there is time we should do this as it greatly facilitates the tuning in of the mind.

Next, we should try to eliminate all physical, emotional, and mental tension, because such tension is a quite useless expenditure of both nervous and muscular energy. Relaxation is an art that has to be worked at, and it is not as simple as it may appear. In trying to achieve it, we are apt to fall into the opposite extreme—a state of passivity which ends in drowsiness. The aim is to eliminate all superfluous tension, while retaining that nervous and muscular tone necessary for alertness and for full attention to what we are doing.

The various techniques of relaxation cannot be described here, but there are many books which go fully into the different aspects of this subject. One of the most effective ways of achieving relaxation

is through slow, rhythmic breathing. But breathing exercises should be done with caution, for they can be harmful if carried out too strenuously. An adequate exercise consists of a deep breath with short pauses held at the end of each in-breathing and each outbreathing. This should be done ten times, rhythmically and slowly. There should be no sense of strain, either in breathing or during the pauses, steady rhythm rather than length of time being the aim. The respiratory muscles should be relaxed with the outbreathing; this “letting go” of tension can then be diffused to all the other muscles of the body and a general relaxation achieved.

Physical relaxation is a first and necessary step to the more important one of psychological relaxation. The latter comprises emotional and mental relaxation, which have to be achieved in two distinct phases corresponding to the two different levels of the inner worlds on which we will be working—the emotional and mental. Each has to be handled separately and in its own way.

If, after relaxing physically, we begin to observe ourselves psychologically, we generally find that various feelings come and go. These emotions have to subside. It is not good to repress them forcibly, but the very fact of calmly observing them from what might be called “above,” without being identified with them, causes them gradually to lose their hold and their intensity, so that they cease to sway us and quiet down—if not completely, at least to a degree in which they no longer constitute a serious obstacle; and that is good enough.

This forms the first part of psychological relaxation; the second part is *mental* relaxation. By nature the mind is restless and in continuous activity, and this is increased by the high tempo of modern life and also by emotional stimulation. If we have managed to exclude for the moment the activities of ordinary life and have quieted the emotions, it will be less difficult to deal with the natural restlessness of the mind itself.

This cannot be done completely in the preparatory stage; it will be the chief task in the first part of the actual meditation, which is concentration. In the preparatory stage it is enough to reach a certain degree of dis-identification from the mind’s activity and to resist being carried by it this way and that, distinguishing this activity from the consciousness of the self, whom we could call the

“Observer.” This provides what might be regarded as a platform from which to go on to the actual meditation. Here, also, the aim is not to suppress by violence, or by an effort which immediately brings tension and therefore defeats its object. The method to be used is more that of attrition, of not feeding with interest any stray thoughts or images which remain in the mind; they will not then interfere seriously with the inner action of meditation. This preparation could be described as making room in and around the center of consciousness for the exercises of concentration that are to follow, yet without attempting to clear the whole area completely at this stage.

### **Concentration**

In taking up the subject of concentration the first point to realize is the difference between spontaneous or automatic concentration and deliberate, controlled concentration. They are different both in nature and in the way they work. What is called spontaneous concentration is the functioning of the mind under the impulse of a strong interest, desire or feeling, which keeps it working along a certain line. A typical example is the executive as he plans for the success of an organization. Another example is the student's concentration on the subjects of a course before an examination

Those who can concentrate effectively in this way are under the illusion that their power of concentration is good. And it does indicate a certain degree of it, but the ability to keep the mind on a task or subject when driven by intense interest, need or fear, does not necessarily mean that it can be done when that incentive is lacking. The fact is that when we try to concentrate on some abstract subject, or on something which entails no personal interest or benefit, we find it much more difficult and frequently discover that we have no real control over our minds after all.

This discovery is humiliating, but it is salutary. It shows how much we are the prey of our drives, and in that sense are negative, even though outwardly we may be positive and active. It is evidence that our emotions, drives, and thoughts play, almost dramatically, through us and are the strong forces in our lives. In other words, we are driven by them and are not ourselves the choosing, directing, controlling factor.

This is one reason why the more intellectual or spiritual interests have not the driving potential of the usual personal interests of the average individual, but it is also because there is an inherent difference in the nature of these interests. Abstract subjects are “thinner”; they are more intangible for the mind to take hold of and focus on. The mind, being less accustomed to this subtler and more difficult way of functioning, is reluctant to face it and turns away. It is a new kind of activity, and generally speaking any new subject or new area of knowledge presents difficulties to begin with. Our minds do not like starting to work in new fields; in those with which they are familiar much work has already been done; there is background, and there are connections which make the work easier. A new subject requires much more concentration and effort.

This explains the reluctance of so many to accept new ideas and to change their goals or their interests; they hate and fear the new and consequently resist it. An amusing instance of this, which now seems almost incredible, is the statement of a prominent French astronomer in 1884 that there was nothing more to be discovered in the field of astronomy!

The realization that we are not the masters of our minds may shock us, but if it does, that is good; it will galvanize us into making efforts towards such mastery, and will help to provide the emotional incentive which was lacking previously. Another important result of these discoveries about ourselves is awareness that there is a difference between ourselves and our minds and emotions. The unsuccessful effort to keep the mind at work has shown that there is a conflict, and means that there are two factions which disagree. This awareness of conflict is valuable, therefore, in bringing to light the difference between the “I,” with its own will and the mind, which is often unruly, reluctant or lazy and has, in a way, a life of its own.

These preliminary but vital recognitions provide a foundation for the task of learning to concentrate the mind *at will*. They bring understanding of ourselves and give the incentive we need to become masters of this precious instrument, the mind, which is so excellent a servant when dominated, but which gives such trouble when it goes its own way.

The technique to be used in acquiring control of the mind and ability to concentrate at will is the opposite to that used frequently in education, which is to arouse the interest of the pupil. This makes the acquiring of knowledge easier but it does not make for real control and mastery of the mind. To achieve deliberate concentration on difficult and abstract subjects, the technique is to begin with concentration on simple and neutral subjects which have no interest for us whatever. In this way we learn to hold the mind steady without the help of personal interest and desire.

There are many types of such exercises in concentration which can be practiced. Visual perception is a simple one and consequently a good one to work with first. It is a training of *attention*, not of thought processes, and it develops an elementary ability to focus the attention, which is the first step in the more difficult and complicated processes of meditation on abstract subjects.

A simple exercise in visual perception is to observe a set of objects rapidly and accurately. For instance, observe the contents of a room for half a minute, and then write as detailed an account of them as possible. The same exercise can be done by looking in a shop window, or examining a picture. This last enables a better watch to be kept on the growth of our proficiency for, if the right type of picture is used, we can keep a check statistically.

Such exercises also show that the ability to observe varies widely according to different psychological types. Quite a number of people find this kind of exercise comparatively easy because they are interested in the outer world and normally observe everything about them. For these people such exercises are superfluous. On the other hand they are extremely useful for those with a tendency to live on the inner, more abstract levels of life, with the interest chiefly centered in the worlds of emotion, of imagination or of pure thought. They train such people both in observing and concentrating on what does not interest them, and this helps to develop this comparatively undeveloped side of their natures. The aim is to be able to concentrate *at will*—no matter what may be our interest—on any level of life and on any particular object or subject.

Exercises in observing outward objects are a preparation for concentration on inner subjects—on inner pictures or images. An

exercise which provides a transition between the two is to observe a picture for twenty or thirty seconds, then close the eyes and try to keep the image of the picture in the “mind’s eye” or “inner eye.” We all have this power of imagination in the sense of being able to picture objects, faces, and so on, which are familiar. It is more developed and vivid in some people than others, but for the present purpose it is not so much the vividness which is important as the power to keep the picture steady before the mind’s eye, and to be able to concentrate the attention on it. Looking at the picture for a time helps considerably in getting a clear image, and therefore in the holding of it.

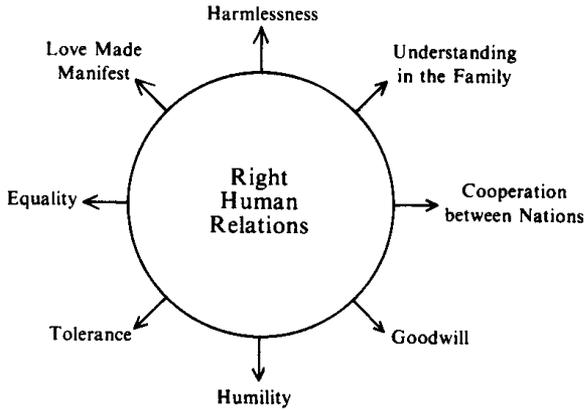
A second exercise of this type is to evoke an image and keep it steady for a short time without having looked at it just before. One can start with some familiar object, such as a building that is seen every day, a view one knows, or a member of the family. The image should be built precisely, with concentration on the details, and then held steady for a certain time.

Here begins a real fight—an interesting but sometimes exasperating skirmish—between our will to keep the image steady and the fluid nature of the imagination, which is accustomed to pass from one thing to another in rapid and often disordered succession. It will play all sorts of tricks; it will distort the image, enlarge it, add some alien element to it, divide it into two or more parts, substitute something else for it, in fact do anything and everything except let the picture remain quietly before the mind’s eye.

This fact is humiliating but again revealing. Once more we have undeniable evidence that we are not the masters of our mechanism and that there is conflict between it and ourselves. It is here that the process of self-mastery really begins in the sense of controlling, directing, and using—at will—our whole mechanism.

An excellent exercise in concentration is found in Ernest Wood’s *book Concentration*:

Study the following diagram:



such as: telling co-workers you appreciate something they have accomplished; returning an overdue library book; healing a breach with an acquaintance; driving your car with care; being patient with someone who moves at a different rhythm than you do.

Do not spend time thinking about Goodwill, Equality, Cooperation, etc. Merely notice them, write them down, and then slide your attention back to Right Human Relations. Do not jump back, but slide back. Then ask yourself “What next?” while looking at Right Human Relations. Again write down any idea that comes up. When you have written down a good many you may find the mind going empty, and bringing out no more. Still hold on for a while to allow other ideas to come.

This exercise may be incorporated in the suggested meditation on page 28 of this book. Not only is it a help to concentration but it also gives a form for reflecting on the theme.

The key to acquiring the power of concentration is, as in every other skill, prolonged patience and repeated practice. And here it might be mentioned that the process of evoking a mental image, or inner picture, has a value beyond that of developing the power of concentration. Images have a power of their own which is unconsciously or consciously utilized. But that subject will be gone into later, in the Set on the use of visualization as one of the most important parts of the technique of meditation. At this point we are only using visualization as a phase of concentration.

Apart from these specific technical exercises, there is ample opportunity for us to train our concentration during everyday life. It means simply giving full attention to the matter at hand without letting the mind wander. Habitual actions are frequently carried out in a more or less dreamy way, with stray thoughts about extraneous things playing through the mind. This creates a state of passive disassociation which can grow to harmful proportions, and is in any case a waste of energy. Later we will consider doing two things at the same time, which means being conscious and active on two different levels simultaneously; but that is an entirely different matter. In that case we are consciously aware and active on both levels, whereas in the former case there is a more or less automatic continuation of some physical activity while the imagination is running wild without our control and not according to our will.

Viewing concentration from this deeper angle, one might say that many people seem scarcely to live in the present at all. Most of their interest, attention, and psychological life is directed either to the past or to the future, and they are always either reminiscing or regretting things that are gone, or worrying about the things that are still in the future. It is an unwholesome condition and should be corrected. To sum up, concentration means the ability to live in the present in general, and specifically in that focused section or area of the present where our immediate task lies.

There is a higher and more important form of concentration than those types so far dealt with. It is that of the Observer or inner Spectator who, perfectly concentrated, observes the flowing panorama of the psychological life—called by William James the “mind stream”—and in a detached way perceives it, assesses it and, when needed, intervenes to change it. Such an inner attitude is not at all easy to maintain consistently. Being what might be termed “on the bank” of the mind stream, we tend to be drawn into it by its currents. The attention is easily caught by some surge of emotion, by some interesting idea, by some impelling drive, and we have to draw it back continually to the center of concentration, to the self, the part in us which is persistent and unchanging throughout all the variations of the psychological flow.

Dedication of the first two months to this preparatory work of concentration provides a necessary basis for future effective meditation. Two extremes should be avoided. One is doing these apparently uninteresting exercises in a more or less perfunctory way, as a kind of routine; this would be too superficial to serve much purpose. The other extreme to be avoided is working with them too strenuously and forcibly; there should not be any strain attached to this work. Nor should we attempt to do these exercises when tired, for there is then little likelihood of success and any progress made will be at the cost of too much strain.

Another point is that we should not be discouraged by failure, especially failure to maintain concentration for a certain time. At first it is good enough if we can achieve real concentration for ten and then twenty seconds; a minute or two is quite long. So it is better to carry out repeated short exercises with some success than try forcibly to keep the attention fixed for a longer time.

Finally, there are two helpful attitudes which, as the Observer, each of us should try to maintain through all the experiments and exercises. The first of these is patience with ourselves or, more accurately, with our mechanism—the attitude that we would adopt towards an unruly child whose cooperation we hoped to gain in the end. The other attitude is confidence that persistence will bring success. The following words of Hermann Keyserling—from his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*—will reinforce our confidence as well as emphasize the value of what we are attempting to achieve:

Undoubtedly the power of concentration is the real propelling power of the whole of our psychic mechanism. Nothing heightens our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain, can be traced back to the intelligent exploitation of this power. No obstacle can resist permanently the exceptional power of utmost concentration. Attention forces every problem sooner or later to reveal all of its aspects which are capable of recognition by a specific nature.

## **Concentration and Right Relationship**

The concentration required for effective meditation will be needed of course in the work with each Law and Principle, but we have particular opportunity to practice it continually in connection with the Law of Right Human Relations, for this Law is woven through every part of daily life. It is the basis of all cooperation and constructive interplay, and necessary in all our attitudes; therefore the practice of mind control throughout the day as suggested can very well be linked with the cultivation of right relationships. This can be done not only directly with everyone we meet, but also with anyone contacted through correspondence, the telephone, and even thought. We should not forget, also, the need for right relations within ourselves—between the emotions and the mind, and between these and the Observer or Perceiver.

Exercises of this type are more valuable than may appear at first, and they can be used for different purposes as will be indicated in later Sets. They not only condition our general attitude for the day, but actually build a pattern of thinking along which our thought will then run more easily throughout the day. It might be said that such exercises help to establish the required vibration, like the setting of an instrument to broadcast on a certain wavelength, and if they are done carefully their effect is very valuable.

## **Daily Exercise**

In the morning, before beginning the daily activities and contacts, concentrate upon and “foresee,” or visualize, all probable associations with other people. Image their being carried on in the right way, see them as *right* relations, and if some of these contacts are likely to be difficult because of either some dislike for the people or differences of opinion with them, then endeavor to resolve the dislike or criticism by applying the Law of Right Human Relations. Imagine this Law working through every contact and event of the day, and establishing a pattern of right relationships within every aspect of life.

### **Part III**

## **The Law Of Right Human Relations**

We have several billion neighbors—not neighbors who exactly share the same street, but fellow human beings who have been brought into close contact with us, and with each other, through modern methods of living so that they really are “neighbors.”

This means that Right Human Relations must be of paramount importance in the New Age we are entering, but there is also another factor—this increase of contact has occurred in a very short time compared to the long periods of gradual change through which life developed in the past. Suddenly distances separating one people from another have been telescoped; happenings on the other side of the world are being seen and heard at our own firesides; we have developed habits which make us economically dependent on people in almost every land; these are necessitating adaptation on our part. Whether consciously or not, we are being forced to change our attitudes, to think in new dimensions, to expand in consciousness as quickly as science is taking our civilization forward, and this is quite a demand on human nature.

Yet we must also recognize that these outer circumstances are only forcing us at last to accept the relationship that is our true inheritance as human beings. This relationship is the basis of our existence; it is not only an ideal for harmonious living or a necessity for survival, it *is a fact in nature*. We are indissolubly linked, growing up together in the great drama of life that is unfolding on our earth. We are in continuous contact with each other, not only socially and on the physical plane, but also through the inter-penetrating currents of our thoughts and emotions. We are parts of a whole, like the cells of our own bodies—each a unit, yet each also part of a larger form. We are members of our family, citizens of our town, we belong to our nation and—under the same law—we are units in the *whole* of the human race.

Consideration of these facts enables us to see the wide perspective in which the Law of Right Human Relations has its place and its function. It is not only a law for our own right contact with others,

it is a basic rule of the whole organism of life, and its field is the total area in which we live, that is, outer practical expression and inner feeling, attitude, and thinking.

Various qualities need to be given thought in any study of Right Human Relations. A sense of responsibility, understanding, compassion, love, and harmlessness are all links in the chain of right relationships, which must be forged within our own hearts. And this is our basic problem, the establishing of that right attitude *within* ourselves which will set free the flow of right relationship, breaking down the barriers and opening the way for expansion into the life of others.

We are experimenting daily with the science of Right Relations, even if often blindly and unconsciously. Through all the necessary everyday acts of cooperation, through the organization of our lives, through the handling of all our contacts, we are experimenting practically with and experiencing the various aspects, degrees, and types of relationship. In addition, we are continually building all of this on the inner planes with our thinking and feeling.

There have been many exponents of Right Human Relationships down the ages. Many great thinkers have taught it in one way or another, and all those who have worked for human liberty, for free and right association with others, have helped to straighten out the crosscurrents and confused relationships that have so frequently resulted from various stages of our civilization and culture.

It is a joyous concept that we are *one human family*, and although its realization has been checked by the necessary growth of individualism and self-assertion, we are now at a point where the delicate balance between individuality and the whole can begin to be achieved. The Law of Right Human Relations is concerned with *intelligent* participation in this whole; unthinking acceptance and the ancient “herd instinct” have no part in the attitudes of the New Age. It is as developed individuals that we will attempt in the future to fit the little personal units rightly into the jigsaw of the life of the one humanity, and it is intelligent cooperation with this Law of Right Human Relations that is called for from those seeking to help to establish the New Age.

## **TABULATION**

### **Types of Relationship**

1. Between the various aspects of oneself-.
  - Mind
  - Emotions
  - Actions
  - “Self”
2. Between oneself and one’s environment, for example:
  - Members of the family
  - Associates in business or work
  - Those met in the daily routine
  - Particular friends
3. Between the groups to which one belongs, for example:
  - Social
  - Religious
  - Political
  - Professional
4. Between nations
5. These are all “horizontal” relationships; there are also, “vertical” relationships:
  - With those “above” us
  - With the lower kingdoms of nature

### **Some of the Hindrances to Right Relations**

1. Selfishness
2. Fear
3. Hate
4. Ambition
5. Pride
6. Separativeness

## **Some of the Qualities Needed for Right Relations**

1. Sense of Responsibility
2. Understanding
3. Compassion
4. Love
5. Harmlessness
6. Spirit of Sharing.

## **Techniques for Establishing Right Human Relations**

### **1. Visualization**

As a daily exercise visualize your relationships as living, golden threads or channels through which light and love can flow freely.

### **2. Key Thought**

(To be said each morning on waking)

“May everyone with whom I come in contact today be blessed.”

### **3. Prayer for Unification**

The sons of men are one, and I am one with them.

I seek to love, not hate;

I seek to serve and not exact due service;

I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward of light and love.

Let the soul control the outer form, And life, and all events,

And bring to light the Love

That underlies the happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.

Let the future stand revealed.

Let inner union demonstrate

and outer cleavages be gone.

Let love prevail. Let all men love.

The above Tabulation suggests lines for our thinking on this Law during these two months and may be found helpful both in

connection with the Daily Exercise mentioned on p. 23, and the Meditation Outline on p. 28.

## OUTLINE OF MEDITATION

### Alignment

Through:

1. Relaxation—physical, emotional, and mental
2. Aspiration
3. Mental concentration
4. Linking and identification with this worldwide Meditation Group.

### Dedication

“I dedicate myself to do all in my power to bring about a New Age based on understanding, cooperation, and sharing in which each and all will be able to unfold and express their creative powers and their higher spiritual possibilities.”

### Meditation On The Law Of Right Human Relations

1. Concentrate for a few moments on Right Human Relations.
2. Reflectively consider the meaning, value and significance of this Law.
3. Visualize a symbol of Right Human Relations (i.e. People of all races holding hands in a circle. Children playing together joyfully.)
4. Plan how to demonstrate it individually, and how to contribute to its implementation in the world.
5. Telepathically radiate it through
  - a. Repeating out loud the phrase “Right Human Relations”
  - b. Sending forth the thoughtform of Right Human Relations along rays of light in all directions.

### Affirmation:

“May this group be helped to do its part”

This Outline of Meditation is suggested for daily or twice-weekly use. A short and dynamic meditation is more effective than a protracted one which is apt to lose its focus and impetus; therefore 10 or 15 minutes will be sufficient. Suggestions on the preparatory stages of meditation—**relaxation and concentration**—will be found on pp. 12-13 of this set.

## Recommended Reading

These books may be ordered from the publisher. We do not have them in stock.

*The Silent Path*, Michal J. Eastcott. London: Rider & Co., New York: Weiser, 1970

*Small is Beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher. New York: Harper & Row, 1973

*Concentration*, Ernest Wood. Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL 1972

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