

Concentration and The Rosicrucian Fellowship



By G. E. Carlin

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Prayer & the Rosicrucian Fellowship

St. Christopher's Holy Order of Kindness & Compassion
Praying for Ourselves and Others, Vol. 2: *Burden Bearing*

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Thoughts on Concentration

“By practice of concentration, you will become superhuman.”

– Swami Sivananda

“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work in hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.”

- Alexander Graham Bell

“Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade, in short, in all management of human affairs.”

“Concentration is the essence of genius”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought.”

- Buddha

“You can’t depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.” - Mark Twain

“Concentrated attention is the collection of units of power on a chosen point of intention.”

- James Arthur Ray

“The person that is able to concentrate utilizes all constructive thoughts and shuts out all destructive ones.”

-William W. Atkinson

“Everyone has two natures. One wants us to advance and the other wants to pull us back. The one that we cultivate and concentrate on decides what we are at the end.”

-Theron Q. Dumont (William W. Atkinson)

Introduction

One of the things that is essential in our lives is that we need to take time out and *self-assess* ourselves for growth in things like new skills we are learning, how we are doing in our responsibilities to our families, and even the progress of our spiritual life. Many times, when we feel stuck or slow to progress in something the issue can usually be traced back to the very beginning and the fundamentals we established or did *not* establish with ourselves. Therefore, whenever I write something on a specific nonfiction topic, I always try to come up with a short set of questions that I could ask someone so I could get a sense of how well they understand the topic, how to perform (pre-, during, and post-) any of the required skills, how they would assess their performance, and what they thought their next steps should be to improve their performance.

The truth is, I am really asking these questions to myself so I can get a sense of what someone needs to “doom themselves to succeed” in the given topic I’m writing about. In the first book, *Prayer and The Rosicrucian Fellowship*, I thought it was critical for all of us, myself included, to first learn the many different ways to effectively communicate with God, never forgetting to express thanksgiving and praise so we could develop a *real* relationship with God that we could then further build upon. Prayers are special, and they evolve as we evolve spiritually, always offering us what is need regardless of where we find ourselves spiritual. As Max Heindel points out, even just reciting the words of prayer when we first begin praying can help lift us and prepare us for new spiritual levels of our prayers.

Yet, it is critical to understand what Max Heindel means when he states that prayer is ultimately a form of “*proper concentration*”, a skill that most of us need to dedicate ourselves to in order to develop its mastery so we can advance spiritually. The *Morning Exercise of Concentration* is not only one of the two exercises that we are asked to perform as students of *The Rosicrucian Fellowship*, it is the skill that if we don’t fully understand it or don’t address what it is actually asking, then we will just spin our wheels and go *no* further in our spiritual progress.

So here is the short set of *five* questions I might ask someone about concentration if I was in mentoring role as a spiritual friend (but really, I am asking myself!):

1. Do you enjoy the morning concentration exercise, why?

Start with any safe, easy question to get your mentee talking and feeling safe with you! If it is not enjoyable than most people will not sustain their practice of concentration.

2. How would you compare (same) and contrast (different)

“concentration” to “spiritual concentration” and/or

“mindfulness”?

Let’s see how well they understand the concept of Concentration and how much deeper concentration is than just being conscious or aware of something. By adding “spiritual” to concentration it then puts our attention or focus on the constant presence of God in our lives.

3. What preparation if any do you do before your concentration exercise, why?

Is there something that they have spent time getting ready or planning for to ensure better outcomes during the concentration exercise. If for example, we don't spend adequate time on fully observing all of the finer details of an object than it becomes difficult for our minds to then bring it to life and make it real through concentration.

4. How effective is your concentration exercise now, why?

Now they can self-evaluate themselves and support their claims with specific evidence from the exercise and its outcomes. It's important for each person to know where they are in the process of developing their concentration so that they can not only reward themselves for their accomplishments but understand how their current abilities in concentration compare to the ideal or needed level of concentration for spiritual development.

5. What do you envision as the "next step(s)" in improving your concentration exercise, why?

It's important to see if they feel there is something they can do to improve their concentration, and what they believe that next step to be. Making progress occurs when we are clear about what small step you can work towards next with an attitude of confidence in your success. It will only be through a series of small manageable steps that we will ultimately reach our goal in concentration.

With complete candor, I can say that I didn't always have the *best* answers to these questions and I needed to go back to the fundamentals of *Concentration* so I could then understand how I could expand my own practice of this exercise and improve upon my spiritual progress. Ultimately, spiritual concentration as given to us by Max Heindel goes well beyond just learning to focus our attention. As concentration is not a unique practice to TRF we can also consider what other spiritual leaders and writers such as Rudolph Steiner, William W. Atkinson (Theron Q. Dumont), Annie Rix Miltz, S. R. Parchment, Swami Sivananda, Annie Besant, Ernest Wood, and Swami Vivekananda have shared about the concept, their explanations, specific practices and exercises of concentration, to see if we can add to what Max Heindel has given us so can eliminate any potential stumbling blocks and we have all the knowledge and tools we need to ensure our success.

"Hard to control, unstable is this mind, ever in quest of delight.

Good is it to subdue the mind.

A mind subdued brings happiness.

Difficult to grasp, exceedingly subtle is this mind, ever in quest of delight.

Let the wise person keep watch over their mind.

A guarded mind brings happiness."

- Dhammapada

Concentration and *Moving to Christ*

In Hebrew the word for “*to concentrate*” (or to focus) comes from the word “*center*”, so when we concentrate on something we put it in the center of our world because not only is it important but it is where we want or need to invest our time, energy, and effort. Even Solomon warns us that we must stay focused if we want to keep ourselves righteous and moving in the right direction to God.

*Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight
before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be
established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy
foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:25-27 KJV)*

While Paul tells us that if we wish to be Christians then our entire focus must always be on Christ and that we should not look to ourselves, or our past, we should put our concentration on our future which will be with Christ for eternity.

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:
but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am
apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have
apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things
which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are
before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of
God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14 KJV)*

Part of being a Christian is as Peter says, is to get your *mind* ready for action by taking control of your thoughts by focusing your complete attention on living a life that glorifies and is pleasing to God so He will bless us with His grace.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus. (1 Peter 1:13 KJV)

In the most basic sense, a *single eye* in the Bible represents focus and attention and provides the clarity we need to understand what life brings to us. In our spiritual development the concentration of the single eye allows the light of light to surround us so it may guide and protect us in our journey.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:22-23 KJV)

Yet, as we shall discover in TRF the ability to effectively concentrate and come to a sense of “one-pointedness” within our minds will determine whether we come into the full light of Christ and steadily progress in our spiritual work. It is a choice we are given but *not* something given to us, it is something we must make a consistent effort so it becomes who we are and how we participate in the world.

Psalm 46 KJV:

To Understand the Meaning of Focus and Concentration

Psalm 46 is a psalm of worship that speaks to the strength and presence of God.

Charles Spurgeon calls Psalm 46 a “*song of holy confidence*” because regardless of what happens in our lives or the chaos that might occur around us, we will always be safe with God as He is our refuge. He is always with us and never leaves us so He can be our strength and power as we deal with the many difficulties around us. Therefore, regardless of where we might find ourselves, reliance upon God will always deliver us to a safe place.

“Come, let us sing the 46th psalm and let them do their worst.”

– **Martin Luther**

As we read *Psalm 46*, we see someone who has found complete trust and reliance upon God and now can “be still” or we can “surrender” ourselves so that we can release thoughts of jealousy, revenge, hatred, or even fight against the will of God so that we our minds are now free to just be in the moment of peace, calm, and stillness so we can be with God and rest with Him. It is only in our stillness that we can then put our *full focus and concentration* on the Lord.

As Charles Spurgeon stated since we can’t adequately describe God’s nature then we should let our “*expressive silence muse his praise*.” Then we are ready to listen to hear what He has to tell us as we pray. Therefore, we can use *Psalm 46* to

understand what God asks of us in our concentration so that He can protect us and release us to explore higher worlds.

“we sing this psalm to the praise of God, because He is with us and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends His church and His word against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and sin.” - Martin Luther

Psalm 46 KJV

Also Called the *Luther Psalm*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

*Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made
in the earth.*

*He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the
bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the
fire.*

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the
heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A hymn written by Martin Luther that paraphrases *Psalm 46* (1527 – 1529)

A mighty fortress is our God,

A mighty shield and weapon;

He helps us free from ev'ry need

That hath us now o'ertaken.

The old evil foe

Now means deadly woe;

Deep guile and great might

Are his dread arms in fight;

On earth is not his equal.

- First Verse

The Desire Body

As Max Heindel describes in the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, within our physical bodies we have a vehicle, the *Desire Body*, that produces all of our actions including our desires, feelings, and emotions. The desire body consists of the densest matter that was produced during the *Sun Period*. It forms an ovoid cloud that extend beyond our physical body (12”-16”) and its color is a reflection of our characteristics, temperament, health, or mood. It contains many “sense centers” or *vortices* that are found in fixed positions relative to our physical bodies. While most are found in the head region, they are also found in all other regions throughout body. In most people these sense centers are inactive and when developed will be the means by which we can will be able to enter the invisible worlds to learn many new things.



Aura of a Healthy Person

English: Charles Webster Leadbeater Русский: Ледбитер, Чарлз Уэбстер, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Within this ovoid cloud of the Desire Body, the “desire stuff” constantly and freely flows like the water molecules moving within a balloon. However, unlike the balloon, the desire body has “two-way valve-like structures” that when activated allow the desire stuff to flow outward in eddies and currents that move to the outer most limits of the Desire body and then permit the return and recycling of the desire stuff in the Desire Body. These valve-like structures are called *vortices* and their main point of exit and return from them is from the *liver*. It is important to note that as the desire stuff flows in currents out from the vortices it does not travel in a straight line like water from a garden hose but flows outward from a vortex in many curved lines producing a spinning vortex (like a spinning lawn sprinkler or the blades of a fan, see below).

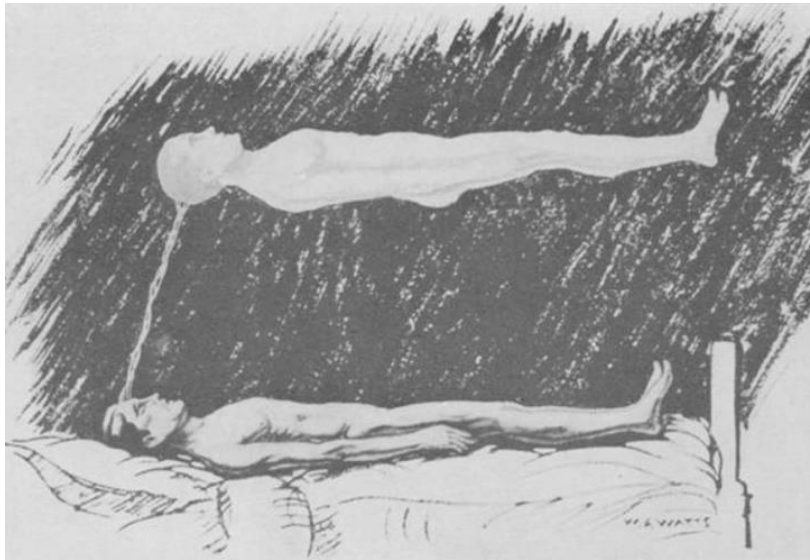


Blades of a Cooling Fan Similar to the Vortices

The original uploader was Huha at German Wikipedia. Later versions were uploaded by Afrank99, Namex at de.wikipedia., CC BY-SA 3.0 <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

During the course of our waking hours, the currents of desire stuff through the vortices is extremely weak and slows almost to a stop. However, when our desire body leaves our dense body during sleep (or death), the currents of our desire stuff now flows with great strength and the *sense centers* of the Desire Body respond

with rapidly spinning vortices like a pin wheel being held outside the window of a quickly moving car. Thus, during sleep our sense centers or vortices become our “centers of perception” for the Desire World and open us to many new things.



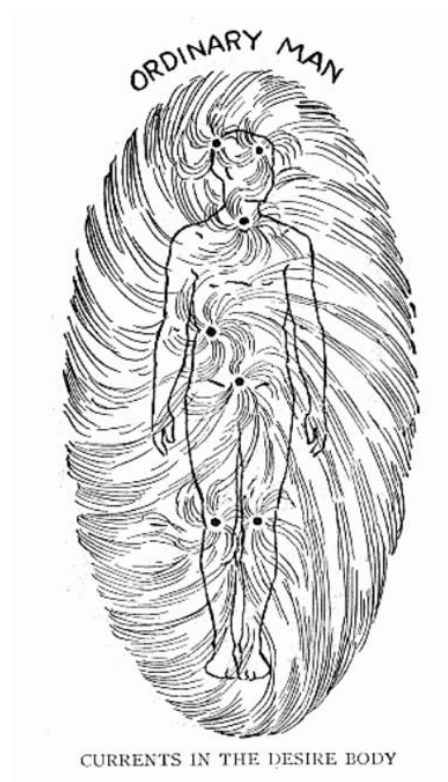
Hereward Carrington, Sylvan Muldoon., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Desire Body Outside of Dense Body During Sleep

The reason why our vortices do not actively spin while we are awake is that our Desire Body has moved back within our Dense Body and the desire stuff can no longer freely flow in currents as it encounters even denser material and electro-chemical nerve currents of our central and peripheral nervous systems in the Dense Body. Consider how quickly you could walk on an empty street with no one to block your movements (*current in the Desire Body outside of the Dense Body*) and then consider how slowly you then have to walk on an extremely crowded or even a closed street in which you were being blocked from every direction (*current with the Desire Body within the Dense Body*).

Clairvoyance and the Desire World

If we wish to become *positive clairvoyant* or see, investigate, and learn from the invisible worlds then what we must be able to do is to train our desire body while we are awake and it is within the dense body to function as if were outside of the dense body. While we are awake, we must now be able to produce the free-flowing currents of our desire stuff that will produce rapidly spinning vortices so that we activate our *centers of perception*. Just like with the *chakras* (energy points in the body) of the body in which we find over one-hundred (or more) scattered in our bodies, there are also many vortices in our bodies we could engage and “turn on” and spin at full capacity for a maximum effect.



Seven Great Vortices in the Human Body

Spinning Clockwise

There are two types of vortices found in the body, the *lesser* and the *greater* vortices. The currents of the Desire Body form “seven great vortices” that are found in the head (2), neck (1), liver (1), pubic region (1), and the knees (2) and these will be of the greatest importance in seeking clairvoyance as they will provide the majority of the power for our centers of perception. With proper training the vortices of the “voluntary clairvoyant” will spin in a *clockwise* direction with a radiant glow that produces an even greater luminous intensity of the Desire Body. However, as in an “involuntary clairvoyant” such as a medium the vortices will spin *counter-clockwise* and they will be unable to determine any specific information as the vortices will act strictly as mirrors. Only those things that randomly move past these mirrors can be seen as reflections and then be known.

As Max Heindel states, concentration provides the state in which we can work on our vehicles as this is time that we have silenced our senses from the outside world. Concentration is similar to a state of deep sleep in that our spirit remains with the body “fully conscious” and “in full control of the faculties”. The goal of our training in concentration, in the morning exercises and even throughout the day in busy places, is to train our bodies to be able to enter a state of concentration at will. We first train ourselves in concentration with simple objects that we imagine in our minds such as pencil so that we can eventually use the developed skill on any given subject such as scripture in the Bible, writings from spiritual books (i.e., *The Imitation of Christ*), a prayer, thoughts to communicate to others, healing thoughts and forces and their one-way directional transmission to the Invisible Helpers, etc.

When we have sufficient master of concentration and can absolutely quiet our senses, we can then use our concentration to focus our thoughts upon the seven major sense centers found in the Desire Body so that they begin to spin in clockwise direction. Initially, this is quite difficult and takes time and patience until the movement of the vortices within the sense centers even move slightly but eventually the “sense-centers of the desire body will make places for themselves within the dense and vital bodies”. With dedication and persistence, the rate of spinning will gradually increase until they spin at the same rate as if the Desire Body was outside of the physical body.

Max Heindel in the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (Chapter XVII) describes how over time when we purify and sanctify ourselves by living a life that is pleasing to Christ or imitates His life and we develop needed skills such as concentration we can separate the two lower ethers of the vital body from the two higher ethers so that we can put ourselves beyond our Dense Body and travel at will within the inner and outer Worlds. Then we can serve others as Invisible Helpers and assist in the healing our brothers and sisters as Christ has asked of.

“Then some day, when the proper life has developed the requisite cleavage between the higher and lower parts of the vital body, there is a supreme effort of the will; a spiral motion in many directions takes place, and the aspirant stands outside his dense body. He looks at it as at another person. The door of this prison-house has been opened. He is free to come and go, as much at liberty in the inner

worlds as in the Physical World, functioning at will, in the inner or outer World, a helper of all desiring his services in any of them.”

– *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, Max Heindel

Control of the Desire Body

Over time we must learn to gain control of our desire bodies otherwise we are prone to act on desires that might be destructive to our soul growth or we have to use our energy to resist our unhealthy desires or control our temper. The key to gaining control over our desire body is to develop the skill of concentration. Then we can go beyond what we believe the world to be and venture out into the invisible worlds where we will have unique opportunities for soul growth.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. (Proverbs 25:28 KJV)

Ultimately, *concentration* is one of the tools we need to find our *Christ-within* and experience the life that God wants for us. Yet, developing concentration is a challenge even for the best of us. What we need to be able to do is to learn to focus our complete attention or thoughts on *one* specific object, concept, condition, or action.

Object: Inanimate Object, Living Organism, Person, Christ, etc.

Concept: Divine Love, Service, Faith, etc.

Action: Resurrection, Crucifixion, Healing the Sick, Miraculous Signs, etc.

Condition: Compassionate, Kindly, Righteous, Steadfast, etc.

By placing our complete focus on our thoughts, they become an activated “thought-forces”. The key to realizing our thought forces is to sufficiently energize them. The best way to do this is to develop your concentration to the point where you can focus exclusively on one object, concept, or condition without being distracted by any other factors so as to raise the thought-power. However, most people never spend the necessary time to make this happen so they are unable to direct the power needed to energize their thoughts so they are never realized.

Getting Started with Concentration

In terms of how to begin the practice of concentration, the first step is to select something on which you want to concentrate. In Max Heindel’s opinion it doesn’t really matter what you select, however it should be something that is inherently “pure and mentally uplifting”. It is often helpful to start your practice with a familiar living object. For example, an object from nature such as a tree, flower, or an animal or a specific religious symbol such as a dove, the Good Shepherd, or even Christ.



Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd

AnonymousUnknown author, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The key to your success lies in your ability to make the object you select life-like in every single detail. You have to be able to “imagine” the object as if it were a living organism you were viewing under the microscope (i.e., diatom, paramecium or euglena) or through binoculars (i.e., house sparrow, gray squirrel, or a deer) in perfect focus. If the image or any part of the image is blurry, too light or too dark, or not acceptably true to form or resemblance than you are *not* concentrating.

Preparation Through the Skill of Observation

If we wish to concentrate on anything, we first need to be able to produce a mental image within our minds. For most of us this is *not* a skill we have all developed to the extent that we can hold a realistic image within our minds for a given period of time. So, before we select a “pure and uplifting image” it would probably be best if we started our practice of concentration with a common object such as No.2 pencil. However, before we jump into trying to visualize the pencil in our minds, we should become familiar with the *all* the *observable details* of the pencil.

Qualitative and Quantitative Observations

When we observe an object, activity, or a location we use all of our senses (*sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch*) to determine its characteristics, attributes, and properties. These types of observations are called *qualitative observations*. If we count or measure (use numbers) in making an observation, they are called *quantitative observations*. In some cases, we can use tools such as a ruler, magnifying glass, or thermometer to make more precise observations (i.e., small size vs. 1.0 mm in length) and extend our ability to make observations (i.e., using a telescope to see the craters of the Moon).

The real key to describing an object is to make accurate and thorough observations of all details of the object. In terms of accuracy, we are speaking about precision which refers to its exactness. For example, if most people were asked the color of a No. 2 school pencil they would respond “*yellow*”. However, “*yellow*” does not give us an exact color of the pencil. The question that needs to be answered is the yellow

color of the pencil barrel more precisely *Goldenrod, Dandelion, Green-Yellow, Canary Yellow, or Lemon Yellow*? It is important that you take the time to make this determination as this will better connect you to the image of the pencil so you can than firmly hold it in your mind.

As you continue to observe the pencil you will further notice that “yellow” color of the pencil’s barrel is not the only color found on the pencil but it is the *predominant* color of the entire pencil. The other colors on most No. 2 school pencils are the color of the pencil’s graphite tip (*charcoal gray*), the raw wood of sharpened end (*light almond*), the lettering on the barrel of the pencil (*emerald green*), the metal band or ferule (*white shimmer*), and the eraser (*vivid tangerine*). Therefore, we need to spend sufficient time observing an object as simple as a pencil so as to be able to precisely capture all of its details so we can than recreate all of its finest and most accurate details in our minds.

Describing the Shapes of an Object (2-D)

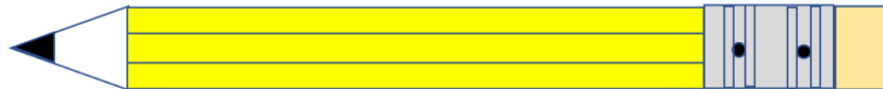
When describing the shape of an object you should first start by describing the object or living organism in two-dimensions. However, as the actual object or organism is three-dimensional you will have to start by “flattening-it-out”. Then you have to decide what surface of the flattened object you want to be apparent in your view. Let’s consider a typical #2 pencil that has been sharpened and start our view with the surface of the pencil that has the writing of the brand name (*Dixon Ticonderoga*), lead number (HB 2) and hardness (Soft) of the pencil.

It is helpful if we break the object down into each of its components so we can identify the shape of each component. The sharpened end of the pencil is a triangle, the long yellow body of the pencil is a rectangle, the short silver metal fastener at the end of the pencil is a rectangle, and the very short pink eraser that protrudes from the silver metal fastener is also a rectangle (see below).



Shapes of All the Details of a Pencil

Let's then spend some time taking a closer look at the pencil to see if we identified all the shapes (see pencil below). The graphite end of the sharpened pencil is actually a triangle and the rest of the tapered end of the sharpened pencil is a *trapezoid*. Then looking down on the long yellow body of the pencil you can see three of the six sides of the pencil. Therefore, instead of one long rectangle, it is divided into three thinner, long rectangles (in 2-D). The silver metal fastener has two circular holes where the metal was pushed in to fasten it to the body of the pencil and eraser. In addition, the silver fastener has two set of three very thin rectangles that crimp the silver metal fastener to the pencil body and the eraser (see below).



Pencil in Greater Detail Shapes

Describing the Shapes of an Object (3-D)

Once we have sufficiently described an object in two-dimension, then we need to consider its three-dimensional shape. In the #2 pencil that we just described in two dimensions, the sharpened end of the pencil is actually a “cone” in three-dimensions, the metal faster and the eraser are “cylinders”, and the yellow body of the pencil is a “hexagonal prism”.

Use the chart below to help you identify three-dimensional shapes, so we can use this information to most accurately create a mental visual of the object (i.e., the pencil) we are concentrating on. Most objects will be a combination of these-dimensional shapes such as a lollipop consisting of sphere (candy part) and a cylinder (stick part).

Three-Dimensional Shapes

3-D Shape	Produced 2-D Shape(s)	Examples
Spheres	Circle	Volleyball, globe, an orange fruit, planets
Cubes	Square	Dice, Rubik’s cube, sugar cube
Cuboid	Rectangle	Brick, mattress, shoebox, book
Cylinders	Rectangle with Circles at Both ends	Soda can, candle, battery, toilet paper roll

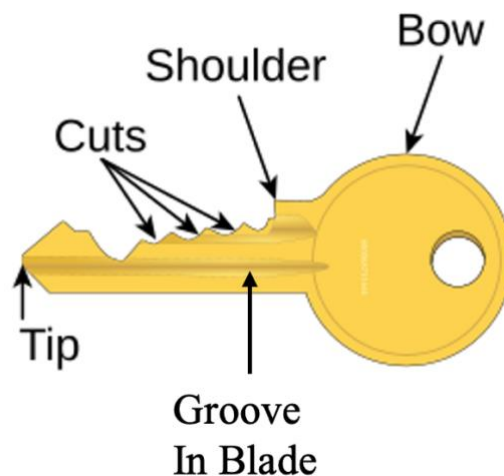
Cones	<p>Circular base attached to curved base that wraps around and narrows to a point</p> <p>Triangle (from side)</p>	<p>Ice cream cone, funnel, Native American teepee, birthday hat, sharpened pencil tip, orange traffic cone</p>
Pyramids	<p>Triangle (all four faces)</p>	<p>Egyptian Pyramids of Giza, pie-shaped wedge of cheese or watermelon, telephone towers, outdoor table umbrella</p>
Prism	<p>All two-dimension shapes with flat edges: including all polygons - triangle, square, rectangle, etc.</p>	<p>Honeycomb that holds honey, body of an unsharpened pencil, a simple tent, a barn, Toblerone candy, cereal box, etc.</p>

The table above identifies the 3-dimensional shapes and the 2-dimensional shapes they were produced from and some common examples of objects with these 3-dimensional shapes. In creating your mental image, you will train yourself to expand and shrink these 3-D shapes as you put them together in different orders so as to create your complete mental image of an object.

In the world around us, three-dimensional shapes help us to better describe the complex structure of atoms and molecules, microorganisms, our various body parts,

rocks, tornadoes, minerals, planets, etc. In the study of Anatomy & Physiology, one of the core beliefs is that the basic structure of a body part is key to the understanding of the function of that part in the body. Francis Crick, one of the discoverers of the structure of DNA, was quoted as saying, *“If you want to understand function, study structure”*.

Therefore, it is essential that you see an object and all of its components as three-dimensional structure so you can fully appreciate their function, possible effects, or their relationship to other components or objects. Think about a front door key; why doesn't one front door key open everyone's front door? Because if we look closely enough at the key, we can clearly see that there are differences in its teeth and notches (cuts), position of its grooves in the blade, shape of the tip, and the length of blade and shoulder.



House Key Anatomy

Fred the OysterThe source code of this SVG is valid. This vector image was created with Adobe Illustrator by v., CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Think about the three-dimensional shape and structure of the #2 pencil and consider how it relates to their functions and the questions you want to answer:

Functional Questions

- How do you prepare the pencil so it will write best?
- Why does the point of the pencil sometimes break off?
- Why do pencil marks sometimes smudge on writing paper?
- How does the shape of pencil allow you to easily hold it?
- How is the pencil *best* held in your hand?
- How was the basic pencil modified to produce *children's*, *carpenters*, and *golf* pencils?

General Questions about the Pencil

- How is the graphite placed within the barrel of the pencil
- Why was the erasure added to the end of some pencil?
- What does the yellow color of the pencil indicate?

(Finest graphite came from China, yellow indicated China)

- Why is my pencil marked “*HB 2*”?

(HB: *Hard and Black*, Hardness of the graphite core: 2)

- How can you judge the quality of a pencil?
- What is the advantage of a mechanical pencil compared to a graphite pencil?

Moving the Object in Your Mind

Rotation of the Object

In order to observe all the detail of a three-dimensional object such as No. 2 school pencil you have to rotate it on both its X- and Y-axis.

Around the X-Axis

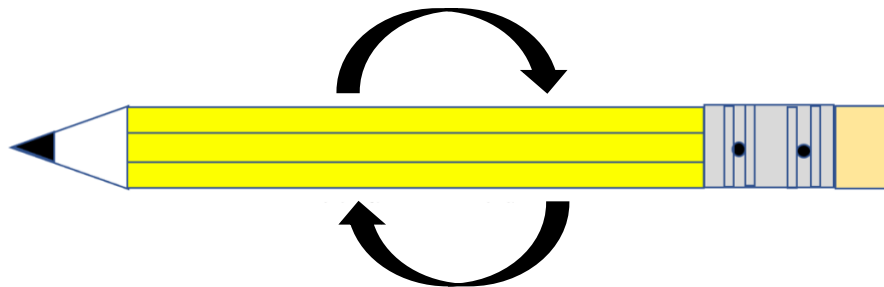


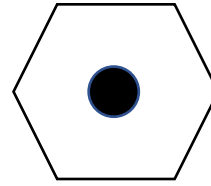
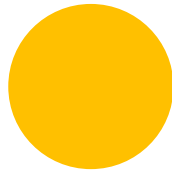
Roll the pencil three-hundred and sixty degrees on its barrel so you can observe the details of all parts of the pencil – as viewed from the side of the pencil.

Around the Y-Axis

Spin the pencil ninety degrees to the right to see the top of the eraser (see below).

Spin the pencil another two-hundred and seventy degrees to see the pencil from the tip of its sharpened point (see below). Notice that eraser has a circular-shape and the sharpened end of the pencil has a six-sided polygon hexagonal shape with a black circle in the middle (see below).





Pencil Viewed from Top of the Eraser and its Sharpened Point

Rotating and Spinning the Object in Your Mind

In your mind you can start by bringing the two-dimensional image of the pencil to life (hold it for several seconds), then slowly convert it to a three-dimensional image. Hold it there for several seconds and then begin to rotate it along its X-axis (rolling it to the front) and stop after several full rotations around the object. Then spin the object on the Y-axis (clockwise), stopping at each end of the object for a few seconds as you spin it several rotations around its Y-axis.

When you become proficient in this you can rotate and spin the object in any direction and spin in any random method, stopping and restarting at any point you wish. When you can do this for a period of five minutes without losing focus on the pencil at any point then you are truly concentrating!

A Living Thought Form

Ideally, when we are intensely concentrating, we are not creating a still photograph or a marble statue within our minds. Our goal is to creating something that is alive, a “living thought form, a clear and true image”. However, this is where many of us misunderstand the esoteric meaning of concentration and do not address the entire process of concentration. We are *not* just trying to imagine something at a given point in time or as one specific view, when we should be attempting to envision the *totality* of the object we are concentrating on. As we shall see, our concentration creates the living thought form while meditation provides us with opportunity to harvest a wealth of knowledge on that we are concentrating upon. Therefore, let us look at a few examples of living thought forms that we can create in our minds.

Concentrating on Living Organism: *Maple Tree*



Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada. Vol. 2: 496., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Bruce Marlin, CC BY-SA 2.5 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>>, via Wikimedia Commons

If for instance we wanted to concentrate on a maple tree, we do *not* just bring the full-grown tree into our imagination we start with its seed (the samara). We start by envisioning the two conjoined seeds spinning slowly towards the ground as a “helicopter” or “whirler”. The wind catches the samara and carries it for a distance from the tree until it lands on the ground. One of the seeds from the samara germinates and its root pushes into the ground, the root hairs on root absorb water as the root digs deeper into the ground, branching off into several different directions.

The stem rises from ground with the two seed leaves (cotyledons) from which the first two true leaves appear. The stem continues to grow upward towards the sun branching off at several points as more leaves appear. As the young tree continues to grow the stems become woody with a grayish colored bark that has a cracked appearance.

Then in spring round clusters of yellow-green male and female flower blooms appear at the ends of long flower stalks. The flowers are pollinated by bees and from pollen from other maple trees that is carried in the wind. The fruits from the pollinated flowers grow into the mature samaras that hang from the many stalks surrounded by the leaves of the mature maple tree.

We can hear the rustling of the tree leaves as the wind blows and watch as the samaras float and drift in the air as they are released and the branches of the tree bounce slowly back and forth.

Concentrating on a *Christ*

If we were to choose to concentrate on Christ, then we need to not only see his physical appearance (facial features, teeth, hair, chest, arms, hands, legs, feet, wounds, etc.), His clothing/adornments (tunic, sandals, belt, crown, book, halo, etc.) and His staff we also need to envision the slightest details of a living Christ that might include:

- *how the expression in His eyes changes as He interacts with others,*
- *how His lips change to smile, frown, and express other emotions*
- *the gestures of all of His other body parts (arms, head, hands, etc.)*
- *how he presents himself to others and the feelings it elicits (i.e., confidence, caring, lovingly, kindly, etc.),*
- *the movement of His body as He walks, preaches, eats, greets others, etc.*
- *His bodily reactions to His surroundings and events occurring around Him,*
- *How He prays, comforts, and heals others*
- *His look and actions of persistence, dedication, and commitment to His mission,*
- *His birth (nativity), years as an adolescent, years from baptism from John the Baptist, and His death on the cross (crucifixion)*

Difficulty of Concentration on the Complete form of Christ

For many people it will be difficult to concentrate on the entire form of a person or a deity such as Jesus Christ. Our mind struggles with trying to take in the all the details of every single aspect of the deity and attempting to fix our concentration on

all of them at the same time. So rather than trying to take in all the aspects of the deity at the same time, it is easier at first to let your mind start with your concentration on one aspect then move to the next aspect. For most people, the mind cannot take in the entire form of the deity all at once so our mind chunks it up into parts.

Our mind focuses on one specific part (see face of Jesus below) until it brings forth every single minute detail of its color, shape, size, arrangement, etc. Then we move on to the next adjacent part and repeat the process until we have addressed the entire deity. Then you can practice using your focused attention in your concentration as you repeatedly move up and down the deity until your mind can take in the *totality* of the entire deity. As Swami Krishnananda states, “It should be like a powerful magnet drawing the mind towards it entirely, and not only in parts.” It is only when we have a thorough detailed description of any object, person, or deity through our observations that our mind is able to become one with it through our concentration.



Starting with Face of Christ

FatherAdamBrown, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Sample Images of Christ to Observe for Details



Christ and the Penitent Sinners

Paris Orlando, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Common



Christ Carrying the Cross with the Virgin and Saint John

Luis de Morales, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Concentrating on an Action: *Jesus Healing the Sick*



Christ Healing the Blind

Emmanuel Tzanes, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Actions such as Jesus healing the sick involve a process of multiple steps. Images such as painting and drawings are great starting point, however, they only capture a single point in time. Therefore, it is important that you are able to create and fill in the entire process from the beginning to the end. It will be helpful to find scripture from the bible to add in details to the painting or drawing that you have selected.

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

(Matthew 8:1-4 KJV)

Steps in the Healing Process of Jesus

Steps in Healing	Description
<i>Request a healing by an Infirm Person</i>	A leper kneels in front of Jesus and asks, “ <i>Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean</i> ”.
<i>Jesus’ Response to the Request</i>	Without saying a word and with great compassion, Jesus puts forth his hand
<i>Jesus’ Method of Healing the Infirm</i>	Jesus simply touches the side of the leper’s diseased face, saying, <i>I will; be thou clean</i>
<i>Infirm Person’s Response to Healing</i>	A sense of peace comes over the leper that makes his pain and suffering disappear. He feels transformed and awakened.
<i>Jesus’ Final Words/Request to the Infirm</i>	Jesus says to him, “ <i>See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them</i> ”.

The painting above of *Christ Healing the Blind* will provide many of the additional details we need to create our complete mental image to concentrate on, such as:

- *A description of Jesus (clothing, physical features, body positions, accessories, etc.)*
- *A description of the leper*
- *A description of the other people observing the healing*
- *The setting of the healing: location, time of day, weather conditions, etc.*
- *The reactions of Jesus, the leper, and the other people (i.e., sensory interpretations)*
- *Background objects, organisms, additional actions, etc.*
- *Special Effects: lighting, contrast, strong focal point, balance, etc.*

By including the *additional details* with the *steps of a process* (i.e., *Jesus Healing the Leper*) you can create a “complete action” upon which to concentrate on. In some cases, you may want to include addition steps such as the pre-step which comes before the first step and/or post-step which comes after the last step. For instance, you may wish to include the leper approaching Jesus from a distance ringing his bell or the very excited healed leper running towards the town to go to the temple to show the priest that he has been healed.

Concentrating on a Condition: *Righteousness*

St. Francis Giving His Mantle to a Poor Man



Giotto, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

When we concentrate on a condition such as an *essential quality, property, or attribute* and its expression it is helpful to have clear understanding of its meaning. For example, as we had decided to concentrate on *righteousness*, we need to start by understanding its meaning in a biblical application.

Righteousness: *being morally right or justifiable*

Righteousness in a Biblical Meaning: *living a right relationship with God and our fellow man in terms of our character, conscience, conduct, and command (4 C's).*

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. (Isaiah 33:15-17 KJV)

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 KJV)

Then we need to consider what that would mean in terms of how we live our lives. In other words, how could we “observe” that condition with our eyes, what it would look like to ourselves and others? If we were an artist how would he draw, paint, or sculpt the condition we were observing? In a very simple sense, *righteousness* can be thought of as fasting and praying for ourselves and others but it extends beyond that so that we also give to the poor, forgive others who have offended us, to love everyone even our enemies as Jesus asked us, and to live a life of faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ. Because Christ was completely righteous in His nature and everything He did, we are called to be His followers which means to imitate Him.

By imitating Him we cannot help but to be righteous in all the conditions we express.

In the painting above St. Francis is imitating Christ by giving to the poor in which he gives a poor man his coat (mantle). Note how the artist has captured the moment that best exemplifies St. Francis' quality of righteousness. St. Francis is following the model set by Christ that He physically demonstrated for us and gave us in His teachings. For every condition that we imitate from Christ we look to Him for the standard that we should strive for. Christ as our lawgiver not only shows us what is right and wrong, He shows us how we should live our lives as well as how he does not want us to live our lives.

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. (Isiah 33:22 KJV)

Ultimately, there is no right or wrong way to concentrate on a condition such as righteousness. We can use an artist representation (i.e., a selected painting as above) as our mental picture upon which to concentrate or we can use a story from the Bible, a Psalm, a part of legend of a saint, an inspirational text with illustrative and true-life anecdotes, or even consider how in our own lives we have embodied and expressed that condition in our own:

character,

conscience,

conduct, and

command (word)

... when interacting with God and our fellow man. But once again, it is important to remember we are not just looking to create a single image but we are striving to capture the totality of the condition within the full story of our actions.

For example, in the above painting our concentration might reflect St. Francis riding on his horse back to the abbey when he spots a poor man in the cold without a coat. He is overwhelmed with compassion for the man almost to the point of tears, he needs to stop his horse and cover this poor man with his mantle to relieve his distress. The poor man at first hesitates because he feels he is not worthy of such a garment but he relents when he sees that St. Francis does not judge him and he is pure in his heart giving the mantle to him without any expectations. Even the horse feels humbled by this gesture and bows down in respect. The poor man puts the mantle on and he now stands up straight, renewed and filled with gratitude and new perspective on life in which he now considers who he might be able to help.

In an example from our own life, we might bring to the mind the time we saw an older man on the side of a dark and desolate road and his car had a flat tire. We were hungry and tired and just wanted to get home and relax but we saw how desperate the man looked so we stopped and helped him change the tire. Our nice clothes got dirty and it wasn't an easy task but we kept smiling and reassuring him that he would be fine and, on his way, shortly. When we were finished, he tried to give us money but we politely refused and wished him well. It was then almost with tears in his eyes he told he was on his way to visit his dying wife in the hospital and how important it was for her to see him every day.

The Morning Exercise: Concentration

The goal of concentration exercise is to transform your desire body into a “separate vehicle of consciousness” so that you can become *clairvoyant* in the sense that you are now free to explore things of the Desire World. The concentration exercise should be performed when you first wake up in the morning as you will be trying to regain your connection to the Desire World and you have not let the cares and concerns of our everyday lives come upon you yet. Therefore, your best chance of reconnecting to the Desire World is when you first wake up in the morning with a clear mind and your connection to the invisible worlds is still fresh and still somewhat active.

Start with Relaxation

Ideally, you should remain in your bed in a supine (laying on your back) position with your feet apart, your arms by your sides with your palms upward, and your eyes closed. If necessary, you can stand momentarily or stretch quickly to relieve any pain or discomfort your body might have in the morning. Start relaxing the body, by focusing your attention on a few slow, deep breaths and continue to slowly inhale and exhale until you find a smooth and relaxing rhythm by the 4-7-8 *breathing technique* or *diaphragmatic breathing* (process described later). Then begin a process of full body relaxation through *Progressive Muscle Relaxation* (PMR), starting from the head and concluding with your feet. Yet, relieving the tension in your muscles is only the first part of being “perfectly relaxed”, you also need to relax or calm the mind.

As simple as it sounds, just closing your eyes can help calm your mind. Then focusing on your breathing allows you to stay in the present moment and helps to prevent any stray thoughts from entering your mind. The deep breathing and the 4-7-8 technique or diaphragmatic breathing that you started your relaxation process with is an excellent method of calming the mind as it will slow down your heart rate, reduce stress levels, and lower your blood pressure. The *Progressive Muscle Relaxation* (PMR) is also an excellent technique to calm the mind by releasing tension and decreasing our stress.

Being in the Present with God Brings Relaxation

Remember to *keep yourself in the moment* of relaxation so that every time you start to think about something from the past or future you shift your thinking to being in the present moment of relaxation.

Finally, part of the calmness of your mind comes from the fact that you know you are *never* alone, God is always with you.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9 KJV)

I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. (Psalm 16:8 KJV)

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

(Matthew 28: 19-20 KJV)

Relaxation Techniques

4-7-8 Breathing Technique

- Inhale for 4 seconds,
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds, and
- Exhale for 8 seconds.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Breathe in deeply through your nose, sending the air towards the lower abdomen, allowing it to rise upward while keeping the chest still and not moving upward
- Then exhale while tightening the abdominal muscles, moving it down to its original position as you exhale through pursed lips

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- Create tension in the muscles of given area as you inhale for five seconds.
Then go to the next step and relax the muscles in the given area. Start the process (tension-relax) from the head and move progressively to the feet (or reverse if you prefer):
 - Head (Forehead, Eyes, Mouth and Jaw)
 - Neck and Shoulders
 - Arms (Upper and Lower) and hands
 - Chest
 - Abdomen
 - Buttocks and Hips
 - Legs: Upper and Lower
 - Feet
- After the first group of muscles (in the Head) have been tensed, then allow the tensed muscles in the given area to relax as you exhale. Keep your focus on the muscle group as it moves from tension to release. Then move to the next set of muscles in the given area (1. Neck and Shoulders, 2. Arms and Hands, 3. Chest, 4. Abdomen, 5. Buttocks and Hips, 6. Legs, and Feet) and repeat the process until all areas have been relaxed.
- Over time you can make the muscle groups larger to shorten the time of the *Progressive Muscle Relaxation* (i.e., 1. Head, 2. Neck/Shoulders/Arms/Hands, 3. Chest/Stomach, and 4.

Buttocks/Hips/Legs/Feet) and/or skip the tension part of the exercise and work your way through each group of muscles by only relaxing the muscles in the given area (“Relax Only Method”).

Concentrating Your Thought Forms

We all at many different times throughout the day daydream or fantasize about how we would really like to live our lives, our ultimate desires, and things we would like to become really good at so we could impress others. Yet, for most of us this is *not* concentrating because we are not focusing on something that is pure and uplifting and we have not completely focused our attention on a specific ideal and held it there without letting any other thoughts catch our attention and draw it away from our ideal. Our mind is simply bouncing between different thoughts and ideas. In concentration we must create images, concepts, feelings, or thoughts that are as real or even more realistic than the actual ones so we can *lock* our attention on one or on a specific aspect or component of one.

At first the images and pictures we create will be blurry, fleeting, or constantly changing or the concepts and thoughts will lack structure, organization, or specificity. Our goal should be to learn to withdraw or still our senses and then concentrate exclusively on your mental images, concepts, feelings, or thought forms for at least *five* minutes. The thoughts of these things and the thought forms they produce represent the foremost power we can learn to possess to drive our ongoing

spiritual development. Max Heindel refers to this as our “true imagination generated by the spirit from within”.

As we discussed previously, the difficulty and what will require the utmost dedication and persistence lies in developing the ability to focus your thought so as you concentrate your mind will *zoom in*, *lock on to*, and *hold* only one image, concept, feeling, or thought. Everything else will be lost from your mind’s field of view and your power can now be “concentrated” into your thought form so that you can now observe the “spiritual side of an object” or watch as an idea becomes “illuminated by spiritual light”. Once we are able to control our concentration in our thoughts and meet the required threshold of power for our thought-forms we can then use their thought-force to obtain *any* knowledge and understanding from the invisible worlds and answer life’s most difficult questions and solve our most challenging problems. When we have sufficient thought-force we no longer waste our time in worry of possible obstacles as they are all eliminated through our concentration. Therefore, all of mankind’s greatest accomplishments and successes are a direct result of “persistent concentration on the desired end”.

After sufficient and consistent daily practice, we will adequately develop the skill of holding a completely realistic image within our minds and the vortices in our Desire bodies will begin to spin even though the Desire Body is within the Dense Body. With continued practice it will require less and less effort to start the spin of the vortices and over time they will begin to spin more rapidly.

Filling the Vacuum in Your Mind

At this point, we are ready for the next step. We now must take the image that we have placed within our minds and remove it quickly and completely. This could be compared to having an image on a television screen and then cutting the power to the television so the television screen immediately turns blank. When you do this with the image in your mind, it eliminates the one thing your mind was focusing on so your mind should now have no other thoughts within it. Max Heindel refers to removing the image in your mind as creating a “vacuum” and that vacuum leaves a space or void that can be filled by something new.

After sufficient concentration, your mind will be ready to *fill the vacuum* with a view from the Desire World, but you must be patient as it will take considerable time before your *inner eye* receives a view and, in most cases, your first views of the Desire World will be fleeting. Don’t force this step or let the mind fool you with false visions of the Desire World. Once you begin to experience the Desire World through your inner eye, the duration of your visions will increase over time with each new vision building upon the previous visions. With time you will be able to request what you would like to see from the Desire World and it will be granted so you may study and learn from it.

Concentrating on Bible Passages

In addition, to concentrating on simple objects that are “pure and uplifting”, we can also turn to the Bible for passages that can offer us great benefit in our spiritual progress such as *Psalms 1:1-3* and *John 1:1-5*. As Max Heindel suggests, we can even go one step beyond and memorize these passages so that we can come to a better understanding of God’s character and will, strengthen our mind, and provide us with wisdom and knowledge on important and spiritual topics. When we memorize biblical scriptures as God has commanded us to it deepens our faith and puts His divine words within our hearts so the Holy Spirit has the opportunity to replay these words, build upon these words, connect them to other words or images, and set you forward to new ideas and concepts to deepen your spiritual development.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. (Deuteronomy 11:18 KJV)

Psalm 1:1-3 KJV

The Psalms or “Songs of Praise” are sacred lyrical poems that are actually prayers that were originally meant to be sung with a musical accompaniment. In fact, the Psalms were the prayers most commonly prayed by Jesus, sometimes even in song with His disciples.

The first Psalm is considered the *Psalm of Psalms* as it with *Psalm Two* introduces us to the teaching nature of the Psalms and their use as prayers. *Psalm One* is classified as a *wisdom psalm* because if we study it closely it teaches us that if we choose to follow the will of God then we will be blessed and can expect happiness and joy in our lives. It consists of two parts; verses 1-3 representing a law-abiding person and their path to happiness and life and verses 4-6 representing a wicked person and their path to misery and death. Yet, this is our choice, a critical choice in how we become righteous before God. Therefore, it is easy to understand why Max Heindel suggests that we spend time concentrating on the first three verses of *Psalm One*. The thoughts we think determine how we act in life, as our thoughts are responsible for producing our feelings that then lead to our actions.

*¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the
scornful.*

*² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he
meditate day and night.*

*³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that
bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither;
and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

In the first part of *Psalms 1* (verses 1-3), King David describes how a man that chooses to follow a righteous life in obedience to God will be blessed by God. Not only do we accept God's Law but we consider it a blessing to love and honor God, experience His holiness, obtain His grace, and live a holy life that reflects His divine holiness. Then we become like trees growing near water that bear fruit, as we will become prosperous, experience peace, love, and joy, and grow spiritually. By avoiding sin, accepting the truth in God's Word, and remaining faithful even in difficult times we transform from within and develop a deep personal relationship that moves us closer to God.

The first Psalm considers our thoughts an essential consideration in living a righteous life. Our actions in life are a product of our thoughts and the feelings that are a result of these thoughts. Ultimately, our thoughts will influence all of our actions and words and become the reality of our lives. Therefore, if we stand firm in making the choices that honor God's Word, we will receive His blessing and become fruitful.

In TRF book, *Letter to Students*, Letter No. 52 *Concentration in the Rosicrucian Work*, Max Heindel suggests that "a lack of concentration" is our "greatest general hindrance to our progress in the spiritual work". Therefore, in order to effectively grow spiritually we need to develop our faculty of concentration using the highest form of holiness available to us, God's Word. Hence, Max Heindel encourages us to **memorize** the first three verse of *Psalms 1* so we can concentration on them and "reap the greatest harvest that we possible can from our spiritual as well as from our material efforts".

St. John's Gospel: *Cosmic Vibrations*

Although Max Heindel states the we can use any pure and uplifting thought, object, image, or concept he takes it one step forward by suggesting we consider something that is not a part of our daily life, something that goes “beyond time and space” so we step outside of our conventional view of the world. His recommendation for this is to explore the concept of *cosmogenesis* (the origin and evolution of the universe) in the first five verses of the Gospel of John in which our concentration upon this will put us in contact with cosmic vibrations.

You may concentrate with the subject of these verses in four ways,

- *concentrating on a single verse each morning,*
- *over time add verses until you are concentrating on all five verses,*
- *concentrating verse by verse on the five verses, or*
- *concentrating on all five verses together.*

Whatever way you choose, your concentration on the beginning verses of the *Gospel of John* will bring you an understanding of the creation and evolution of our universe by God and put you “in touch with cosmic vibrations”, the first sound from the beginning of time. In the bible that first sound is God speaking “*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*” (**Genesis 1:3 KJV**)

Sound is a form of energy from God that was transformed into cosmic vibrations that the universe was created from and still exists today in both sound and the light

God called forth. We can connect to these vibrations from God through concentration and prayer and thereby they heal us, expand our awareness, and move us closer to God. When we become one with the light of God then we too can be healers of others and spread peace and light as Christ did in His time on earth. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He encouraged the people to “believe in the light” and to walk in the light so as to be “children of the light” (**John 12:36 KJV**). Jesus often spoke of himself as the light of the world and in the light is truth and righteousness and our path to salvation that stresses faith and obedience to Him if we are to receive eternal life.

St. John's Gospel: *John 1: 1-5 KJV*

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² The same was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Concentration in Prayers

Max Heindel has gone as far as to say that *prayer* is actually “*proper concentration*”. In his book, *The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers, Volume I*, Question #149, he describes the process of using concentration on a “high ideal” (i.e., something you wish to obtain such as the *elevation of your mind* – which can be obtained by asking God through *prayer*) or scripture such as *The Gospel of John*. In his process, he describes how we first need to perfectly relax our bodies and then concentrate on our high ideal (or prayer) so we connect to the cosmic vibrations (Light or the manifestation of Christ).

When we completely quiet our senses the images and information from the Desire World will come to our “inner vision” so we not only come to learn and understand the mysteries of life. In prayer we also have the opportunity to empower the thoughts that are embedded within a prayer into sufficiently energized thought forces that will accomplish their desired result. (i.e., the healing of others, praise and thanks of God, etc.) Interestingly, Rudolf Steiner (*Letter*, 1904, History and Contents, p. 74) describes the same process by which one quiets the senses and then places “a sentence from an inspired writing” (or even a prayer) into our emptied mind and we surrender completely to the feeling or thoughts it produces within us. We don’t try to figure it out in any way and “we live with it, as we would live with a child we love.”

For many people, prayer simply starts out as a repetition of read or memorized words, yet the power of this practice should not be discounted as even saying the

words can have a positive influence on the growth of one's soul and start to raise him to a higher level. With a "true prayer" such as *The Lord's Prayer*, it will always serve us regardless of how far our spiritual development has taken us. With "proper concentration" it can continuously work to open our minds to a true understanding of the outer world as well as our inner-world of Christ and how best to always serve His will and love Him and others through our unselfish service.

Therefore, as we develop and practice our powers of concentration our true prayers will never become stale or mechanical so that we can then be certain that through our persistent spiritual work upon ourselves our prayers with proper concentration will always raise us to greater spiritual levels. It is important that we develop the skill *now* in the Physical World as it would be nearly impossible in the higher possible. In the higher Worlds there are many "disturbing influences" from its "volatile, fluid conditions" which our Dense Body in the physical world can secure and protect us from.

Thomas a Kempis: *The Imitation of Christ*

Max Heindel refers to Thomas a Kempis' book, *The Imitation of Christ* as his “*own special book*” on Rosicrucian Christianity. As, he believed that this devotional classic addressed all aspects of what might be needed or addressed in one's life in the pursuit of a higher life and “to accelerate their devotional nature”.

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

(1 Tim 4:13 KJV)

The Imitation of Christ calls the reader to imitate and study the life and habits of Christ so that we might grow in our spiritual life. Hence the very first line of the book reads, “*HE WHO follows Me, walks not in darkness,*” (John 8:12). If we follow or imitate the life of Christ then his light will guide our way, show us truth and wisdom, and provide us with peace and salvation.

*We must imitate Christ's life and his ways if we are to be truly enlightened and set free from the darkness of our own hearts. Let it be the most important thing we do, then, to reflect on the life of Jesus Christ. – **The Imitation of Christ***

The Imitation of Christ was a book, actually four books, written in the 1400's by the monk, Thomas a Kempis, as an instructional guide for the spiritual life of monks. It addresses the start of a brother's life in the monastery, how one's spiritual life should progress, and the sacrament of Holy Communion. The overall theme of the book

focuses on *humility* which is considered to be the “antidote” to our greatest obstacle, our *pride*.

“Make your own Bible. Select and collect all the words and sentences that in all your readings have been to you like the blast of a trumpet.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

The four books of *The Imitation of Christ* are:

- Book 1: *Admonitions, Useful for the Spiritual Life*
- Book 2: *Admonitions Concerning Internal Things*
- Book 3: *Of Internal Consolation*
- Book 4: *Concerning the Holy Communion.*

Each book consists of chapters that deal with a specific topic, *such as*:

- *Imitation of Christ and contempt for worldly vanities,*
- *Intimate friendship with Jesus,*
- *Humble obedience following the example of Jesus Christ,*
- *Submit in faith to Christ as an imitator not an investigator, etc.*

For instance, in Chapter Two Thomas a Kempis encourages us to have a *humble opinion* of ourselves and to understand that the possession of knowledge and talent does not make us better than others, it means we must have greater humility and

understand that we have much more to learn in our journey of self-realization and things can always change.

*EVERY man naturally desires knowledge; but what good is knowledge without fear of God? Indeed a humble rustic who serves God is better than a proud intellectual who neglects his soul to study the course of the stars. ... The more you know and the better you understand, the more severely will you be judged, unless your life is also the more holy. Do not be proud, therefore, because of your learning or skill. Rather, fear because of the talent given you. If you think you know many things and understand them well enough, realize at the same time that there is much you do not know. ... Wherefore, if you see another sin openly or commit a serious crime, do not consider yourself better, for you do not know how long you can remain in good estate. – **The Imitation of Christ***

His writing of the book was constructed as specific directions in the first two books for the reader and directions embedded within a narrative between Christ and a disciple for the next two books. It was written to reflect the “humility, discipline and love” of Jesus Christ so as to provide specific information on how to best *imitate* (follow) Him in their daily lives.

*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world:
he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light
of life. (John 8:12 KJV)*

In his form of imitation, Thomas a Kempis provided guidance for inner spiritual development and the establishment of ideal virtues of a Christian interior life. And just as with St. Francis, he tried to impress a great love for the Eucharist and its connection to Christ as an being essential to one's spiritual development and progression in their imitation of Christ.

*For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart
within them so vehemently burneth, whilst Thou, O blessed Jesus, dost
walk and converse with them. – **The Imitation of Christ***

In order to imitate Christ, it is essential that we put our entire trust in Him and not trust others or even yourself. We should accept that humility will bring us suffering, because it through our suffering we grow spiritually and learn to completely submit ourselves to God. In addition, we need to separate ourselves from the temporal thing of this life and focus on the things of heaven in our next life.

*For Thou, O Lord, my God, art best above all things; Thou only art the
Most High, Thou only the Almighty, Thou only the All-sufficient, and the
Fulness of all things; Thou only the All-delightsome and the All-
comforting; Thou alone the altogether lovely and altogether loving;*

Thou alone the Most Exalted and Most Glorious above all things; in Whom all things are, and were, and ever shall be, altogether and all-perfect. And thus it falleth short and is insufficient whatsoever Thou givest to me without Thyself or whatsoever Thou revealest or dost promise concerning Thyself, whilst Thou art not seen or fully possessed: since verily my heart cannot truly rest nor be entirely content, except it rest in Thee, and go beyond all gifts and every creature.

- *The Imitation of Christ*

Thomas a Kempis calls upon us to not only have “humility, resignation, and patience” in our spiritual life but to make sure that we also fulfill our duties for ourselves and others. Whatever we do we should always seek to do our best and build upon our knowledge so we may better serve others so that they so they see us as examples of living a righteous life for the glory of Christ. By living a life of service, “walking the path of duty”, we will increase our spiritual consciousness so that we can apply of higher knowledge we gained of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is

first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

(James 3:13-18 KJV)

As Max Heindel states, the reasons that the Rosicrucian Fellowship's exercises work so well is they not only impart spiritual knowledge to us but they make you suitable, quite ready, and "well-placed" to have and use that knowledge as clay vessels that are ready to be filled with the finest wine. We become the wise man that build our home upon the rocks, just as when we believe in and accept Jesus Christ, so that our belief is a total commitment to Him.

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

(Luke 14:34-35 KJV)

Concentrating on the Writing of Thomas a Kempis

The Devotional Exercises of the TRF, such as the morning exercise of concentration, build our connection to our inner Christ. In addition, they provide the means by which we come to learn compassion by feeling the pain and suffering of our brothers and learn how we can alleviate it.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. (Psalm 119:71 KJV)

Therefore, in *Questions and Answers, Vol. 2*, Max Heindel advises students everyday as part of their morning exercise to select a sentence from Thomas a Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* to concentrate on for *six to eight* minutes. He describes the effect of this concentration on a sentence from *The Imitation of Christ* as filling your consciousness so that a "spiritually alive thought" is absorbed into every aspect of our being. While it also builds your strength to provide you with the courage and confidence you need to overcome life's obstacles and persevere so you can continue to spiritually grow and fulfill God's will.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24 KJV)

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. (Psalm 73:26 KJV)

Sample Sentences to Concentrate on from *The Imitation of Christ*

- *Let our chief effort; therefore, be to study the life of Jesus Christ.*
- *IT IS good for us to have trials and troubles at times, for they often remind us that we are on probation and ought not to hope in any worldly thing.*
- *Sorrow opens the door to many a blessing which dissoluteness usually destroys.*
- *Christ will come to you offering His consolation, if you prepare a fit dwelling for Him in your heart, whose beauty and glory, wherein He takes delight, are all from within.*
- *If you know how to suffer in silence, you will undoubtedly experience God's help.*
- *Simplicity leads to God, purity embraces and enjoys Him.*
- *The noble lover does not rest in the gift but in Me Who am above every gift.*

- *Divine love conquers all and enlarges the powers of the soul.*
- *Habit already formed will resist you, but it shall be overcome by a better habit.*
- *The better you dispose yourself to suffer, the more wisely you act and the greater is the reward promised you.*

Why Read Spiritual books, such as *The Imitation of Christ*:

"The harm that comes to souls from the lack of reading holy books makes me shudder... What power spiritual reading has to lead to a change of course, and to make even worldly people enter into the way of perfection." **St. Padre Pio**

"Spiritual reading, therefore, is slow, deliberate, meditative reading in which we allow the words to penetrate our heart and question our spirit." **Henri J.M. Nouwen**

"You will not see anyone who is truly striving after his spiritual advancement who is not given to spiritual reading."

St. Athanasius

How to Read *The Imitation of Christ*:

Spiritual Reading & Lectio Divina

In spiritual reading we read spiritual classics such as *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis and even magazine and online spiritual articles so we can grow in *divine love*. In spiritual reading we read anything that reflects God's glory, speaks to a devout, spiritual, or holy life, helps us grow in our dedication to God, or teaches us how to live a life that is pure, righteous, or sacred in the eyes of God. A very common type of spiritual reading is the lives of saints and the writings of the church Doctors so that we can learn through the example of others who have greatly pleased God or their significant contribution to church doctrine. *Lectio Divina* or divine reading is a form of spiritual reading that is primarily used for the Bible.

Spiritual Reading and *St. Alphonsus de Liguori*

In his book *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, St. Alphonsus de Liguori, the patron saint of lawyers, moralists, confessors, and moral theologians writes a section entitled "*On Spiritual Reading*" which he describes spiritual books as "not less useful than mental prayer". It was his firm belief that "spiritual reading and prayer are the arms by which ... paradise is won.". St Bernard expands upon this concept, that we should "seek" holy and devout thoughts by reading spiritual books then when we meditate upon what we have read we will find what we were seeking, as "reading puts into the mouth the food that is afterward masticated by meditation".

In addition, spiritual books act as "shields" to protect us from our own negative thoughts. While they can also function as a "mirror" to help us identify our own

areas of imperfections so we can work to improve them. Yet, perhaps the greatest blessing of spiritual books is that God has the opportunity to speak to us through these books and if we intently listen with an open heart and open ears, we will hear God's voice as we read. In your mind the spiritual book you are reading can be your own Sermon on the Mount, epistles from Jesus or any saint on any range of spiritual topics, private instruction on healing, divine love, service, etc. In order to effectively receive the greatest benefit ("great fruit") from spiritual books St. Alphonsus Liguori proposed a five-step approach.

St. Augustine writes that good books are, as it were, so many letters of love the Lord sends us; in them he warns us of our dangers, teaches us the way of salvation, animates us to suffer adversity, enlightens us, and inflames us with divine love. Whoever, then, desires to be saved and to acquire divine love, should often read these letters of paradise.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*

St. Alphonsus Liguori Steps for Spiritual Reading

1. Start with a Prayer

As God will speak to you through the reading of your spiritual book it is proper if you first let God know you are ready to hear His voice and to obey His commands. It is helpful to also God to open our minds so we fully understand His will during the

course of our reading. St. Alphonsus Liguori recommends starting with the words of Samuel: “*Speak; for thy servant heareth*”. And adding “O my Lord, for I wish to obey Thee in all that Thou wilt make known to me to be Thy will.”

*And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times,
Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant
heareth. (1 Samuel 3:10 KJV)*

2. Continue Slowly

Spiritual reading differs in most reading in that its purpose is not to acquire knowledge but to open ourselves to new realities so that we may enrich ourselves in a greater wealth of divine love. Therefore, we need to slow down while reading and not read quickly just to finish because we are simply trying to satisfy our curiosity.

3. Meditate While Reading

As you read your spiritual book *slowly* you should put your full *concentration* on what you are reading. For this St. Augustine makes the analogy that nutrients for your body only come from “well masticated food” or spiritual information that is read slowly and concentrated upon from the spiritual books so that your body can use it to “nourish your soul”. After a while as you read spiritual books, you may notice that the words themselves dictate the pace (tempo) at which you read them and they become less “static” and more dynamic in terms of what they are intended to present to the reader. Just as in music where there are rests, periods of silence,

reading should also include times of silence when we begin to fully concentrate while reading.

Concentration during reading may mean going line-by-line or short paragraph-by short paragraph so that you are not only fully connected to what the words are saying but you are establishing connections with these words to other things or texts (past, present, and future), the symbolism they touch upon, chronology, theology, consider its application to your own life, etc. Remember, when we concentrate, we allow any of your other thoughts or emotions about the text to simply pass and not distract us so that we can stay in the present moment with the spiritual book.

Ideally, what we read has to be read more than once!

4. Pause to Pray at Heartfelt Times

There will be times when you are reading a spiritual book that something special or insightful touches you or “penetrates the heart”. So, stop reading and offer a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to God. Do not be concerned if you have only read a brief amount in your spiritual book before you stop to offer a pray to God. Its not about finishing the book – it’s about mining the *divine love* from the book and then remembering to thank God when you do find it. Also, allow your prayer to remain active and conclude of its own volition.

5. Take a Thought with You During Yor Day

After you have finished your spiritual reading, there should be some idea, concept, application, or practice that you can reflect upon throughout the day in terms of how it might apply to your life and how you want to interact with others. As you go

throughout your day visualize this idea, concept, application, or practice, write some notes or thoughts about it, talk to a trusted friend/mentor about this, try a few simple attempts and notice the reactions of others, etc.

Reading and Increasing Our Powers of Concentration

Annie Besant in her book, *Thought Power: Its Control and Culture*, is emphatic that the real power of reading lies in taking the time to think about what we have read so that have a real understanding of the author's thoughts and ideas and how he or she is using this information to create a connection with us so that we can take in his or her words and let them grow within us. Her suggestion is to use a method by which one is "reading less and thinking more, by a ratio of 2:1." This means that if we plan on spending for an hour, then we should be spending only *twenty* minutes in the reading the spiritual book and *forty* minutes in "strenuous thinking" about the reading. In your thinking time you have set of questions you can ask yourself about any reading, examples might include:

What is the main idea or what idea/concept is the author trying to explain?

How well does the author's examples or evidence support their ideas or position?

What would help you to better understand the author's ideas or position?

What questions do you have in terms of the author's ideas or position?

How accepting or believable do you find the author's ideas or position?

How would explain the author's ideas and position to someone else?

How could you organize the author's ideas or position into a visual image?

Lectio Divina or “Divine Reading”

In *lectio divina* you employ a “mediative approach” to your reading in which your concentration brings forth the truth and wisdom of the words in each line or passage of scripture. The Bible calls for us to meditate or “focus the mind” or *concentrate* on the Scriptures (Psalm 1:2-3) and then we can expect God’s blessing.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

(Psalm 1:2-3)

Although, this ancient practice was originally intended for the Bible it also works well for any spiritual reading. It is considered a form of prayer through which God enters our presence and we can hear His divine voice. Its creation is thought to have been derived from the Jewish practice of reading the *Haggadah* and then brought to Christian practices in the sixth century by St. Gregory of Nyssa and then made more well known by the founder of the Benedictine Order, St. Benedict of Nursia.

“There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call lectio divina. It consists of reading God’s word in a moment of prayer and allowing it to enlighten and renew us.” - Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 152

There are four phases (4 R's) of Lectio Divina;

Read (*lectio*),

Reflect (*meditatio*),

Respond (*oratio*), and

Rest (*contemplatio*).

“Diligently practice prayer and lectio divina. When you pray, you speak with God, when you read, God speaks to you.” – St. Cyprian

Procedure for *Lectio Divina* on a Spiritual Reading

a. Prepare yourself by Entering into Silence (*Silencio*)

Close your eyes and then take slow deep breaths for a minute or so to completely relax yourself. As you breath out feel the muscles in body let go, allowing you to settle down into the center of your body so that you feel open and receptive to hearing God speak to you.

Sample Short Prayer to Open Your Mind to God's Words

Lord, Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; and I shall observe it with my whole heart. Open my mind that I might understand your divine words from these spiritual books and apply them always to my life so I might glorify your name. Amen

- Based on *Psalms 119:34* and *Luke 24:45*

READ (*Lectio*)

b. Once your body and mind are relaxed, open your eyes.

Now begin to slowly read the spiritual book (i.e., *The Imitation of Christ*) and listen carefully to the words and see what word or words really speak to you, feel yourself being drawn to, or speak to your heart. Take your time, in some cases, it might also be the feelings that it brings within you. So just savor the moment and enjoy the beauty of the words as well as the truth and wisdom they are offering you if you slow down enough to notice.

REFLECT (*Meditatio*)

c. Reread the passage from your spiritual book again for a second time making certain to continue to take your time and enjoy the many layers of the beauty, truth, and wisdom within the words. Now spend some time reflecting on how God, Jesus, or a prophet said these same words or how They might have felt having heard others now speaking these words, what they might have added, a story they would have told, or what Jesus or one of the prophets from the Old Testament might ask of you now that you have heard these words. Just try to listen to what the reading is telling you and not try *not* to conduct a detailed examination of what you have read. God is speaking to you, do Him the honor of **LISTENING** and then put then His words into your mind so you might allow these words the needed time to renew your mind and transform your thinking and even change your attitudes and thereby bring you into the light.

RESPOND (*Oratio*),

d. Reread the passage from your spiritual book for a third time.

Now you are ready to respond to what you heard in the passage from your spiritual book. This is your conversation with God, talk to Him about you connected with in the reading passage and why. Don't hold back, be honest it is not about trying to be as holy as possible it is about being as honest as possible to the One you love the most. He already knows how you feel but it is important that you have the courage and strength to tell Him so you can come to understand God's plan and accept His will within His plan. Often times when we talk with someone, we come to solve our own problems, let go of our pain, suffering, and resentment so we are more willing to forgive, and we open ourselves to new possibilities.

Note: Afterwards write your thoughts and learnings in your journal so you can look at it again at a later time and reflect on it again and even discuss it with God in your prayers.

RELAX (*Contemplatio*).

e. Reread the from your spiritual book for a fourth time.

In the first three steps of *Lectio Divina* you exerted a tremendous amount of energy to be in the presence of God and hear His voice. Now is the time you can simply "rest in the arms of God". Quietly finish by spending 5-10 minutes in silence as this is your reward.

Finally, recite a short prayer to God (i.e., *The Lord's Prayer, Our Father, The Jesus Prayer, Prayer to the Holy Spirit*, etc.)

“Lectio Divina is an opportunity to slow down and experience God's Word deeply. An opportunity to savor the words of Scripture, to sit at God's table, to be nourished, fed and refreshed. An invitation to be fully present with our holy God.” - Cindee Snider Re

The Rosicrucian Services and the Use of Concentration

As students of TRF we will be called upon to participate in *Fellowship Services* throughout the year that require us to use our powers of *concentration* for the abstract concepts of *Divine Love, Service, Healing*, and on a specific object, and *The Rosicrucian Fellowship Emblem*. Therefore, let us consider these events that call for our powers of concentration and their meaning in our lives.

The Spring Equinox

*For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers
appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the
voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her
green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

(Song of Solomon 2:11-13 KJV)

The Spring Equinox is the beginning of spring a time in which our days become longer than our nights. It is a celebration in the nature world of new life and for many new beginnings. In astrology, the spring ushers in the *Aries Season*, the beginning of the astrological year filled with energy and exciting new possibilities. While for Christians, it is the time of Easter when Christ ascended to heaven to return His Father's throne for a season. With spring a great release of energy is cast upon the earth bringing with it hope, opportunity, and ways in which to learn the lessons needed to bring us to higher places and experience new worlds. When we

work with the cosmic laws, we too may weave a *Gold Wedding Garment* so that we may become sons of God with a cosmic consciousness that allows us to be one and walk with God in his most holy light and love and “then we shall be able to imitate the Easter Sun and soar into the higher sphere.” Therefore, this a time of reflection for what is needed to further our soul growth. As Easter involves the resurrection, we too must look to the time that too are free from sin and death.

Summer Solstice

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. (Proverbs 10:5 KJV)

In the Northern Hemisphere the summer solstice occurs in June when the tilt of the earth towards the sun is at its maximum so that on that day the earth has its longest day. As the Sun represents our consciousness it is the time that we are most conscious of ourselves. In astrology, the summer solstice begins with the *Cancer Sun Season* and signals the time for us to look inward for our spiritual growth and evolution. Yet, the summer requires for us to wait for the efforts we have put forward in the spring. It requires that we create goals and re-establish relationships within our home and family as well as work on our own personal development. At the solstice, the Christ Spirit is at “the throne of the Father” and in July and August He is “rebuilding His Life Spirit vehicle” so that He can “rejuvenate the Earth” with His “mystical wave of vital energy” and also provide the spiritual force for everything upon the Earth to continue to evolve. Without the Cosmic Christ there is

no physical basis of for the body and blood of Christ on the earth so therefore there would be nothing to change in nature to a spiritual form in which eventually the highest form that could be obtained would be Christ.

Autumn Equinox

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (James 5:7-8 KJV)

On the Autumn Equinox the sun is directly over the equator and day and night are roughly equal in duration which is why it is a time to find balance in your life. This usually occurs in September on the 22 or the 23rd. Generally speaking, the autumn equinox represents an important time in the agricultural process, the “abundance of the harvest”, therefore you need to think of manifesting abundance in your life. In addition, it is a time when we show gratitude for the different activities and affairs that we applied ourselves to throughout the year and the outcomes and rewards they produced for yourself and others. We also take this time to review how effective our efforts were and where we could most successful and where we still need to work on improvements in terms of harvests of products and ourselves. On the Autumn Equinox it is important to consider your health and well-being as the Sun will now be in that part of your astrological chart so it is important to review your

daily actions to see if anything could affect your health or well-being negatively. In addition to your health and well-being, the Autumn Equinox is a special time to “reflect on our inner growth, release stagnant energies, and set intentions for the upcoming season.” When we work on ourselves spiritually so as to be in the light of God, we also harvest our own spiritual fruits. The only way for us to grow spiritually is through soul growth through service to others. It is the responsibility of as many of us as possible to evolve our souls’ bodies so that we can carry forward the work of Christ. Accept and make use of the spiritual vibrations that are saturating your body during the autumn months and we will find ourselves close to the “Day of Liberation”.

Winter Solstice

Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

(Jeremiah 36:21-22 KJV)

The winter solstice brings the longest night and the shortest day usually on December 21 or 22 in the northern Hemisphere. Even though the winter solstice has the longest night we need to remember that each of the following days will bring successively greater light therefore even in this time of darkness it is a time of hope and resilience for the upcoming year and our ability to rise above the darkness.

“The winter solstice is a reminder that true wisdom comes from embracing the cycles of life, and finding beauty in the darkness as well as the light.” – Thich Nhat Han

The key to our success will be in our powers of “introspections and reflection” so that you look inward to your inner light and its connection to your Spirit so you can you are fully aware of God’s will for you and your life then you will be capable of growth, rebirth, transformation as well as leaving behind what is no longer needed in your life. The winter solstice holds the energy we need for the new beginnings in our lives as well opportunities to express our creativity and “set our intentions” for the new year.

“The winter solstice is a time to cultivate inner peace and stillness, to find solace in the quiet moments of reflection.” – Pema Chödrön

In terms of astrology, the Sun moves into *Capricorn* during the winter solstice and for those born at this time it will greatly influence their “career, relationships, and personal growth.”.

"The winter solstice has always been special to me as a barren darkness that gives birth to a verdant future beyond imagination, a time of pain and withdrawal that produces something joyfully inconceivable, like a monarch butterfly masterfully extracting itself from the confines of its cocoon, bursting forth into unexpected glory." - Gary Zukav

During the winter in the Northern Hemisphere the spiritual light that strikes the Earth is at its greatest power and strikes the Earth at right angles which strongly stimulates spirituality and inhibits physical activities. This time of year, is very special in that it is most favorable to our spiritual growth and even the small efforts give us maximum returns.

The Gift of the Winter Solstice

Within the Earth's ever beating Heart,

Wheat and Grapes are now but future thoughts.

The Oak King reluctantly drops his last rust-colored leaf,

As the Holly King proudly steps forward to the throne.

Light slowly dissipates daily as Yin bows to the Yang,

Positive energy gradually raises its vibration, signaling

The goddess Beiwe to enter the nighttime sky in flight,

Reassuring our desire and inner need for greater light.

Nature's rhythms are our continuous drum beats,

The Yew's death is only the beginning of its resurrection.

Do not sleep but search and collect your vital wood.

Light, heat and life are unlocked from the burning Jul logs,

Reminding us of the joyful return of the life-giving Sun.

The sun has not stood still nor slumbered this special day,

*It is our path that has changed leaving us time to reflect,
On our journey of rebirth, renewal, and transformation.*

*The Light of Winter now only shines and rises through the stones,
As those with lights upon their heads carry our spiritual food.
Light the lanterns, Burn the clocks so our minds free to new possibilities,
It is time to release the slaves we carry in our thoughts and beliefs.
As the Earth regenerates so must we, welcome the sun within us,
Pause, reconnect and help the sun to shine and resonate more brightly.
There will be victory in light over darkness in the start of your new season,
Forces of light and vibration are there to make it so, just open your heart!*

- G. E. Carlin

The Yule-tide feast and Christmas we not only celebrate the birth of Jesus who in the future will bring us back into the light but a time that brings a renewing of our “love-life of our Heavenly Father”. The birth of Jesus promises us another year of a new life and with His direct spiritual impulse He opened a time for all of us to take this impulse directly. The *Star of Bethlehem* appears in the winter solstice and brings with it “life, light, and love” that shines upon all of mankind.

What is most important is that we learn to seek and grow the Christ within ourselves so that we can continue to do Christ’s work and much more. But this will only happen when we accept this belief and seriously dedicate our lives to cultivating the “Christ WITHIN before we can perceive the Christ without”. But we

must understand that the *Star of Bethlehem* will not lead us to a manger in foreign land but to ourselves where the Christ is within us.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (John 14:12 KJV)

TRF Services and Their Subjects of Concentration

TRF Service	Subject of Concentration
<i>Spring Equinox Service</i> <i>Summer Solstice Service</i> <i>Autumn Equinox Service</i> <i>Winter Solstice Service</i>	<i>Divine Love and Service</i>
<i>The Temple Service</i>	<i>Service</i>
<i>Healing Service</i>	The Rosicrucian Fellowship Emblem and <i>Healing</i>

Previously, we explored how you might concentrate on a living organism (i.e., Maple Tree), Christ, sentences from a spiritual book (i.e., *The Imitation of Christ*), and verses from the Gospels and Psalms. However, now in these Rosicrucian Fellowship Services we are now being asked to concentrate on something very different, abstract *concepts* such as *Divine Love*, *Service*, and *Healing*. First, we will explore what each of these concepts represents and then we will consider how we can expand each concept so we can then visualize these concepts by using a concept map, a mind map, a line from a Psalm or an image.

Understanding Concepts

First, we need to understand what a concept is so we can bring it into our minds and then concentrate on it. Although concepts are often defined simply as *thoughts and idea*, it is important to see the concept as the *understanding* that is drawn from facts, laws, theories, hypotheses, and the deeper and more complete understandings and explanations of thoughts and ideas. So, while a concept initially may start as an idea or thought within our minds, it cannot be directly observed with our physical senses. However, once the concept is applied to an object, condition, or action then it can be observed, studied, which gives us a better understanding of how we might then concentrate upon a given concept.

Strictly speaking, concepts are general, more abstract ideas that are applied to specific objects, conditions, and phenomenon. For example, *Faith* is a general concept that can be applied to specific situations such as having complete love for God and others, confidence in the promises of Jesus, believing that anything is possible with Christ, etc. Concepts are *qualitative*, as they are purely descriptive and do not consist of any specific numeric or measurement values. Ultimately, concepts are used in the process of understanding *principles* connected to objects, conditions, and actions; or more simply stated for man, the how's and why's for the things we do or things that happen in our lives.

Therefore, it is essential that we take some time consider a concept we are going to concentrate on. The first thing we might consider is a general definition of the given concept taken from a standard dictionary.

Concept	Standard Definition
Love	<i>an intense feeling of deep affection</i>
Service	<i>the action of helping or doing work for someone</i>
Healing	<i>the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again</i>

Then we should consider a “Biblical Definition” or meaning so that the definition is more specific to the concept we are considering. This will give us a deeper and more complete definition of the concept in the context of the specific concept we wish to concentrate on. Often times it is helpful to combine *two to four* different definitions to create a thorough and precise Biblical Definition. Note that the Biblical Definition describes in detail for each concept: “what it is”, “where it comes from”, and the “use or outcome”.

Concept	Biblical Definition
Divine Love	<i>Divine Love is perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal and belongs to or is a part of God, possessing His nature and composed of His substance that He gives to us</i>
Service	<i>Following the example of Jesus’ life in which we love God the Father and love and help our fellow man, always putting others before ourselves, using the gifts God has given us.</i>
Healing	<i>Lifelong process that restores the body, mind, and spirit and makes one whole by the grace of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit through our prayer and anointing.</i>

Then to make certain we fully understand the concept and how we might go about concentrating on it so we might collect additional thoughts, ideas, examples, etc. about the concept from other sources from which to construct a “visual” of the concept since our brains understand how to better work with visuals. In a sense, this is the *pre-work* you are doing in order to best be able to concentrate on a concept.

Creating a Visual: *Concept Maps*

A *Concept Map* is a tool that people use to help them build a visual representation of a specific topic or a core concept. Ideally, the concept map will help you envision the relationships between the core concept and other related concepts and ideas while allowing you to see both the finer details and the *big picture*. A concept map seeks to describes all aspects of a core concept and identify the many interconnections, which often also describes their effects, reasons of necessity, and possible or desired outcomes.

The core concepts (i.e., *divine love, service, healing*, etc.) and the related subordinate concepts (i.e., *body, mind, spirit, heart, faith*, etc.) are placed in circles or *nodes* that connect to other concepts with arrows typically in a hierarchical order. *Connecting Words* are written on the lines of the arrows so the information between concepts can be read as phrases or sentences. Typically connecting words are verbs (i.e., *is/are, creates, produces, flows, causes*, etc.) or short phrases (i.e., *examples include, results in, consists of, as seen in*, etc.). See Concept Map example below of “*Deep Concentration*”.

Concept Maps are an excellent way to take a single core concept word such as “*Concentration*” and create a visual representation that you can then effectively concentrate on. However, they can be *difficult* for many people to create them on their own. Therefore, a simple way to create very basic concept maps is to start by locating a short reading passage on the core concept from a text such as *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* by Max Heindel or *the Power of Concentration* by William W. Atkinson. Start by selecting *eight to ten* keywords from the reading passage below on *Deep Concentration* (identified in bold print).

Deep Concentration

*“In deep concentration you become linked with the great **creative spirit** of the universe, and the **creative energy** then flows through you, vitalizing your creations into **form**. In deep concentration your **mind** becomes attuned with the infinite and registers the **cosmic intelligence** and receives its **messages**. You become so full of the cosmic energy that you are literally flooded with **divine power**. This is a most desired state. It is then we realize the advantages of being connected with the supra-consciousness. The **supra-consciousness** registers the higher **cosmic vibrations**. It is often referred to as the **wireless station**, the message recorded coming from the universal mind.”*

- William W. Atkinson, *The Power of Conception* p. 48

Concept Map “Triangle”

You can start by constructing a triangle in which the “*core concept*” of the concept map is placed in the tip of the triangle and the three keywords are used to form the base of the triangle (*see concept map triangle below*). Then connecting words are placed “*in, above, and next to*” the arrows (*i.e., is a ..., include..., etc.*) to connect the various concepts and ideas. Below is an example of how to start a concept map from a paragraph about a *Deep Concentration*. Bolded words represent selected keywords.

Procedure to Create a *Concept Map Triangle* (to build from)

1. Identify the Core Concept: ***Deep Concentration***

Place the core concept in the top circle of the *Concept Map Triangle* (see below).

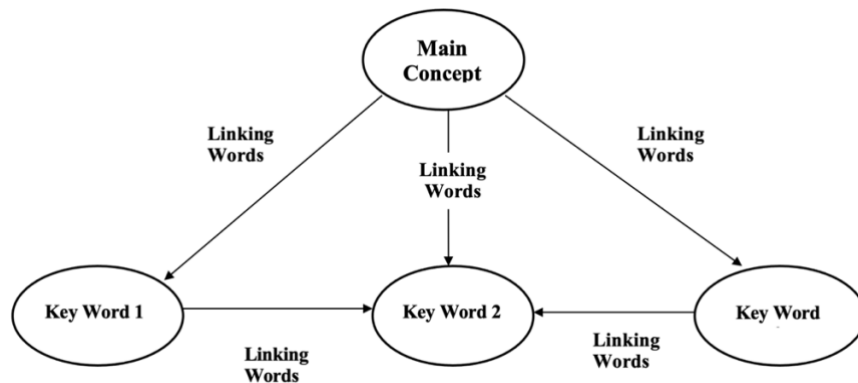
2. Select **8-10 Key Words** (*names, nouns, nouns with adjectives, even phrases*) from the paragraph about the *Deep Concentration* and place them in the table below:

Number	Key Words (Concepts and Examples)
1	<i>Creative Spirit</i>
2	<i>Creative Energy</i>
3	<i>Form</i>
4	<i>Cosmic Intelligence</i>
5	<i>Messages</i>
6	<i>Divine Power</i>
7	<i>Mind</i>
8	<i>Supra-Consciousness</i>

9	<i>Cosmic Vibrations</i>
10	<i>Wireless Station</i>

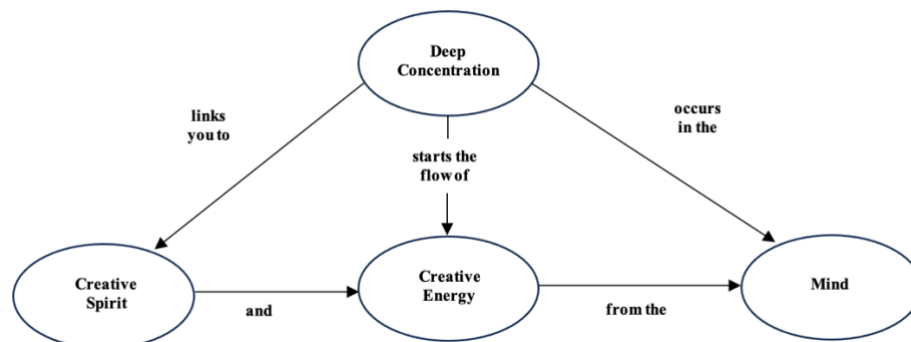
3. Place three of the most GENERAL Key Words (from your table) into the three circles on the base of the *Concept Map Triangle* (see diagram below).

Concept Map Triangle Template



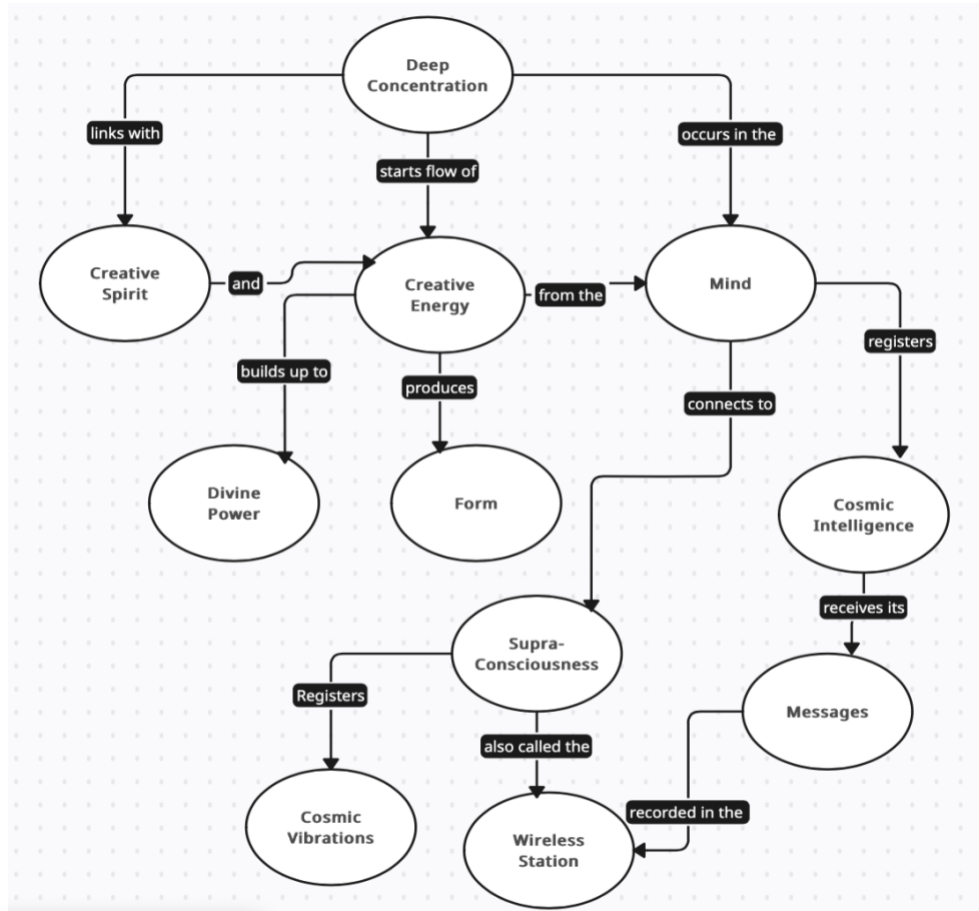
4. Draw an **arrow** to connects the MAIN Concept each of the three KEY WORD(S).

5. Write the **Linking Words** (*verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.*) *in, on or next to the arrow* that explain the relationship between each of the key words (concepts) the main concepts (see Concept Map below). For example;



Concept Map of *Deep Concentration*

Finally, using the remaining *seven* Key Words add them to your Concept Map, ideally moving from general to more specific as you move away from the Main Idea. The best concept maps make the most connections between the concepts to demonstrate how interrelated the concepts actually are.



Note the following:

- A concept (node) can have more than one line (connection) drawn from it
- Connections (lines) can be drawn in any direction to any concept (node)
- You should use additional information sources to add in additional concepts

Creating an Easier Visual for a Concept: *Mind Maps*

A *Mind Map* is another visual tool that is used to collect and organize all the knowledge you have about a topic or concept. For many people mind maps are *easier* to create as they can be created from your initial brainstorming on the concept and they follow a tree chart in their organization rather than a series of interconnected concepts that require you to create a structure.

In addition, the details on the Mind Map can be both texts and visuals (diagrams, pictures, symbols, etc.). While different colors are also commonly used to separate the different ideas and/or details on a Mind Map making them easier to read and follow the flow of information.

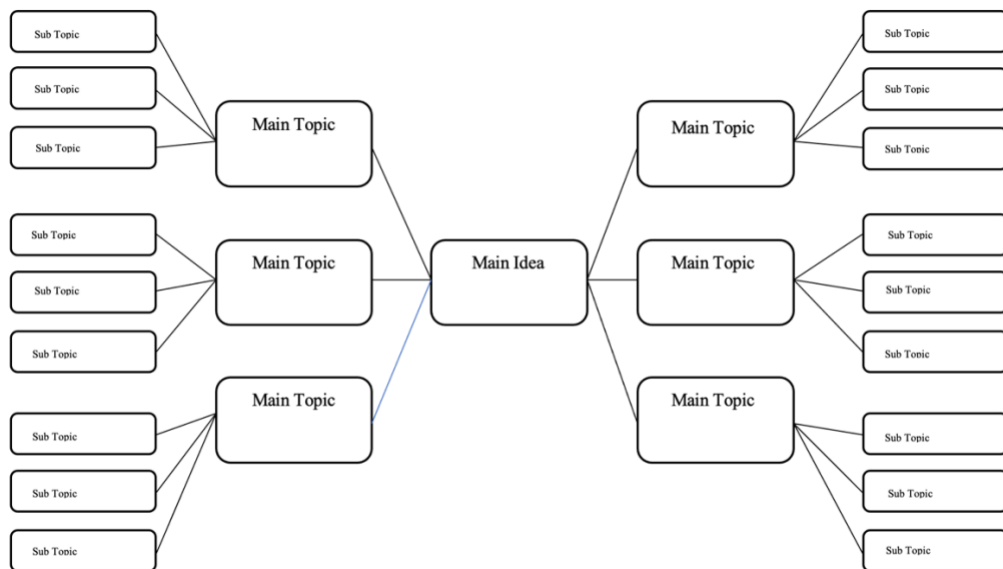
In creating a Mind Map you should start by placing your “*Core Concept*” in the center of your paper within a rectangle. Then using “*branches*” (lines) connect four to six “*Main Topics*” that relate to your Core Concept. Then for each Main Topic use branches to connect two to three “*Sub Topics*” (*see Mind Map Template below*). And the process can continue by adding another layer of information to the Sub Topics. The idea is as you move away from the Main Idea you are going from more *general* ideas and information to more *specific* ideas and information.

The use of colors is important in creating a Mind Map in that they can indicate the follow of one idea through the different levels or simply indicate the different levels of information from the Main Idea. Text can also be connected to visuals as this is extremely helpful in promoting your long-term retention and ability to link a given

concept or idea to other concepts and ideas. In addition, you can use different shapes and/or specific objects in which to include the maps information rather than the basic rectangle to make your map more memorable to you.

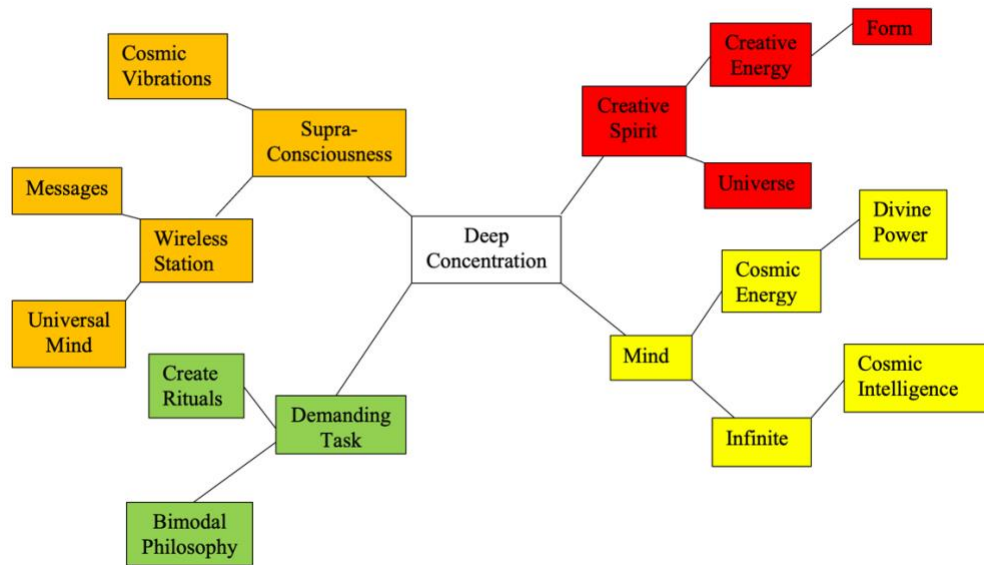
There are also *free* online Mind Mapping apps that can help and teach you the process. Just remember it is a skill and all skills take dedicated practice!

Mind Map Template



Note: The Central *Main Idea* in the above template is the *Core Concept*.

Deep Concentration Mind Map



Note: You can also use visuals (images, graphs, tables, etc.) at any point in the Mind Map in place of or in addition to the text. You can also add additional Main Topics to the Main Idea (Deep Concentration) as well as adding additional Sub Topics to the Main Topics.

Now if you were going to redraw this Mind Map, consider about the following:

- *Where would you add text on the connecting lines, why?*
- *How would you use different colors in your Map, explain?*
- *What visuals would you have used, where, why?*
- *Instead of “rectangles” for the Main Idea and the Main Topics, what shapes and/or objects would you use, where, and why?*
- *What additional information would you connect to the Sub Topics?*
- *How would you have arranged the Main Topics around the Main Idea, why?*
- *What other “Main Topics” could you have added to the Mind Map?*

Connecting a Concept to a Psalm Line

There are several other ways by which we can concentrate on a concept. One effective method is to select a line from a Psalm that represents the specific concept. It will be helpful if you **memorize** the specific Psalm line so you can put it on a “loop” and continuously play it within your mind (see example below) in order to concentrate on it. You may either visualize the Psalm line as it loops within your mind or you may speak the words as it loops within your mind.

Visualization Loops

As you visualize the words of the Psalm line there are several things you can do with the visualize words to more effectively concentrate on them.

Color the Words of the Psalm Line: Colors have different meanings and can help us more closely connect to the meaning of concept within the Psalm line. The color:

Red is often associated with Love,

Green with healing, and

Yellow with helping others or service.

As you envision the words of the Psalm in your mind color the font of the Psalm line to the specific concept color.

In the example below, the font is red because the Psalm line represents *Divine Love*.

My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself!

Change the Size of the Font for Specific Words: You may want to emphasize certain words in the Psalm by making the font larger for those words. To further emphasize the specific words, you can also make the font bold and/or capital.

My lips **praise** you because your **faithful love** is better than life itself!

My lips **PRAISE** you because your **FAITHFUL LOVE** is better than life itself!

Use Italics for Specific Words: You may want to draw your attention on a specific word or words within the Psalm line during your concentration so you can use italics for the font of the word(s). To make the italics more visible you also bold the font or underline it.

My lips praise you because your ***faithful love is better than life itself!***

My lips praise you because your *faithful love is better than life itself!*

Use a Different Font Type: Certain fonts portray specific feelings, emotions, qualities, attributes etc. Select a font that you feel best reflects the concept you are concentrating on such as Divine Love in the examples below.

My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself! (**Monotype Corsiva**)

My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself!

(**Apple Chancery**)

My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself! (**Zapfino**)

Auditory Loops

As you hear the loop of an auditory Psalm within you mind there are several ways you modify the voice you are hearing. Certain words can be modified by:

- **Changing the Volume**
- **Changing the Pitch** (frequency in Hertz – high or low or shrill and flat sounds)
- **Changing the Tone** (regularity of vibration – pitch, quality, strength/intensity)
- **Adding Feeling and Emotions**
- **Creating Longer/Shorter Spaces between Words**
- **Adding a Special Effect to the Words:** Distortion, Tremolo, Vibrato, Reverb, Chorus, Octave, etc.

Sample Psalm Lines for Divine Love, Healing, and Service

DIVINE LOVE

- *For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield. (Psalm 5:12 KJV)*
- *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; (Psalm 31:7 KJV)*
- *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. (Psalm 36:7 KJV)*
- *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (Psalm 51:1-2 KJV)*
- *My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself! (Psalm 63:3 KJV)*
- *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. (Psalm 85:15 KJV)*

- *But you, my Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy; you are very patient and full of faithful love.” (Psalm 86:15 KJV)*
- *For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations. (Psalm 100:5 KJV)*
- *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. (Psalm 107:8-9 KJV)*
- *But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name’s sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. (Psalm 109:21 KJV)*
- *Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 136:1 KJV)*
- *Give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 136:26 KJV)*

SERVICE

- *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. (Psalm 9:18 KJV)*
- *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalm 2:11-12 KJV)*
- *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate. (Psalm 34:22 KJV)*
- *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him? (Psalm 35:10- KJV)*
- *Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. (Psalm 37:4 KJV)*
- *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. (Psalm 37:23 KJV)*
- *Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. (Psalm 41:1 KJV)*

- *Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.*

(Psalm 82:3 KJV)

- *Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*

(Psalm 96:3 KJV)

- *Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

(Psalm 100:2 KJV)

- *Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine
handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. (Psalm 116:16 KJV)*

- *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy
precepts. (Psalm 119:63 KJV)*

- *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in
the Lord his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that
therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for
the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the
prisoners (Psalm 146:5-7 KJV)*

HEALING

- *Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. (Psalm 6:2 KJV)*
- *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; For I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; And forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:16-18 KJV)*
- *I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me (Psalm 30:1-2 KJV)*
- *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room. (Psalm 31:7-8 KJV)*
- *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. (Psalm 34:19-20 KJV)*
- *Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and*

he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. (Psalm 41:1-3 KJV)

- *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. (Psalm 61:2-3 KJV)*
- *My flesh and my heart faileth: But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. (Psalms 73:26 KJV)*
- *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. (Psalm 91:4 KJV)*
- *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; (Psalm 103:2-4 KJV)*
- *Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, And he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions. (Psalm 107:19-20 KJV)*

- *I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul. (Psalm 109:30-31 KJV)*
- *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:1-2 KJV)*
- *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners: The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous: (Psalm 146:7-8 KJV)*
- *He healeth the broken in heart, And bindeth up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3 KJV)*

Connecting a Concept to an Image

Another highly effective way to concentrate on a concept is to connect it to an image (i.e., a painting, drawing, photograph, etc.) that represents the concept.

Visual images allow our inner eye of our mind to go beyond words and more easily envision specific concepts with realistic objects, people, Jesus, feelings, emotions, actions, and conditions.

Many great artists were as Max Heindel stated the “intermediaries” that created the images we now call masterpieces because they allowed man to experience the true depth and truth of concepts such as man’s love for God, Christ making the ultimate sacrifice for mankind, the beauty and magnificence of Christ, the suffering and pain of those who would not renounce their faith, etc. Thus, we can use any form of artwork that captures the true meaning of a concept so we can concentrate on it.

Images for Divine Love

The Sacred Heart of Jesus



Leiloeira São Domingos, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is common image in Christian art in which Christ's heart has a bleeding wound, surrounded by a crown of thorns, and is topped with a royal crown, a cross and flames of glory producing divine light around it. Sometimes the artists only portray the heart itself while at other times they depict Jesus either holding the heart in one of his out stretched hands or an opened chest with either his arms outstretched showing the wounds of His hands or His hands pointing to His sacred heart.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is symbol of the divine love that Jesus has for God the Father and mankind. Part of its symbolism is connected to His Death and what

occurred immediately afterwards. As was the custom Roman soldiers had to confirm that those that were crucified on the cross had died by breaking their legs. However, for Jesus it was clear that He was dead so the Roman Centurion named *Longinus* stabbed Jesus in His side with his spear (lance) and from the wound came blood and water. Although not stated in the Bible, it is believed that the spear pierced Jesus' heart.

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (John 19:34 KJV)

Symbolically the blood and water that flows from the heart of Jesus is *living water*, the compassion, mercy, grace and endless love that Jesus gives to all of us so that we may find salvation and the blood of His sacrifice. As he said in *John 19:37*, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink". Perhaps, there is no greater devotion to the heart of Christ than when we see his disciple John rest his head on the chest of Jesus so as to be closest to His heart during the Last Supper.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. (John 13:23 KJV)

The *Sacred Heart of Jesus* has several symbols to support its meaning of Divine Love:

- **Heart:** is the symbol of Jesus' divine love that is always there for us, it is steady and true and our source of salvation.
- **The Wounded in the Heart:** from the Roman centurion shows the mercy and grace that Jesus has for us and his desire for us to partake of the living water and accept and believe in Him so you can live a life of His will and be reward with eternal life. The blood and water symbolize the *Passover Lamb* that was sacrificed to atone for our sins just as Jesus gave His blood for us on the cross.
- **The Crown of Thorns Surrounding the Heart:** Reminds us that even true love can bring us pain and suffering and sometimes we may feel alone or rejected by others but Christ and others will be there to care for us in our time of need. Jesus willingly and without complaint suffered tremendous persecution and ridicule on our behalf.
- **The Cross:** Christ gave up His life for our sins in the ultimate sacrifice so we were cleansed from our sins that otherwise would have destroyed us. He prayed for us while he was on the cross to ask for God's forgiveness for us showing us the true meaning of sacrificial love.
- **The Flames:** Point to the magnificence and grandeur of Jesus and speak to Him as the "light of the world" that can guide and protect us from the

darkness of sin. Jesus' heart is on fire with divine love for mankind that will never extinguish.

- **A Royal Crown:** A royal crown is atop the Sacred Heart of Jesus as he is our King now and forever. He is our one and only God.

If Jesus is in the Image of the Sacred Heart:

- **Jesus Pointing to the Heart:** Wants us to come to Him, He is welcoming us to be with Him even when we feel worthless, He is there to lighten our loads.
- **Jesus' Arms Reaching Outward:** All are welcome to come to the Kingdom of God, so hear God's call and believe.

The Red Carnation



Rick Kimpel, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Today's carnations come in a multitude of colors however, the earliest forms of the carnation were pink leading to the theory that the Latin word "*carnis*" which means "flesh" was in reference to the pink (or flesh colored) flower color and thereby giving the carnation its name. Interestingly, the popularity of the carnation, *Dianthus caryophyllus*, dates back to the days of the Greeks and Romans when the flowers were used to adorn their ceremonial crowns. This leads to another belief that that name carnation was derived from the word "coronation". While a third theory contends the scientific name of the carnation in which the genus name, *Dianthus*, is from the Greek: in which *Dios* is in reference to the Greek God Zeus and *Anthos* means flower. Thus, the genus name translates to "Flowers of God" and also "Flowers of Love".

In *The Winter's Tale*, William Shakespeare went as far as to state that "The fairest flowers o' the season are our carnations...". Regardless of how it received its name, the bright red carnation came to be a symbol of love as well as divine love due to

their connection to a story about Christ. In the story, Jesus was struggling to carry His cross for His crucifixion through the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem to the hill of Golgotha in what is referred to as *Via Dolorosa* or the “Way of Suffering” or the “Sorrowful Way”. In His path through the city the Virgin Mary witnessed His pain and suffering as He carried His cross and cried tears of remorse. When the tears hit the ground, they immediately brought forth carnations that sent forth their red flowers. A slightly different version of the story has the Virgin Mary watching Jesus as He was being crucified on the cross and her tears causing carnations to first grow and bloom where her tears struck the ground. The reason for this belief came from the fact that the doctrine of *incarnation* states that God took a human form in the body of Christ, thus the carnation flower was a product of God made from human flesh.

Jesus Christ's claim of divinity is the most serious claim anyone ever made. Everything about Christianity hinges on His carnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. That's what Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter are all about. - Luis Palau

The Rose



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The rose is considered by many to be the “Queen of Flowers” and has come to symbolize love, beauty, heaven, the afterlife, mysticism, and even the Holy Grail.

In Christianity, the red rose is often symbolic of the passion and blood of Christ and the many martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their belief in Jesus Christ and the ways of Christianity. Isaiah in the Old Testament uses the metaphor of a rose in the desert to remind people of God’s promise to restore the chosen people so that they will be reborn into a life of joy and beauty just as a desert that is transformed by abundant water and brings forth the most magnificent flowers.

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

(Isaiah 35:1-2 KJV)

Ambrose of Milan (St. Ambrose) a theologian who wrote extensively on Christianity gave roses their origin in the Garden of Eden. However, at first all roses were thornless until the fall of Adam and Eve whereby they began grow thorns on their stems. Thus, the rose and its beauty and fragrant aroma remained with us as everlasting “reminders of Paradise” now with its thorns to also remind of us of what had been lost. The only rose to remain that did not possess thorns was to be the Virgin Mary who was born free from sin and lived a life without sin.

While a rose can symbolize divine love such as in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, it also came to symbolize the purity and joy of the Virgin Mary, the *Mystical Rose of Heaven*. In the Virgin’s honor, St. Dominic put forth the tradition of the Rosary in which one prayed to the Virgin using a strand of beads that were scented with the fragrance of roses to connect our hearts and minds with the sacred rose garlands that were worn by the saints in heaven. As the 13th century mystic poet *Rumi* describes, being in the fragrance of roses not only opens one heart it causes its true beauty to God to become even greater.

*“That which God said to the rose, and caused it to laugh in full-blown
beauty, He said to my heart, and made it a hundred times more
beautiful.” - Rumi*

As Marian Devotional practices grew, especially with the Catholics, the symbolism of the rose to represent the Mother of God became firmly established and she became known as *Rosa Mystica* or *Mystic Rose* as followers called upon her for intercession. The color of roses and their symbolism also became important to

signify specific symbolism of the different attributes being represented. Thus, the white rose became a predominate symbol of the Virgin Mary to represent her spirituality, purity, virginity, grace, and holiness.

A poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins, *Rosa Mystica*, clearly established the connection between the rose and the Virgin Mary.

“*Rosa Mystica*” by Gerard Manley Hopkins

1. The rose in a mystery, where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground? —
It was made of earth's mould but it went from men's eyes
And its place is a secret and shut in the skies.

Refrain —
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Find me a place by thee, mother of mine.

2. But where was it formerly? which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is not? —
It is Galilee's growth: it grew at God's will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth hill.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall look on thy loveliness, mother of mine.

3. What was its season then? how long ago?
When was the summer that saw the bud blow? —
Two thousands of years are near upon past
Since its birth and its bloom and its breathing its last.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall keep time with thee, mother of mine.

4. Tell me the name now, tell me its name.

The heart guesses easily: is it the same? —
Mary the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the mystery, she is that rose.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall come home to thee, mother of mine.

5. Is Mary the rose then? Mary the tree?
But the blossom, the blossom there, who can it be? —
Who can her rose be? It could be but one:
Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her son.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Shew me thy son, mother, mother of mine.

6. What was the colour of that blossom bright? —
White to begin with, immaculate white.
But what a wild flush on the flakes of it stood
When the rose ran in crimsonings down the cross-wood!
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall worship His wounds with thee, mother of mine.

7. How many leaves had it? — Five they were then,
Five like the senses and members of men;
Five is their number by nature, but now
They multiply, multiply who can tell how?
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Make me a leaf in thee, mother of mine.

8. Does it smell sweet too in that holy place? —
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace:
O Breath of it bathes great heaven above
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.
To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine
Draw me by charity, mother of mine.

Images for *Service*

Jesus made it clear that he came to earth he came to serve others and *not* to be served. He felt the pain and suffering of all of those around Him and wanted to make everyone whole in their body, soul, and spirit so we might be effective in carrying out His will. He spent His time helping and feeding the poor, He healed the sick, cast out demons, and taught the people the meaning of God's word.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

(Luke 22:27 KJV)

Jesus set the perfect example of service for all of us. Jesus taught us that service is “love in action”, love “made flesh”, and ultimately, “the incarnation of love”. When we do service for our fellow man as when Jesus asked us to love our brothers, we are really doing service for Him.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me **(Matthew 25:40 KJV)**

Service is not only helping others that need assistance, it is anything that has a positive impact on the spiritual development of others or even the world is a form of service. In service we should strive to build up others and work to create a world that offers a greater wealth of love, compassion, and opportunity for us to find happiness and “desires

of the heart”. It doesn’t matter what position a man occupies, if he serves others than he will be rewarded by the Lord.

Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
(Ephesians 6:6-8 KJV)

The Ultimate Act of Service



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Christ came to the earth so he might give His life for all of mankind so that we would be saved. It was the ultimate act of service. By being both fully God and human he could die on the cross for our sins. There is no greater love that can be shown to someone then to give your life so others can be brought back into a proper relation with God so we might find our salvation.

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23:32-34 KJV)

Christ Models Service to His Disciples



Jesus Washing Peter's Feet

At the Last Supper Jesus washed the feet of His apostles to show His love for them. It is also a reminder of Jesus' unlimited power and authority to forgive our sins. Ultimately, in foot washing we are cleaned and purified of our sins. Foot washing was a job typically performed by a servant, it requires humility in which you are willing to be selfless and serve others. At first Peter did not understand this and tried to prevent Jesus from doing so, until Jesus told him he could have no part with him if he did not allow Him to do so. To which Peter then wanted Jesus to wash his entire body. Jesus wanted the disciples to learn from His example so that they would understand the true meaning of service and thereby always serve others.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:14-15 KJV)

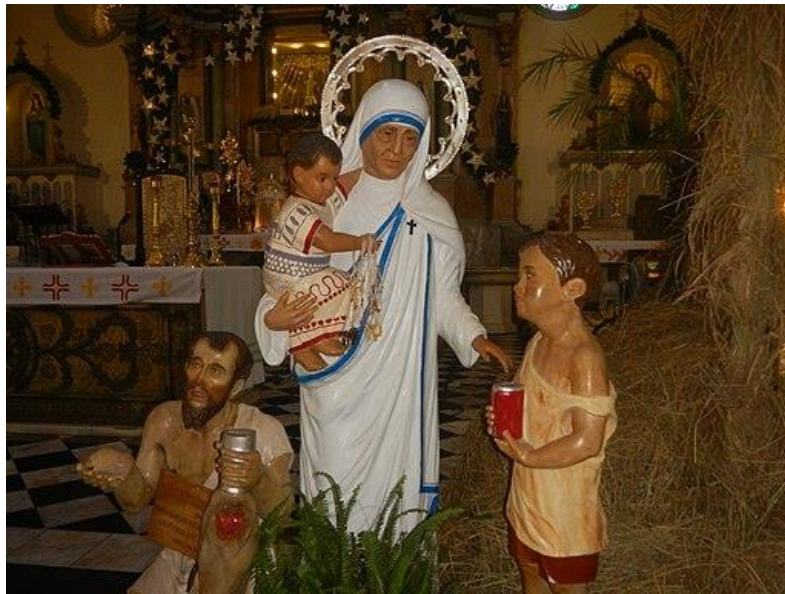
St Christopher Carrying the Christ-Child Across the River



Konrad Witz, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In the legend of St. Christopher, a small child comes to the river in the early evening to be crossed to the other side by the giant Reprobis who is serving God by safely transporting people across the dangerous river. As Reprobis carries the small child through the river it begins to rise and the currents become unusually strong and the weight of the small child upon his shoulders becomes almost unbearable. However, Reprobis completely exhausted finally makes it across the river and tells the child how heavy felt upon his shoulders to which the child answers, you carried the weight of the world and its creator on your shoulders, I am Jesus Christ the one you have so faithfully served. From this point on you will be called Christopher, the “Christ-bearer”.

St. Mother Teresa



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Mother Teresa or St. Teresa of Calcutta dedicated over forty-five years of her life as a missionary in service to the people in greatest need in Calcutta India. She founded the *Missionaries of Charity* and helped to care for and feed the many poor and orphans in the city's slums, created schools for their education, and provided them with homes. She showed great love and compassion for the dying who suffered from diseases such as HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis.

- *The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service. The fruit of service is peace.*
- *A life not lived for others is not a life.*
- *Give your hands to serve and your hearts to love.*
- *Helping hands are better than praying lips.*

- St. Teresa of Calcutta

Images of Healing

In the New Testament there are *twenty-three* recorded healings of Jesus of either a single person or multiple people. The healings included; leprosy, paralysis, fever, demon possession, uncontrolled female bleeding, blindness, seizures, epilepsy, deafness, dropsy, congenital deformities, crippled limbs, dysentery, near death and death, etc.

In the bible, the other primary healers are; Paul, Elijah, and the twelve apostles. In the *Acts of the Apostles* the apostles describe the healings they performed after Jesus' ascension to heaven. While the apostles were given healing powers directly by Jesus, it is also believed that some people are given this gift by the Holy Spirit. However, healing in the bible is not just the curing of diseases and the casting out of demons, it's a process that leads to our "wholeness" and coming into unity with God. So, while wholeness does imply perfect physical health, it also speaks to the harmony in our bodies, minds, and spirit.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (3 John:2 KJV)

Our wholeness comes from our love of Christ who opens, minds, and fills our heart with his divine light so we can be complete. Therefore, being made whole is different than healing the body as it requires us to have faith in God and enter an ongoing relationship with Him so we can move forward in your spiritual journey.

*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,
Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come
unto thee.?* **(John 5:14 KJV)**

Jesus Heals the Blind



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Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

*And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his
disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of
Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it
was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son
of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should
hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of
David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him*

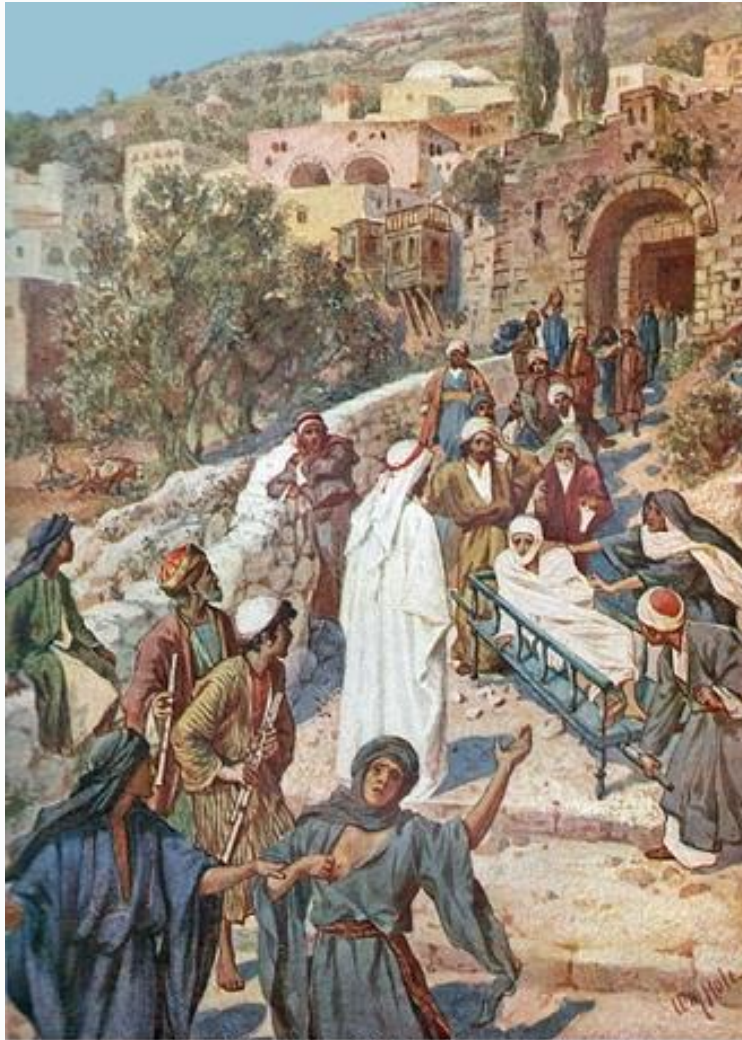
to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

(Mark 10:46–52 KJV)



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Jesus Raising the Dead



Jesus Heals The Widow Of Nain's Son by William Hole

Jesus Heals the Widow of Nain's Son

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

*And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still.
And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was
dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.
And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a
great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his
people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea,
and throughout all the region round about. (Luke 7:11-17 KJV)*

Jesus Heals a Boy of Demon Possession



And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. (Luke 9:40-42 KJV)

The Rod of Asclepius

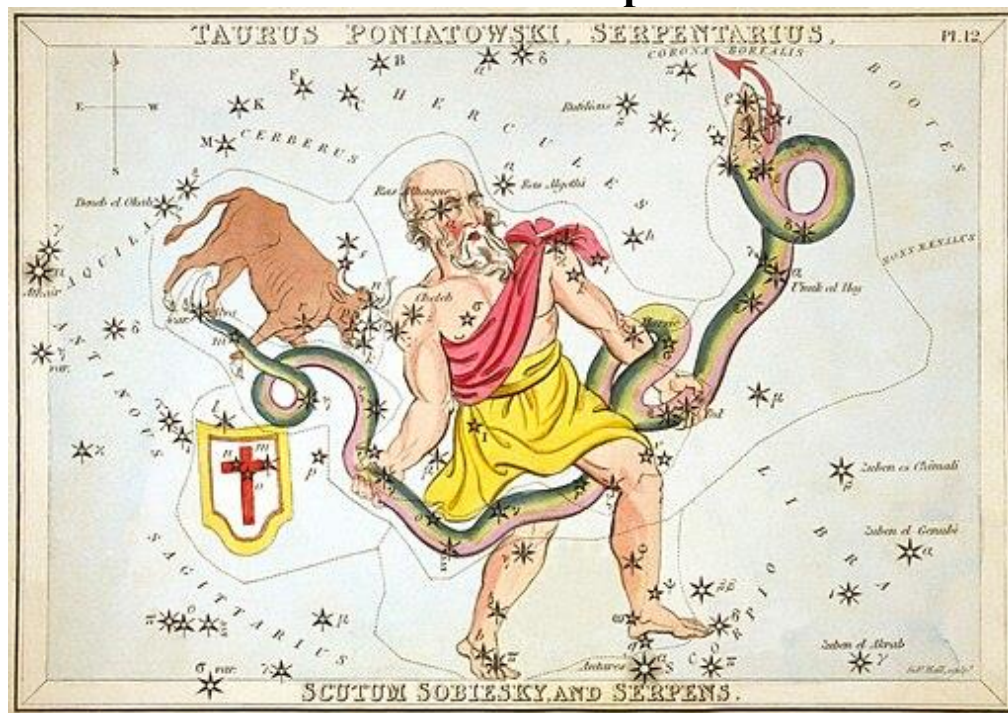


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Asclepius was a demigod as he was the son of the god Apollo and the mortal Koronis. He was trained in medicine by His father *Apollo* and the centaur *Chiron* and developed into the greatest physician of all times and eventually the Greek god of medicine and healing. It was believed that Asclepius' healing powers were so powerful that he was capable of even raising the dead.

Upon Asclepius' death he was made into a full god and became the constellation *Ophiuchus*. His symbol is a rod or staff in which a single snake is coiled around it. The constellation *Ophiuchus* is the serpent bearer and is located between Scorpio and Sagittarius. The reason for the serpent (or snake) in another version of the legend is that Asclepius killed a snake that unexpectedly came close to him with his staff. Then a second snake appeared with an herb in its mouth to bring the first snake back to life. Asclepius took the herb and used it to heal others and even bring some back from the dead.

The Constellation Ophiuchus



The ancient Babylonians considered Ophiuchus one of the thirteen major constellations of the zodiac but excluded it when they used the other twelve major constellations in their twelve-month calendar. The brightest star in the Ophiuchus

constellation is *Rasalhague* (“head of the snake handler or charmer”) a giant bluish-white binary star in the head or face of Asclepius.

Apollo Entrusting Chiron with the Education of Asclepius



Hendrik Goltzius Workshop, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Chiron was a centaur, half-man half-horse, from Greek mythology was considered the wisest of centaurs that was renowned for his healing abilities. His father was the Titan god Cronus and his mother was the sea nymph Philyra. He was trained in medicine, music, and prophecy by Apollo and in archery and hunting by Artemis. In addition, he also studied the other art forms, the use of herbs in medicine, and gymnastics. His name Chiron, “skilled with hands” speaks to the fact of his skill as a surgeon. He was so gifted in healing that he is credited with inventing the fields of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy. His skills as a teacher were so special that he trained many of the Greek heroes including; *Hercules*, *Jason*, and *Achilles*. In fact,

Apollo even had Chiron train Asclepius, who became the greatest physician of all times.

Chiron was accidentally shot by a poisoned arrow by Hercules, yet he could not use his own powers to heal himself and because he was immortal he could not die. The pain from the poison was unbearable for Chiron and in a bargain made by Hercules he gave up his immortality for Prometheus' release from his immortal task and he was moved into the sky and became the constellation Centaurus. It is in the southern hemisphere and is one of the largest constellations with eleven stars. Some other sources feel Chiron might be associated with Sagittarius, however the Roman poet *Ovid* specifically names Chiron as the centaur represented by this Centaurus Constellation.

Centaurus Constellation



Johann Bayer, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The Greek Goddess of Medicine: *Panacea*

Asclepius, the Greek God of Medicine and Healing had five immortal daughters; *Aceso*, *Iaso*, *Aegle*, *Hygieia*, and *Panacea*. The five daughters were collectively referred to as the *Asclepiades* and each daughter had a role in health, wellness, and the healing process that reflected a portion of their father's overall skills as a healer. Panacea, who provided “all-healing” curatives, often symbolized the counterpart to her father, *Asclepius*, as the Greek goddess of health and healing.

Iaso – Recuperation, Curing

Aceso – Healing Process, Recovery

Hygieia – Disease Prevention, Cleanliness and Sanitation

Aegle – Beauty, Radiant Good Health

Panacea – Cures, Universal Remedy

Panacea, Goddess of Health and Healing



Chiron a Minor Planet

Chiron was once believed to be an asteroid (2060 Chiron); however, it is now believed to be a minor planet that is orbiting the Sun between Saturn and Uranus with an “eccentric orbit”. More precisely, it is an icy body that has characteristics of both a comet and a minor planet. Chiron is technically classified in a new group of celestial objects called “Centaurs”. It is one of the largest Centaurs and sometimes acts as a comet with “jet-like dust structures”. In addition, it has been found to have a set of two “icy rings” that surround it.

Chiron with Double Rings

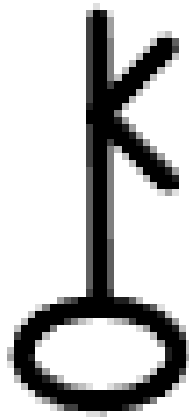


Celestia Team (GPL <<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>>, GPL <<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>> or GPL <<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>>), via Wikimedia Commons

In our birth charts, Chiron, The Wounded Healer, acts just as any other planet producing its own influences in the different houses and signs. In general, Chiron can identify your great struggles from emotional or spiritual wounds and speaks to

your ability to provide healing to yourself and others. Just as Chiron had been wounded by the poisoned arrow, Chiron's chart position tells us where we are "wounded" and how we can heal ourselves as this is also knowledge that adds to our practice of medicine and healing that we can then use to expand our treatment to others who are in pain and suffering from their own wounds. The idea is to let Chiron be your teacher so you can learn to take the traumas from your life that produced your greatest pain and suffering and *reframe* them so as to produce wisdom instead.

Ultimately, Chiron is there to show you how you can take your greatest pain and produce power that will transform your life so you can be free to be still again, undistracted, to take refuge in God and fully concentrate on His divine presence in all aspects of your life.



Astrological sign for Chiron

The Rosicrucian Fellowship Emblem


The *Rosicrucian Fellowship Healing Service* brings together a group of participants that produce focused, one-directional thoughts of “help and healing” to assist the “Elder brothers of the Rosicrucian Order in their beneficent work for humanity.” As one of God’s blessings, every one of us receives a healing force from God that we can use ourselves and liberate for the benefit of others in their sickness and suffering.

Yet, in order to heal others, we must understand that Rosicrucians view disease as an invisible fire within us that is purifying our bodies from the “crystallized conditions” that are a result of our “breaking the laws of nature”. This inner healing power that is purging our bodies of crystalized conditions can be greatly magnified by our prayers. For those in a healing service, praying in its most basic sense can be thought of as the application of *proper concentration*.

Take for instance the beginning of the *Rosicrucian Fellowship Healing Service* when all the participants are asked to *concentrate* on the Rosicrucian Emblem. Using concentration in this way is actually a form of praying with our eyes or divine seeing in which the participant is using the emblem to focus their concentration so that they can then create healing, helpful, and focused thoughts that generate and release pure and strong healing forces to support the Elder Brothers in their healing work.

Yet, it is important to remember that this proper concentration or prayer requires that we put all the feelings and emotions we are capable of into our efforts if we expect to be successful in achieving the desired results, such as the release of a pure strong healing

force. Through our *prayers of the eyes*, the image of the Rosicrucian Emblem connects us to Jesus the Great Physician (Mark 2:17) who helps us bring forth our healing force that can be imparted to not only those well enough to request it but also for our brothers and sisters who were unable to ask themselves. And so, we understand that the force or power that we produce is really from God and to be used at his discretion in what we ask for others to aid in their suffering and healing, it is important to always qualify our requests with “*Not my will, but Thine, be done*” (Luke 22:42).

PART	REPRESENTS	
Blue Background	God the Father	
Golden Star	Christ born within the spiritual aspirant and the head and four limbs radiating into the five points of the star <i>Golden Wedding Garment</i>	
Red Roses	Purification of the human desire nature on the cross of matter, the blood of the aspirant cleansed from passion. Cleansed Blood.	
White Rose	Purity of heart and also the larynx with which, once purified, humanity will speak the Creative Word. Heart of Invisible Helper.	
White Cross	Physical Body	

Concentration and the Healing Service

The *Ecclesia* or *Healing Temple* of The Rosicrucian Fellowship International Headquarters is located on Mt. Ecclesia in Oceanside, California. Probationers use the Ecclesia daily for their Spiritual Healing Meetings; however, it is only open to the public one day of the year (October 28).

The Ecclesia, or Healing Temple



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Mt. Ecclesia – Healing Temple

Each week at 6:30 pm (7:30 pm for daylight savings time) at TRF Headquarters in Oceanside, California when the Moon is in a Cardinal sign (Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn) students gather in the *Pro-Ecclesia* Chapel to bring forth healing power through their “earnest prayer and concentration”. The *cardinal influence* is especially helpful in that it energizes and promotes change in any activity that is started will under its influence such as the healing process. It is a special time when the Moon is connected to the Chemical and Etheric regions of the Physical world

and we have the opportunity to use the Cardinal energy from the Etheric region to help us in generating our healing force.

Pro-Ecclesia: The Chapel



If students are not at the TRF Headquarters they can still participate from their homes using the same basic procedure. Regardless of your location, on a respective date and time, start by sitting down, relaxing your body, and clearing your mind of any stray thoughts. For students who are at the headquarters they can start by concentrating on the pure white rose located in the center of the Rosicrucian Emblem. If you are not at the headquarters then just proceed to the next step.

Now close your eyes and create a mental image of the *pure white rose* from the Rosicrucian emblem which symbolizes the “heart of an Invisible Helper” so you can begin to concentrate upon “Divine Love and Healing”. Then you can put these concentrated thought forces of divine love and healing into your prayers in which you then ask God, the Great Physician to bless you with healing forces so that

anyone who needs healing can be restored to health. We ask God for healing force because all healing forces emanate from His creation and exist everywhere around us in a latent form.

It is critical that you put as much feeling and emotion as possible into your prayers so that you create a pathway (“funnel”) between yourself and the Father so that He can send down and fill you with His “Divine Power” which then empowers your thought forms on the healing of others so that it will be accomplished. Remember that what God provides you with is a power beyond our comprehension so we must take great care to make certain it is used for its proper purpose. Therefore, we always end our prayers of petition for those in need with the words, “*Not my will but Thine be done.*”

Now in the healing service you are asked to concentrate exclusively on the concept of *Healing* for a few minutes. Finally in the Parting Admonition, the healing force is released and collected by “Christ, the Elder Brothers, and the Invisible Helpers, to be used where it is most needed” as they will best be able to make certain it is properly directed to those in need. The release or transmission of one’s healing force is accomplished by focusing it in one common direction to the Emblem in the Etheric Temple at Mt. Ecclesia so it can be stored and made available to the Invisible Helpers who are guided by the Elder Brothers who will then visit and heal the sick. The Elder Brothers have the ability to transmute the healing forces we have sent into the *Balm of Gilead*, a “healing Panacea”, that is packaged and used by the Invisible Helpers in their healing of the sick in their evening visits to the ill.

Upon completion of the Healing Service, we should acknowledge our Father's compassion and mercy in providing healings for all those past and present He has blessed with His divine healing powers by offering Him prayers of love, thanksgiving, and gratitude.

Flowers of Healing

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)



Lavender is well known for its relaxing qualities and its ability to instill calmness and promote a sense of well-being and sleep. It is said to awaken your inner strength and to offer emotional healing. Used in baths for its “soothing scent” it also was believed to bring forth serenity and purification. Spiritually, lavender

represents our crown chakra from which we connect to the divine. While in the Bible, lavender is often thought to be *nard*, an anointing oil and perfume which symbolizes divine love, peace, devotion, and beauty.

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)

Calendula has many healing properties such as its use in skin and wound care, treating gastrointestinal issues, eye infections, and helping people to heal more quickly. In healing it symbolizes “comfort and recovery” and spiritually it provides “protection and prosperity”. It also connects the Virgin Mary in that it is also called Mary’s Gold in reference to the legend that she used the flowers as a form of money and prominently bloomed on her festival of *Ladytide*.



Peony (*Paeonia spp.*)

The Peony plant was named after the divine physician of the gods, *Paeon*, who treated and healed the other gods such as Ares and Hades, who were injured in their adventures or in the Trojan War as described in Homer's *Iliad*. Paeon learned his healing arts through his mentor, *Asclepius*, the greatest of all physicians. However, in one legend, Asclepius became so jealous of Paeon when he cured Pluto from illness that for his protection Zeus changed him into a peony flower.

The Peony is helpful in relieving pain and inflammation, prevent blood clotting, and providing antioxidant and anticarcinogenic properties. Therefore, it is a symbol of healing with a full recovery, good health, and wellness. While spiritually, it brings forth peace, protection, joy, and prosperity.



Brandt, Albertus Jonas (1788-1821), CC BY 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

The Fragrance of Christ

The *Fragrance of Christ* is a sweet smell that diffuses from personally knowing Christ and from knowledge he shared with mankind. It also comes from ourselves when we are true believers, share the knowledge of Christ with others, and experience the “triumph” of God’s love and salvation. When incense was burned in the tabernacle and the temples it symbolized the presence of God.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Corinthians 2:14-16 KJV)

When we have the fragrance of Christ, we attract others as they are drawn to the peace, hope, and abundance we received through His grace. There is also His promises that he will accept anyone who believes in Him and eternal life in which one will never die. Yet, as Christians we make sacrifices to demonstrate our worthiness and all of our sacrifices will have a pleasing fragrance to God. Even our prayers are considered “sweet fragrances to God”.

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Ephesians 5:2 KJV)

Aromatherapy to Boost Concentration

The use of essential oils from different materials has been used to promote relaxation, improve one's mood or level of energy, and even relieve physical and mental pain. However, scents from specific essential oils can also boost our ability to focus and concentrate and improve our overall mental functioning. Therefore, it has been a common practice for thousands of years for people to burn specific types of incense such as *frankincense* while they are praying or meditating to increase their mental focus and ability to *concentrate*.

With the latest scientific research many other different scents have also been shown to promote our focus and concentration even in difficult and stressful times due to their ability to stimulate the *limbic system* which regulates our emotions and behavior. In simple terms, the limbic system uses your thoughts, memories, and other factors that might motivate you to create your bodies responses (cognitive functioning) such as using greater concentration to stimuli such as different essential oil scents.

In addition to frankincense, a few extremely effective scents from essential oils to focus our concentration include: peppermint, citrus (i.e., lemon, orange, etc.), lemongrass, rosemary, jasmine, mint, and bergamot. These essential oils work by affecting your brain through the production of different hormones such as acetylcholine, dopamine, serotonin, noradrenaline, etc. that then affect specific target cells within your brain and other parts of your body. For example,

noradrenaline increases your heart function as well as cognitive functions such as concentration, attention, alertness, and stress reactions.

How Essential Oils Promote Concentration

Essential Oil	Active Ingredient	Effect (→) and Outcome
Peppermint	Menthol	→ Hippocampus Mental clarity and focus
Rosemary	Cineole	→ Acetylcholine levels Memory and attention
Frankincense	Boswellic acids	→ Hormones, i.e., Noradrenaline release Calming and stimulating effect
Bergamot (Orange)	Limonene Linalool Linalyl Acetate, Terpinene, Pinene	→ Dopamine and Serotonin Enhance mood, mental clarity for concentration
Lemon	Limonene, Pinene	→ Neurotransmitter Activity Mental clarity and accuracy

Essential Oils for Love, Health, and Service

The human nose which is *not* nearly as sensitive as other animals such as dogs, but it can still detect over 350,000 different scents. You can also use your sense of smell (olfaction) to concentrate on specific concepts such as love, health, and service. In olfaction, compounds or molecules attach to sense receptors in your nose and send an impulse (message) to your brain (amygdala) so that the odor can be determined. Specific smells and aromas can have a great influence on our emotions and memories. In addition, certain smells or aromas can then influence the central

nervous system (brain and spinal cord) such as triggering the release of endorphins that have a calming effect, rejuvenate your energy, or promote a sense of well-being by reducing stress levels.

Just as an image can be used for concentration, we can also use certain smells or aromas. As previously discussed, an image of a Red Rose can be used for concentrating on Divine Love. However, the aroma from essential or absolute oils are also an excellent medium for concentration. So rather than using an image for divine love, you could also use Rose essential oil that has an aroma that has a strong connection to love. In addition, other essential or absolute oils have a connection to the emotion and feeling of love, such as *Sandalwood, Patchouli, and Jasmine*.

Concept	Essential or Absolute Oil
Love	<i>Rose, Sandalwood, Patchouli, Jasmine</i>
Health	<i>Lavender, Chamomile, Bergamot</i>
Service	<i>Frankincense, Spikenard, Cedar Wood, Myrrh</i>

Rose essential oil not only will raise your mood but is said to balance and keep your heart chakra open, which is considered the center of compassion and Divine love.

Rose oil also has an extremely high vibratory frequency (320 MHz) which can raise the vibration rate of the cells in our bodies (62-70 MHz), bring positive energy, and help us to feel happiness and love. Rose essential oils has the highest frequency of all essential oils and comes closest to the *Solfeggio* frequency that is responsible for

opening the chakras that are associated with love, miracles, and spiritual awakening (528 Hz), or the “universal frequency of love”.

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. (Proverbs 27:9 KJV)

Some essential oils produce health benefits that not only have a positive effect on your overall well-being (i.e., reduce stress, promote relaxation and sleep, etc.) but have even been used for specific ailments, mental healing, and reduce pain and inflammation. Therefore, we can also use essential oils such as lavender, chamomile, or bergamot to focus on the concept of healing. Lavender has several medicinal properties such as being an antiseptic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, speeding up the healing of wounds, relieve headaches, restoring hair loss, etc. In aromatherapy lavender helps to improve your mood, reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension and spasms, and promote sleep. Lavender is one of the holy herbs and it was used in the preparation of perfumes and *Nard*.

In doing service for others, we are asked to care and help our fellow man as if we were serving Christ making every effort to provide comfort and kindness at every opportunity. Essential oils such as *frankincense, cedar wood, and myrrh* are commonly used to bring out feelings of kindness in ourselves and others. While essential oils such as Geranium are said to open our hearts so we would believe and trust in our fellow man so we might extend ourselves in kindness and compassion.

Spikenard is a flowering plant that has been used to flavor wine and make medicines, and perfumes since ancient times. It was the used to make incense that the Hebrews used in the Jerusalem Temple and described in the Old Testament for preparing the body of a deceased person for burial. Just prior to Passover an unknown woman anoints the feet of Jesus with the entire container of a very expensive ointment of spikenard. Judas Iscariot, the thief and betrayer, who becomes upset by the action but Christ quickly rebuffed him telling him that this was an act of extreme love and will be remembered throughout time as her anointment was the necessary for the ritual to prepare His body for burial. It was also a tremendous act of service for Mary to lay at the feet of Jesus and anoint him with such an expensive material, and the use her hair to wipe His feet!

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. (John 12:3-8 KJV)

In another version of the story in the *Gospel of Mark*, Mary of Bethany used the spikenard ointment to anoint the head of Jesus just before His crucifixion.

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (Mark 14:3 KJV)

Spikenard is still used today in rituals for those who wish to visit the spirit world, the dying in hospice care so they can pass into the afterlife, dream work, astral travel. Due to its grounding nature, it is often used in mediation and prayer and to balance the *Root Chakra* which connects us to the Earth.

Using Essential Oils for Concentration

In some cases, you may wish to use specific essential oils to enhance your concentration while concentrating on an object, person, word, concept, line from scripture, part of a prayer or an entire prayer. There are several different ways to put the molecules of the oil into your environment so you can then bring them into your olfactory system or directly into your circulatory system.

In early times, the two most common methods were to use the essential oils in the creation of incense to be burned and absorbed through the root of your nasal cavity or *diluted* in a carrier oil and applied to the body in areas such as the forehead, temples, neck, soles of the feet, behind the ears, palms of the hands, etc. to be absorbed directly into your blood stream. A favorite location for the quick

absorption of essential oils into the blood stream is the inner wrist where the oil can be readily absorbed by your radial artery.

Today, people also use essential oil *diffusers* in which a small quantity of essential oil is placed into an oil diffuser that either heats and evaporates the essential oil, or evaporates into the air with no heat, or sprays it directly into the environment without dilution or heat, or uses ultrasonic waves to spread the essential oil into the environment so it can be inhaled and come into contact with our olfactory system.

Each of the four types of oil diffusers: *heat*, *evaporative*, *nebulizer*, and the *ultrasonic* has its advantages and disadvantages. Initially, the two most common ways to diffuse the essential oil were by heat and evaporation. Heat diffusers use a source of heat from an object such as candle to heat an essential oil that has been diluted in water or that has been impregnated directly into the candle itself so it can be released into the surrounding air as the candle burns. The concern with heat diffusion is that it may alter or even destroy the chemical composition of the essential oil making it less effective and, in some cases, ineffective in aromatherapy. In addition, there are safety consideration in working with open flames in your home and sanctuary.

While in evaporative diffusion, the essential oil is either applied directly to an absorbent pad that can either naturally evaporate off on its own or it has a small fan that blows across the pad to speed up the evaporative process. These types of evaporative diffusers do not need for the essential oil to be diluted in water and the ones with fans can quickly and evenly disperse the essential oil into the

environment. In earlier times and even today, thin reeds are placed into containers of water diluted essential oils (one-third of the reed in the solution and two-thirds of the reed above the solution) so the solution can travel up the reeds and eventually evaporate into the surrounding area without the use of a fan. You can increase or decrease the amount of essential oil diffusing into the room by increasing or decreasing the number of reeds placed into the essential oil solution. It is a slower process and would be need to be set-up well in advance in the room you wished to use for your concentration, meditation or prayer.

The most concentrated way to bring an essential oil into your body is through a nebulizer. Essentially without any heat or dilution, a nebulizer will convert a liquid essential oil into a mist (superfine microscopic droplets) that can be easily inhaled into your body. Because of the enhanced concentration of the essential oil in the environment this type of diffusion may be too overwhelming for some people and might be better suited to the treatment of specific illness. In addition, it can be problematic with some of the more viscous (thicker) essential oils as they tend to clog the diffuser.

The ultrasonic diffuser uses ultrasonic waves to separate the essential oil into microscopic particles that are released into the surrounding area. The essential oil is diluted in water and through an *adiabatic* process that requires no heat (transfer) in which the water is converted to a superfine mist that contains microscope particles of essential oil and is also charged with negative ions like a water fall. Negative ions from waterfalls and aromatherapy from ultrasonic diffusers have been found to

boost the levels of serotonin (“feel good hormone”) in our blood stream that bring us a peaceful and calming sense of well-being.

Essential Oils in the Bible

The Bible has close to six-hundred references to over thirty different plants and their essential oils. Seven examples of essential oils used in the Old Testament are specifically stated in the *Song of Solomon 4*.

Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (Song of Solomon 4: 14 KJV)

In addition, other frequently mentioned essential oils from plant sources include: *Bay, Boswell Fir, Cassia, Cassia Cinnamon, Cedarwood, Cypress, Galbanum, Hyssop, Lavender, Myrtle, Onycha, Rose of Sharon, Sandalwood.*, etc. In the Old Testament Isaiah speaks of soldiers anointing their shields with holy oils to protect themselves in battle just as the people came to anoint themselves for God’s protection and blessings in their lives.

Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield. (Isaiah 21:5 KJV)

Over time it also became common for people to anoint themselves with these holy oils to demonstrate that they were loyal followers of Christ and would carry out His mission as Christians.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (Luke 4:18 KJV)

Jesus sent out His disciples to preach and heal others on their own in pairs. After they had made people whole by curing them of illness, casting out their demons, and their repentance, they anointed them with holy oil as a sign of a miracle from Christ.

And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. (Mark 6:12-13 KJV)

In *Psalms* 45 some of these essential oils are referred to as “oil of gladness”.

Anointing oil was used in the performance of Jewish marriages and symbolized joy that would come from the union. Christ is the bridegroom of the wedding, He is our King to come, and to honor His kingship He is anointed by an oil with myrrh, aloes,

and cassia to symbolize His exaltation when He would come as our Messiah and give His life for us.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. (Psalm 45:7-8 KJV).

In the Old Testament, *Isaiah 61* refers to some of the essential oils as “oil of joy” that indicate the use of essential oils in the mourning process but then makes it clear the God is ready to transform us beyond the state of mourning to righteousness and joy so that we can glorify Him.

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:3 KJV)

Hebrews 1 refers to some of the essential oils as “oil of gladness” used by God in anointing you to symbolize that you belong to Him. The anointing of Jesus is God’s blessing and empowerment so that He could fulfill His role as the substitute for our sins and bring us salvation so that we could then rise to His calling

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God,
even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy
fellows. (Hebrews 1: 9 KJV)*

While *Proverbs 27* speaks to the use of essential oils to produce ointments and perfumes that “*rejoice the heart*” and using their sweetness as a metaphor to the heartfelt advice given by a close friend. Ultimately, the truth we give to those we hold close is how we show them our love.

*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a
man's friend by hearty counsel. (Proverbs 27: 9 KJV)*

Anointing Oil

When we are anointed with holy oil, we are actually anointing our inner-Spirit to demonstrate to God that we are dedicating our lives to be one with Him so that as we walk with God each day our relationship grows. The title of *Christ* means “the anointed one or one anointed by God” (or the chosen one) as He was from the line of David and would come to power as the Messiah to restore the nation and people of Israel thereby fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies. In being divinely anointed by God He is fully empowered and has the presence and guiding force of the Holy Spirit within Himself as the power and authority to fulfill His mission on earth.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (Acts 10:38 KJV)

In the Bible, we find the first use of the holy anointing oil being used only by priests in sanctifying themselves (setting aside for God, making holy), the sacrifices, the tabernacle and all of its furnishings, i.e., the alter of burnt offerings and its utensils, the laver, the tent, and all that is within the tabernacle: the furniture, the golden candelabrum, alter of incense, table of shewbread, the arc of the covenant, etc. In fact, God, gave Moses an exact recipe to make the anointing oil in *Exodus 30*.

Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. (Exodus 30:23-25 KJV)

In time anointing with the holy anointing oil also was used to identify who God had chosen to become King of Israel thereby setting him apart for the future service he would perform for God and his countrymen.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. (1 Samuel 16:13 KJV)

Anointing Oils and the Holy Spirit

Prior to the arrival of Jesus, only priests, kings, and prophets were anointed so that God might work through them. However, with Jesus' arrival our bodies, if we are believers, we become the earthen vessels that hold the world's greatest treasure, Jesus Christ himself. The holy oils came to symbolize our connection between earth and heaven.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4: 6-7 KJV)

And as believers of Jesus Christ, we become part of a "royal priesthood" and we are anointed directly by Christ himself and we receive the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit now resides within us to bless and empower us.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who

hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; (1 Peter
2:9 KJV)

For the people of the Old Testament, anointing oil was used to sanctify objects and selected people and their positions. It was poured upon them, usually on their heads and sometimes even over their entire body. It was a connection back to the *Garden of Eden* when God brought forth water for the dry land to create a garden and then created humans by breathing the “breath of life” into the nostrils of a man created of dust. This event is considered God’s first anointment in which God uses water and pours out His Spirit to “mark” His first created human life that will live in His Garden. The same pouring out of God’s Spirit is seen in the baptism of Jesus, His Son. Thus, the anointing oil that was poured onto a person in earlier times symbolized the coming of Christ, when the Holy Spirit would be poured into and received by those who believed on the day of Pentecost.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4 KJV)

Even Jesus calls for us to anoint ourselves in the Bible. He connects the act of fasting in which one surrenders and humbles oneself to God and only fasts “to loose

the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free.” (Isaiah 58:6 KJV) to the call for us to anoint ourselves. Ultimately, fasting is not about food it is about putting our *focus and concentration* on our Spirit and strengthening our communication with God. Therefore, when we anoint ourselves in our fasting, we are acknowledging and calling upon that Spirit that is within us so that we may come closer to God in our relationship in which the voice of God always rings loud and true and His grace abounds.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

(Matthew 6:17 KJV)

Healing with Anointing Oils

In the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, we see the Good Samaritan using oils to help heal the stranger who has been attacked by robbers upon the road.

*And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine,
and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took
care of him. (Luke 10:34 KJV)*

Then we have James describing how we can heal the sick in of our ministry for Jesus by using both prayers and anointing the person with oil in the name of the

Lord. As God is within us and is capable of healing us in all ways, bringing needed comfort and helping us bring forth our spiritual strength.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. (James 5: 14-15 KJV)

Even today we still encouraged to use anointing oil in the healing of others through the power of the Holy Spirit within themselves. We can see the power of anointing oil in the bible when someone such as David that has it poured upon them and their lives change and they accomplish things they never dreamed possible. Yet, they need to remember that it is not the oil itself or their own powers that is responsible for these things it is the release of power from the Holy Spirit within themselves that allows God to work through them to do the things their human bodies and minds were not capable of on their own.

I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall

cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. (Psalm 89:20-29 KJV)

When you become ill, you have two choices in how you can be anointed with holy oil. You can anoint yourself or you can have someone else anoint you it makes no difference. As previously stated, we are now of a chosen generation that is part of the “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9 KJV). As Revelation 1 also tells us we are kings and priests to God, therefore we have the right as priests to anoint ourselves and others. What is most critical in the process of anointing is that we firmly believe that we will receive the blessing and healing from the Holy Spirit that dwells within us so that we empower the thought force of healing we release to ourselves or others.

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:6 KJV)

Today's Anointing Oil

Originally the holy anointing oil that was used in the healing of others was created by the apostles (*apostolic tradition*) and then distributed to all areas of the world as the apostles spread the Good News in all corners of the earth. As the original oil sample was used, more holy anointing oil was made and added to it so that all supplies of the oil would always contain a trace amount of the original anointing oil created by the apostles.

In today's world we find holy anointing oils being produced and marketed as virgin olive oil that has been grown and/or pressed in the Holy Lands (*Israel, Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, etc.*) and in some cases consecrated by a priest or bishop, and either unscented or scented with specific essential oils, flowers, herbs, spices, etc. However, some people also choose to pray over and consecrate their own anointing oil from extra virgin olive oil. As *Hebrews 8:1* tells us, we are now longer bound to the old systems of priestly controls and regulations as Christ's sacrifice on the cross brought forth a new covenant in which He functions as our high priest and is at the right-hand of God. Therefore, as "born again believers" in Christ we ourselves can pray to God and ask that He bless our own virgin olive oil so that we may use it to anoint ourselves and the sick.

*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have
such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the
Majesty in the heavens; (Hebrews 8:1 KJV)*

Anointing Oil and Concentration

Olive oil is preferred oil for anointing oil for several reasons: it has an extremely high vibrational energy that aids in the purification and strengthening of your aura, it facilitates the opening of your heart chakra so you experience greater depths of love, compassion, and forgiveness, it brings forth abundance in your life so you express thankfulness and gratitude. Symbolically, the olive oil represents the Holy Spirit that brings us “comfort, power, healing, and fills us so that we never hunger or thirst again”.

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (Psalm 23:5
KJV)*

It also increases the power of your prayers and meditations due to its ability raise your attention and concentration so you can establish a deeper connection with God. The anointing oil holds a key to our transformation just as Jacob was changed forever in his encounter with God.

*And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he
had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon
the top of it. (Genesis 28:18 KJV)*

In addition to its use in physical healing, anointing oil also is believed to have spiritual benefits in which it *cleanses* and *purifies* the spirit, provides emotional

healing, and merges your inner divine energy with your thoughts and prayers to greatly empower them. Therefore, people commonly use anointing oils during prayers and meditation as they find they bring a sense of peace, well-being, and clarity that greatly improves their ability to *focus and concentrate* so they can fully experience the power of their intuition, the wisdom and guidance offered from God and the outer worlds, and more easily connect and communicate with God and the worlds beyond themselves.

And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. (Exodus 40:15 KJV)

Creating a Prayer of Consecration for Your Anointing Oil

Address the Prayer to God or Jesus

Dear Heavenly Father

Request for Oil to be Transformed

I come to you today with this oil that I am setting apart asking that you will bless and consecrate it in the name of Jesus Christ

Praise/Thanksgiving:

In terms of the connection between Jesus' life, the oil, and its actions

The glorious work of your Son, Jesus, was always with and through the power of the Holy Spirit that now dwells in all believers and pours out our spiritual gifts as the oil I will use to anoint will pour out love and compassion to those who need divine healing.

Petition for the Anointing Oil with Specific Example(s)

Purpose of the Anointing Oil

Let this oil help bring wholeness to those who are in darkness and need repentance to be brought to health. As it anoints those in need let it be your grace and mercy in their restoration. I ask this this as a loyal servant in your glorious name.

Proclaim It to Be So

Therefore, I proclaim this oil to now be consecrated and it so. Amen

Sample Prayer of Consecration for Anointing Oil

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to you today with this oil that I am setting apart asking that you will bless and consecrate it in the name of Jesus Christ,

The glorious work of your Son, Jesus, was always with and through the power of the Holy Spirit that now dwells in all believers and pours out our spiritual gifts as the oil I will use to anoint will pour out your love and compassion to those who need divine healing,

Let this oil help bring wholeness to those who are in darkness and need repentance to be brought to health. As it anoints those in need let it be your grace and mercy in their restoration. I ask this this as a loyal servant in your glorious name.

Therefore, I proclaim this oil to now be consecrated and it so. Amen

Anointing Yourself and Others

In order to anoint yourself, put one-two drops of anointing oil on your right thumb and then use your thumb to make the sign of the cross on your forehead as you pray, *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”* In addition, you can cross yourself directly upon an area of your body that has been ill or is injured. Then you can continue praying to praise God, ask forgiveness for your sins, or ask for His divine healing powers to make you whole again. You can also anoint other people so that God will provide them with His blessing using the same technique. However, your prayer should now start with person’s name and then indicate you or anointing them in the name of the blessed trinity. For example, *“John, my brother in Christ, I am anointing you now with this holy oil in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* Then you can offer your prayers of intercession for this person and ask specifically for what this person

needs to become whole again, i.e., physical healing, spiritual support for problems or troubles, a blessing for protection or benefit that can be shared with others, etc.

Anointing Your Sanctuary

When we anoint ourselves, we are really anointing the “Temple of the Holy Spirit” that is within us. To accept, believe, and follow Jesus Christ is a sincere and deep commitment in which you will act and do what he has done, always put Him first, and live according to His Word and in a far greater sense that the “anointings of Christ”, His teachings, truth, and wisdom are always with you to help you grasp spiritual truths and put them to use in your life.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:27 KJV)

Just as Moses and his people anointed the holy tabernacle, you can also anoint your entire home so that it too becomes a *holy sanctuary* that is pleasing to God. Start by placing one-two drops of holy anointing oil on your right index finger and touching the frame of the front door and then move through your home touching each door frame and window sill. As you make your way through your home, pray to the Holy Spirit that what occurs in your home will honor God’s will and that your home will always be filled with His light, love, and peace and your powers of concentration will always connect you to your Christ-within.

You can also choose to just anoint the sanctuary that you have set up in your home that you are using during times of concentration, i.e., the weekly TRF Healing Services, your time concentrating on *Psalms 1:1-3* and *John 1:1-5*, or concentrating to fully empower your prayers so they connect you to God. As your sanctuary may only be part of a room, start by anointing any ways into and out of the given room (door frames). Then you can anoint the walls behind and on the sides of the area you have chosen, the floor in front of the area, and the ceiling above the area. If the sanctuary has an altar, table, or any furniture you can also anoint them as well as any other objects in your sanctuary.

And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. (Exodus 40:9-10 KJV)

By anointing your sanctuary, you have consecrated it so that it now set apart for your time alone with God with your powers of concentration and prayer. When you take the time to anoint your sanctuary it demonstrates to God you are here, trying to please Him through your actions, and ready to be in His presence and open yourself fully to your communication with Him. Make the commitment on a regular basis to go to your sanctuary to concentrate and pray and when you go there always anoint yourself before entering your sanctuary so that you have not only set aside the area of the sanctuary but you have set yourself aside as the body of the sanctuary so that

your aura reaches up and connects to God and He can empower the thoughts you have concentrated and prayed upon.

Four Spices in Anointing Oil

Spices	Uses:	Symbolism:
<p><i>Calamus</i> (Sweet Cane)</p> <p><i>“to acquire or to purchase”</i></p>	<p>Holy Anointing Oil</p> <p>Incense</p> <p>Fragrance</p>	<p><i>Resurrection of Christ</i></p> <p>Humility</p> <p>Word of God</p> <p>Authority of Scriptures (Canon)</p> <p>3rd Gospel: Luke</p>
<p><i>Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, (Exodus 30:23 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. (Ezekiel 27:19 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (Song of Solomon 4:14 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. (Isaiah 43:24 KJV)</i></p>		
<p><i>Cassia</i></p> <p><i>“to bow the head”</i></p>	<p>Similar to Cinnamon</p> <p>Holy Anointing Oil</p> <p>Give fragrance to clothes</p>	<p><i>Power of Christ’s resurrection</i></p> <p>Cleansing</p>

	Dedication and Devotion	Obedience 4th Gospel: John
<p><i>And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin (Exodus 30:24 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. (Ezekiel 27:19 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad. (Psalm 45:8 KJV)</i></p>		
Cinnamon “to erect”	Holy Anointing Oil Perfume, Air Purifier Healing Oil Prosperity, Passion and Courage	<i>Power of Christ’s death</i> Uprightness The redeemed Christ 2nd Gospel: Mark
<p><i>Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (Song of Solomon 4:14 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. (Proverbs 7:17 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. (Revelation 18: 13 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, (Exodus 30:23 KJV)</i></p>		
Myrrh “bitter”	Holy Pouring Oil Queen Esther, Beauty Treatment Embalming	<i>Love of Christ</i> <i>Death of Christ</i>

	Holy Anointing Oiling Wise men as gift to infant Jesus Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea provided for burial of Jesus Peace and Grace	<i>King to die for His people: Lamb of God</i> <i>Meekness</i> <i>Bitterness of Christ's life on earth as our sacrifice</i> <i>1st Gospel: Matthew</i>
<p><i>And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. (John 19:39 KJV)</i></p> <p><i>And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. (Mark 15:23 KJV)</i></p>		

Spices Used in the Anointing Oil

Each of the four spices (*myrrh*, *cinnamon*, *calamus*, and *cassia*) used in the preparation of the anointing oil are used to purposefully so as to foretell the coming of Christ in the Old Testament, connect us to the divine when anointed, represent the characteristics of Christ, and bring forth the truth so love can emerge. When the four spices are mixed together in the preparation of the anointing oil they merge and become one to represent the “divine perfection” of God and all that He has created.

In the preparation of the anointing oil there is twice as much (five-hundred shekels) *myrrh* and *cassia* compared to the *cinnamon* and *calamus* (two-hundred and fifty

shekels). The myrrh is connected to the first gospel, or *Gospel of Matthew* in which Jesus comes to us as our *King*. The cassia is connected to the fourth gospel, or the *Gospel of John*, in which Jesus comes to us as the *Son of God*. While at half the amount of the other two “fragrant” spices, cinnamon represent the *Gospel of Mark* and calamus represents the *Gospel of Luke* in which Christ is referred to a “servant” and the “Son of Man” which being fragrant were roles that meant to please the Father. In this way the greater amounts of myrrh and cassia are connecting to the Christ’s more elevated roles as a *King* and *Son of God* compared to His role on Earth to be a *servant* and not a ruler in which He identified Himself as the *Son of God* to let people know that He was not only human but was also divine and come with the authority of the Father as prophesized as the Messiah.

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(Matthew 20:27-28 KJV)

Myrrh was a gift from the Magi upon the birth of Jesus. Yet, it is also used as an embalming oil in the preparation of the dead and represented His giving of His life for mankind. Through the death of Christ came our freedom. Jesus had such commitment to this end that he refused to take the wine that had myrrh in it as that would have taken away His pain because He was fully committed to give Himself completely so as to ensure our freedom.

And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. (Mark 15:23 KJV)

Cinnamon is a spice that comes from a tree that is known for growing as straight as possible and is used to create a “contrast” between the two different types of “houses” that one may choose, the true (straight) house and the false house. *Cinnamon* is used to refer to those of us who stand with Christ and those who chose harlotry as part of their lives.

*I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and **cinnamon**.*
(Proverbs 7:17 KJV)

The root word of cinnamon comes from the words “to erect”, indicating there is either the building of the *Church of Christ*, the true church contrasted to the false churches of many false gods and those that want to only fulfill their primal desires such as lust with acts of harlotry. In the end, only those who come to the Church of Christ will live forever. Christ ultimately came as a servant to build His church on Earth for His believers in which Peter would be the rock of its foundation.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
(Matthew 16:18-19 KJV)

Calamus or sweet cane grows in the form of an upright or straight reed and resembles a measuring rod (a rod of a given length used as a basis for comparison for measurement). As the calamus reed grows its head collects with oil that eventually causes the reed to bend over as if the plant were bowing which speaks to Christ's humility. Symbolically, it also refers to the "word of God" which is then infused throughout the anointing oil and its application makes God's word visible to ourselves and others so that we are clear of God's law that we will be held and measured against. Sweet cane's name is from the word "to acquire", in Jesus' mission on Earth he "acquired" His followers and believers because he fulfilled the law of God indicating He had met the full measure of His Father. In addition, the word "canon" also comes from the name of sweet cane and refers to the books of the Bible that we consider to be genuine, or we give authority to.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17-18 KJV)

Cassia comes from the fragrant inner bark or roots of a tree that appears to be quite similar to the cinnamon tree. Cassia was a commonly traded spice due to its pleasing fragrance (Ezekiel 27:19), yet Christ is not about the buying and selling of what God wants or asks from us as we are His creation and belong to Him. Cassia's name comes from the word meaning "to bow the head down" and was meant to reflect submission and obedience of Jesus to the Father as well as ours to God also.

As part of our submission to God, we must make sacrifices to demonstrate our devotion to God and restore our relationship with God for not following His will and sinning. While in following God's will we are called to serve our fellow man and not to become someone puts himself above others. For this Christ was the perfect example of service and following the will of His Father.

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (John 6:38 KJV)

Incense: Prayers and the Spices of Christ

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (Psalm 141:2 KJV)

Moses was also instructed by God to make incense using four spices; *stacte*, *onycha*, *galbanum*, and *pure frankincense*. Once, again, the spices used in the preparation of incense were the characteristics of Christ.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the

testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. (Exodus 30:34-37 KJV)

Incense symbolizes our prayers and the prayers of the saints and even the prayers of Christ himself. In the tabernacle of the Old Testament, the incense is called the “holy of holies” as it came to represent the High Priest who was the only one who could enter the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle (also called the Holy of Holies) and act as our “Mediator” and bring our prayers to God so that they would be acceptable. However, with the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament, He now became our “Mediator” to bring our prayers through Him to the Father as He was sinless in His life and His prayers were acceptable to the Father. However, when we repent, ask for forgiveness, and believe in Christ as true followers, then our prayers spontaneously pass through Jesus Christ so they may always become acceptable to God the Father.

Stacte is most probably the liquid form or oil of myrrh (or possibly the gum of the storax tree) that is found on the outside bark of the tree in hardened droplets. The Bible is unclear on this, however its name is from the words “to speak by inspiration or prophesize” which connects to the Words of Christ.

Onycha is another incense ingredient from the Bible that we are unclear about today. Unlike the other plant spices, onycha was probably the shells of several different muscle species that were found in the Red Sea or the operculum (trap door or calcified covering that closes to allow the snail to remain safely in its shell) of seasnails. Its name is derived from the word for “roar” which signifies the power of Christ’s Words. As a descendant of the House of David, Christ is symbolized as the lion of Judah, the King of Kings.

Galbanum is a brown colored resin (or gum) from plant genus of *Ferula* but for the most part consists of one species of the aromatic herbs, called *Ferula gummosa* that was found in Persia and grown in Syria and India. It has an intense smell, somewhat bitter, which on its own is not very pleasing. However, it has a unique characteristic of enhancing the fragrances of the other spices as they burned and increasing the duration of their burn so the scent of incense travel great distances. It also strongly enhances concentration needed for and meditation and praying. Galbanum comes from the words for *animal fat* from animals sacrificed in the tabernacle and also translates as being the “best” and “finest”. Thus, we consider all the Words and works of Christ they stand as being the very best and finest that man has ever witnessed.

Frankincense is a resin from the *Boswellia* tree and in biblical times was quite expensive due to the fact it took a considerable amount of time to collect the gum (resin) from the trees and distilled so the aromatic oil could be collected. Then it had to be transported long distances by caravan from India, Arabia, and Africa (Egypt) to the parts of the Roman Empire, Asia, and Europe. In the Old Testament

it was commonly burned as an offering to God in the temples as it was a pleasing fragrance to God.

And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: (Leviticus 2:2 KJV)

Frankincense was also used to make perfumes and was given to Mary and Joseph as a gift for Jesus at the time of His birth for the Magi recognized Him as a King. Each gift of the Magi symbolized the components of Jesus' life; *gold*: His royalty as King, *frankincense*: Jesus as our God, and *myrrh*: His sacrificial death for humanity.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11 KJV)

Frankincense also known as *olibanum* is known for calming the mind and body as it brings forth peace and relaxation. It also increases our spiritual awareness and helps us to establish the connection between ourselves and our inner-Christ during our times of concentration, prayer, and meditation. Frankincense helps us to clean and purify our auras so that we balanced and healthy which contribute to increasing our

positive vibrations. The name frankincense comes from the words for *white* referring to the color of dried resin and *brick* which refers to its symbolism in “human work” that produced structures such as the ill-conceived Tower of Babel or a time when due to Pharaoh’s punishment for the Israelites produced bricks that were improperly made without straw to giving the dried brick no strength. Therefore, God’s recipe for incense calls for “pure frankincense” which now calls attention not to the imperfect but to the “perfect works” that are produced through the sacrifices of Christ so that they honor God.

*Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore:
let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the
bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye
shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry,
saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be
laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not
regard vain words. (Exodus 5:7-9 KJV)*

The last ingredient in making incense is the addition of salt as a “seasoning” to make it “pure and holy”. For the people of Israel, the burning incense symbolized their prayers to God that were placed upon the altar therefore they wanted to ensure that their prayers were both pure and holy and would please God so He would not forget their prayers.

And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: (Exodus 30:35 KJV)

The salt also represented a covenant between God and His people in which God expresses His righteousness by promising to always be faithful to His people even if sometimes we are not always faithful to Him and we can be certain because God's word is always incorruptible. By flavoring the incense with salt, we will experience a life of "new taste" that is beyond what we could have ever expected or even believed possible.

Additional Spices for Anointing Oil and Incense

Spices	Information/Uses:
<i>Bay</i>	Symbolize Resurrection of Christ Blessing Strength and Triumph Cooking of Fish
<i>Boswell Fir</i>	Holy Anointing Oil Make musical instruments Healing oil
<i>Cedarwood</i>	King Solomon used to build Temple Possible cross Jesus was hung on Medicine for skin diseases: leprosy Healing, Strength, and Protection
<i>Cypress</i>	Used to build Noah's Ark (gopher wood) Used to build military weapons Symbolizes power and safety
<i>Frankincense</i>	Wise men as gift to infant Jesus Sacred incense Healing and Intercession

	“Brick”: Human Work Unpleasing to God (Tower of Babel) Perfect Works of Christ
<i>Galbanum</i>	Incense Balance and regulate one’s emotions “Finest”: Christ’s work Fulfilling the Law by His Death
<i>Hyssop</i>	Cleanse people and their homes Hyssop stem was used to give Jesus vinegar on cross Purification
<i>Lavender</i>	Possibly refers to Spikenard Perfume Healing Oil Peace, Love, Purity, Silence, Grace, Devotion Color of Royalty, Calmness, Creativity Third Eye
<i>Myrtle</i>	Anointing Oil Healing oil Perfume Grace
<i>Onycha</i>	Holy Anointing Oil “Roar”: Power of Christ’s Words From Mussels or Sea Snails (<i>not a plant</i>)
<i>Rose of Sharon</i>	Symbol of Christ Song of Solomon Beauty of the Beloved
<i>Saffron</i>	Perfume Medicine Food Flavoring and Coloring Yellow Dye Divine Light, Purity, and Sanctity
<i>Spikenard</i>	Perfume Ointment Medicine Put on Jesus before crucifixion and burial Worship
	Holy Anointing Oil

<i>Sandalwood</i> <i>(Aloes)</i>	Oil of Happiness Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea provided for burial of Jesus Beauty treatments
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Devotional Exercise #1: *Retrospection*

In order to promote soul growth TRF teaches its members to offer confession to a higher self in a process called *retrospection*. It involves “judging our motives, merits, and shortcomings” every night for the events of each day.

“Never suffer sleep to close thy eyelids after thy going to bed, till thou hast examined by reason all thy actions of the day. Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done? If in this examination thou findest that thou hast done amiss, reprimand thyself severely for it, and if thou hast done any good, - rejoice!” - Pythagoras

Ideally, this nightly habit is a spiritual cleansing process in which we acknowledge our positive actions as well as negative actions where we hurt or treated others badly, fell short in our efforts, or acted deceitfully, arrogantly, or without concern for others. In reviewing the actions of our day, we are seeking to renew our *desire bodies* so we can better serve God as we move forward into a new day with new opportunities to have purer motives and considerations for our fellow man.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18 KJV)

Through retrospection over time, TRF believes that spiritually we shine greater light and clarity so we are better able to be honest with ourselves and judge ourselves appropriately as God would see us and our actions. Retrospection in TRF is an essential part of their faith in showing their sincere belief in God that opens them to His grace. Yet, it is not enough to simply acknowledge your blame, you have to feel the pain you inflicted on others so deeply that you feel regret and remorse that overflows your consciousness. Max Heindel likens this “pain” to the sacrifices that were brought to the tabernacle in the wilderness and placed upon the alter of burnt offerings. As all sacrifices had to be salted to be accepted by God, we can imagine the pain of placing salt within our own wounds from negative actions towards others.

The cleansing or renewal from retrospection comes when we have given our “sins” to God and then let go of our own guilt, regrets, and remorse. If any apologies or restitution is needed it then can be made and we then can release these memories of our negative actions and behaviors and move forward with a clean slate in our life, born anew to start again.

If, however, we do not let go of the regret and remorse we will only drain the strength from our desire body and destroy our “moral and spiritual health”.

Retrospection allows one to pay their debt for their sins, promote their soul growth,

and shorten their time in purgatory (not the traditional purgatory as will be discussed later).

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16 KJV)

Delayed Retrospection

TRF also encourages all members to perform a retrospection of their life prior to when they started their nightly retrospection exercises. This log of past events in your life that need to be acknowledged and addressed is called a *delayed retrospection*. While the daily retrospection is done mentally, the delayed retrospection is a written process and will probably extend over multiple days until your entire life has been captured.

It can be written as an outline, a free write by your age groups (early, middle, late adolescent, twenties, thirties, etc.) randomly written on index cards that later can then be arranged chronologically, in a template you create to organize the events, etc. In addition, to those negative actions that stand out in your life, also try to capture those past events that had strongly influence your life that involved “fear, anger, shame, etc.”. Remember this is only for your personal use to release yourself from past issues, suffering, and emotional difficulties. Therefore, keep it private and when you have finished you can permanently destroy it a way that speaks to you (i.e., burn it, shred it, tear it up and recycle it, etc.)

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalms 139:23-24 KJV)

Steiner's Additional Thoughts on Retrospection

Rudolf Steiner's approach to the nightly *retrospection* is very much aligned to that presented by Max Heindel. However, Steiner does provide some additional thoughts, explanations, and suggestions on the process that are worth our consideration as they do not contradict anything presented by Heindel regarding the process. For Steiner as well as Heindel, retrospection is a form of "self-observation" that is done for spiritual training using mental visualization. Whereas using a backwards or reverse order time for the viewing of one's daily life in retrospection is how we *train the soul* to let go of simply recounting the events of our life that we generally recount in a sequential order from an earlier time to a later time period.

The exercise of retrospection is how we strengthen our thoughts so the events, spoken word, or melodies (succession of sounds we experience) so that an "*ideal*" is produced which will have an "inner certainty" of these thoughts. In addition, in the *ideal* there will be a calmness of our thoughts as we are not judging them in any way. Therefore, when we look at an upsetting event that may have occurred in our day it has lost those qualities that we previously had found so worrisome, disappointing, or even had made us so unhappy so that now we can consider the

thought in terms of its “inner significance and value” as an ideal. Therefore, when we can bring forth an ideal, we now surrendering it ourselves so that we can then meditate on their “symbolism, thoughts, and feelings”.

As you review each of the scenes that occurred in your day, Steiner is asking us to consider our “*moral attitude*” in each scene in terms of what we had done or not done in terms of our actions. Yet, in approaching our evaluation of action we consider appropriate, Steiner asks us to go further and consider if we could have even done better with our actions. While it is also important to consider the impact of what we have said to others as the *meaning of our words* can often be misinterpreted due to what we exactly said or if we intentionally let room for the meaning of our words to be misunderstood for our benefit. And in speaking with others did we embellish the things we told them about ourselves or our actions or try to paint somethings as being less important or impressive than they really are.

Steiner makes a point to note that as we review our day in retrospection and you recount an experience in which you feel you could have been or done better you should never have *feelings of regrets* as this is only an expression of your ego. Therefore, never let yourself feel you should have been or done better for a specific incident you are recalling. Your focus in retrospection should be in improving yourself and finding ways to improve yourself and get better. Therefore, in considering all of your actions you need to ask yourself; *Were my actions right for the situation?* And, *How could I have done better in that situation?* Then Steiner wants you to think upon the words: “*I couldn’t do otherwise back then, but now I can do it better and I will do it better in future.*”

Steiner also speaks to the concepts of *looking back* and *memory* in which looking back occurs in the present moment in which the scene still exists while in memory time has passed making that impossible. However, you can learn to *look back* if you visualize the current day that has passed in clear and tangible pictures. Using retrospection in this way is the process by which one can learn to read all of the events, actions, feeling, emotions, and intentions from the past to the future from every form of life, the Akashic record. Therefore, even if an event occurred in the past, it is not lost and can be found in the Akashic record when you develop the skill of retrospection in which you make certain to include every detail regardless of how small. As Steiner states, “*Memory is the bridge on which we’re led to the invisible Akashic record.*” In addition to looking back through our memory and our eyes, we can look back even if we have lost the memory because periods of time also exist in space. In this way we have access to higher knowledge and wisdom. Then we can use the skill of retrospection to better understand the higher worlds in which “everything runs from end to beginning”.

In time, you will be able to do you complete retrospection in five minutes even though you are taking into account every detail as this will “strengthens the soul’s forces.” When you are able to remember even the smallest of details of a given experience, the ones that are often overlooked, or perceived as unimportant or uninteresting this “generates inner forces”. Sometimes it is helpful if you see yourself as a “stranger”, so that you don’t get too caught up in your expectations and beliefs about who you are as you visualize your experiences. Don’t be concerned if you fall asleep during your night time retrospection as it usually will

continue on its own. The key is to work on developing clarity in the images you bring into your mind as this will help to build the organs of your *astral body*. Over time your memory will slowly disappear and you then will have the ability to have a “direct perception” of the past.

Concentrating on Retrospection

In order to fully understand retrospection, we need to reach inside the people we have hurt and focus on their pain and suffering so that we feel it as our own pain and suffering. *Psalms of Lament* are prayers to God that express a deeply hurt soul’s sorrow and pain by sharing their negative emotions and accusatory questions about the difficulties and trial that they have gone through often without a clear understanding of why. While other Psalms are penitential and express repentance for the hurt and lack of concern, we have shown our fellow man in their time of need and the deep sorrow for our past wrong doings. Their words force us to look deep within ourselves to find our inner Spirit, stop sinning, and ask for forgiveness. Therefore, if we want to truly cleanse ourselves, we can *concentrate* on the Psalms for Pain, Suffering, and Forgiveness as part of the exercise of retrospection.

“Each hour of the day we should note and weigh our actions and in the evening we should do what we can to free ourselves of the burden of them by means of repentance ...”

- St Hesychios the Priest, Philokalia

Psalms for Pain

- *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:18 KJV)*
- I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (Psalm 69:2-3 KJV)
- Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. (Psalm 6:2 KJV)
- Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. (Psalm 38:9-11 KJV)
- Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? (Psalm 10:1 KJV)
- The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psalm 34:18 KJV)
- He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3 KJV)

Psalms for Suffering

- *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? (Psalm 13:1-2 KJV)*
- *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. (Psalm 31:10 KJV)*
- *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. (Psalm 43:5 KJV)*
- *But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. (Psalm 69:29 KJV)*
- *For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. (Psalm 88:3-5 KJV)*

- My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

(Psalm 22:1-2 KJV)
- Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.* **(Psalm 130:1 KJV)**
- It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

(Psalm 119:71 KJV)
- In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.* **(Psalm 77:2 KJV)**
- The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

(Psalm 25:17-18 KJV)
- Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?* **(Psalm 6:1-3 KJV)**
- From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* **(Psalm 61:2 KJV)**

- *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. (Psalm 6:6 KJV)*

- *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart (Psalm 38:5-8 KJV)*

Psalms for Forgiveness

- *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

(Psalm 51:1 KJV)

- *Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.*

(Psalm 6:4 KJV)

- *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5 KJV)*

- *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. (Psalm 86:5 KJV)*

- *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:2-3 KJV)*

- *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*

(Psalm 25:11 KJV)

- *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. (Psalm 130:3-4 KJV)*
- *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
(Psalm 51:10-12 KJV)*
- *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:11-12 KJV)*
- *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.
(Psalm 38:18 KJV)*
- *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. (Psalm 85:3-4 KJV)*

Images for *Pain and Suffering*

The Sufferings of Job



Silvestro Chiesa, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

There have been many stories of people suffering in the bible, Joseph, Jeremiah, Ruth, and even Peter the Apostle. Yet, the suffering of Job by Satan is allowed by God in order to prove that a righteous man who is prosperous will not curse God or lose faith even if he loses everything (money, health, wife, children, home, property, etc.) as Job did.

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

(Job19:25-27 KJV)

Therefore, Job was upset and felt he had been treated wrongly and put through unmerciful trials and afflictions that caused him to complain about to God and even wish he had never been born yet he *never* lost his faith. Even his friends who came to comfort him, eventually attacked and accused him of causing his own suffering and even abandoning God.

Christ as the Suffering Redeemer



Andrea Mantegna, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

It was common for poor people in biblical times to sell their property or themselves into slavery so as to pay their debts. However, their closet relative had the opportunity to “buy back” the property they had sold or their freedom from slavery. This person was called a “kinsman redeemer” and the practice originated from the

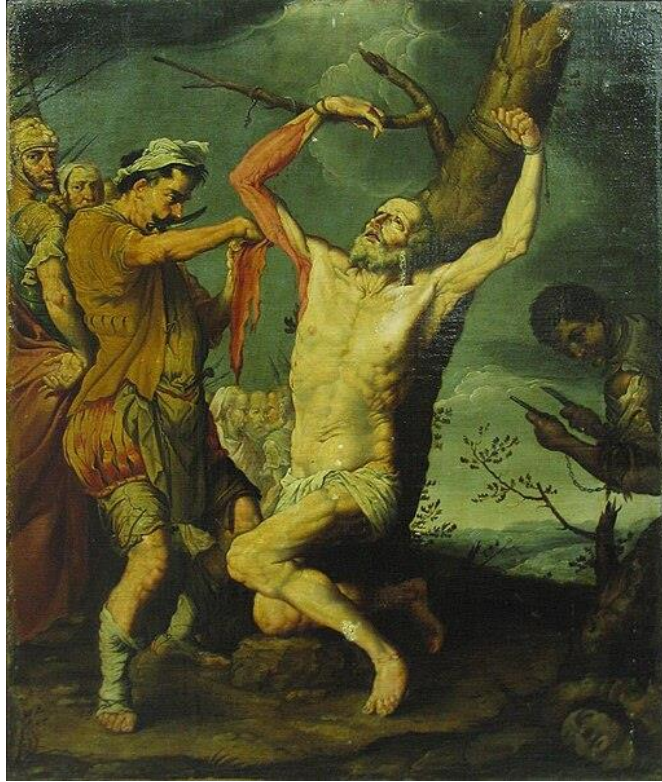
Law of Moses. A redeemer could also marry a widow, take in orphaned children, or even take revenge for a murder.

If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. (Leviticus 25:25 KJV)

Christ was also called our “Redeemer”, as he was our nearest kinsman when sin caused us to be become separated from our Father. For those that believed and trusted in Him and offered their repentance, He *bought back* our lives from God by suffering greatly and dying on the cross for us. It is by His redemption, His blood on the cross that we can find our salvation. For it was only through His great suffering that our souls have been saved.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Galatians 3:13 KJV)

The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew



Jusepe de Ribera, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Bartholomew or Nathanael as he is called in the *Gospel of John* was one Jesus' twelve apostles. When Jesus first met Bartholomew, He praised him for the honesty that came from his heart. Thus, Bartholomew's heart opened and he believed that Jesus was the son of God and became his follower.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! (John 1:46-47 KJV)

When Jesus was crucified, Bartholomew performed miracles and converted many through his evangelization in the East. In one legend he is in Armenia and converts King Polymius to Christianity after he removes a demon from his daughter. This caused the king's brother, Prince Astyages, to fear that there would be deadly consequences from the Roman Empire. Therefore, he has Bartholomew tortured by having his skin removed by slowly cutting it off his body (flaying) so as to make him suffer as much as humanly possible and then beheading him.

Images for Forgiveness

Jacob seeking Forgiveness of Esau



Jan Victors, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Isaac's wife Rebecca was barren until her husband, Isaac, prayed to God and she became pregnant with twins. Esau was born before his brother, Jacob, who was grasping onto his brother's heel fighting to be the first born. Then one day as time went on Esau came home from working in the fields and asked his brother for some of the pottage he had cooked. However, Jacob will only give him some pottage if Esau gives him his birthright and luckily for him Esau is so hungry, he agrees.

And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

(Genesis 25:31-34 KJV)

As Isaac was dying, Jacob and his mother tricked him to give his blessing to Jacob as the firstborn. When Esau discovers the betrayal from his father, he promises that he will kill his brother when the mourning for his father's death has passed.

Therefore, Jacob disappears for twenty years until God tells him he must return home. Jacob knows he must seek forgiveness from his brother so he sends him many gifts. He then wrestles an unknown man in the night and will not let him go until the man gives him his blessing. After the man wounds him, he gives him his blessing and Jacob realizes that he has seen God. Now Jacob, renamed Israel, in penance to his brother prostrates himself seven times in hope of his brother's forgiveness. Yet, Esau has no malice for his brother and embraces his brother in

forgiveness. In Esau's forgives, Jacob is restored in his relationship with God so he can begin his work to bring God's people back to Him and worship Him properly.

Thy Sins are Forgiven



Heinrich HofmannGeorg Hahn, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

A sinful woman, most probably a local prostitute, showed Jesus much love in her acts of humility, kissing his feet, washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair, scenting Him with perfume, and anointing Him with oil. Jesus knew the many sins of the woman yet forgave her because of the great love that she had shown him. Peter didn't understand this and Jesus needs him to understand that

even though this woman was lowly in stature and extremely sinful she offered a wealth of love compared to someone such as himself of higher stature that needed less forgiveness and therefore offers less love.

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.

And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. (Luke 7:36-39 KJV) And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. (Luke 7:44-48 KJV)

The Return of the Prodigal Son



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In the parable of the *Prodigal Son*, we come to see that God's love is unconditional and we can always ask for His forgiveness regardless of far we have gone astray. In His merciful love He not only forgives all sins; He forgets them and does not hold them against us as we move forward. Just as the son's merciful father gladly welcomes him back, God will always welcome us back if we repent and ask His forgiveness. While those who are hard of heart, such as the other loyal brother, experience the same love that implores them to open their hearts and forgive. Ultimately, God desires our return to Him and is willing to wait because He loves us and will celebrate our return.

And he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to

the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

(Luke 15:11-32 KJV)

Concentrating on Amen

When we concentrate on the word “Amen” we are concentrating on Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God who was the fulfillment of all the promises of the God in the Old Testament. Just as Amen is the last word of the Bible, Christ is the final revelation of God.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; (Revelation 3:14 KJV)

Just as today when we buy a product in the supermarket and it is rated Grade A we know it is of the highest quality. In earlier times, Amen confirmed the divine authority and absolute certainty of words the people heard from the mouth of Jesus. Therefore, the people knew they could have absolute trust and confidence in the words they were hearing while Jesus taught them. And when He finished teaching, they themselves would whole heartedly respond with *Amen* to signify their agreement and faith in Him as the Son of God.

When the *Amen* we speak after a prayer or any part of a sermon comes from a place that acknowledges the sacrifice, love, miraculous power, mercy, grace, and/or resurrection of Jesus Christ with faith and humility that shows our vulnerability as we surrender to our Master then we open ourselves to a transformational power.

“When uttered with sincerity and conviction, ‘Amen’ becomes a catalyst for transformation, inviting divine intervention and aligning our spirits with the higher forces of the universe.” **Chrissie, *The***

Final Word: Why Does the Bible End with ‘Amen’?

It is through this inner transformation that you connect to your inner-Spirit or your inner-Christ so you can become whole, find peace, and explore higher worlds to continue your spiritual development and support and encourage others. Jesus was God’s most reliable witness and everything had to be made through Him. “Amen is the epitome of the work of Christ” while He was among us on the earth from His baptism, His healings and miracles, His transfiguration, His suffering in the garden to His death on Calvary, and His resurrection and ascension. Therefore, if we want to come to a deeper understanding of spiritual truths we need to understand and be able to concentrate on the connection between Amen and Jesus.

Valetin Tomberg in his study of *The Mystery of Golgotha* assert that “repeated meditative concentration” on the scripture passage “*These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God*” (Rev. 3:14) will lead to a more thorough understanding of our resurrection body than any other study. Yet, the true potency of the biblical passage lies in the concentration on the single word of AMEN which is the perfect example of Christ’s work on earth which is analogous to the resurrection body which embodies cosmic evolution.

The Sacred Sound of Amen

In Buddhism and Hinduism, the Sanskrit word “*OM*” (or Aum) is chanted to connect one to the *cosmic vibration* and its energy of calmness and peace. The word OM can be defined as the Absolute Reality, the sacred sound of the original vibration of the universe, a “sacred formula” that is the “greatest of all mantras”. Cosmic vibrations existed before the creation of our universe as a form of energy that had a humming sound and vibration. And it was from that vibration and its “primordial sound” that the universe was created.

Yet other religions such as Christianity use *sound vibrations* and have sacred sounds such as “*Amen*”. And the Cosmic vibration not only occurs in sound such as Om, it also occurs in another form of energy as Light. Regardless, of whether the cosmic vibrations occur as sound or light they “have the infinite potential to heal, transform, and bring us into greater and more expansive levels of awareness.”

Therefore, in *John 8:12* it is clear to see why Christ refers to Himself as the *Light of the world* and “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Just as the yogis conclude their yoga practice by chanting *Om* so as to be closer to the oneness of the universe, Christians conclude their prayers with the final word and sound of *Amen* to be closer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Biblical Symbolism: Pituitary and Pineal Glands

In S. R. Parchment's book, *Steps to Self-Mastery*, he describes how the Bible in Genesis uses the river found in Eden as being symbolic of the physical body and four streams that branches off from it as the *water of life* that flows upward in the body to open the "gates of the invisible world". *Pison* the first stream provides water for Havilah which represents the head. It describes the country of Havilah as having *gold* symbolizing the pons and *bdellium* and *onyx stones* symbolizing the pituitary and pineal gland. Thus, in terms of obtaining wisdom and becoming "ready for discipleship" our job is to bring the waters of the Eden River (physical body) under our control and then use the full power of the water from the *Pison* stream in the country of Havilah (head).

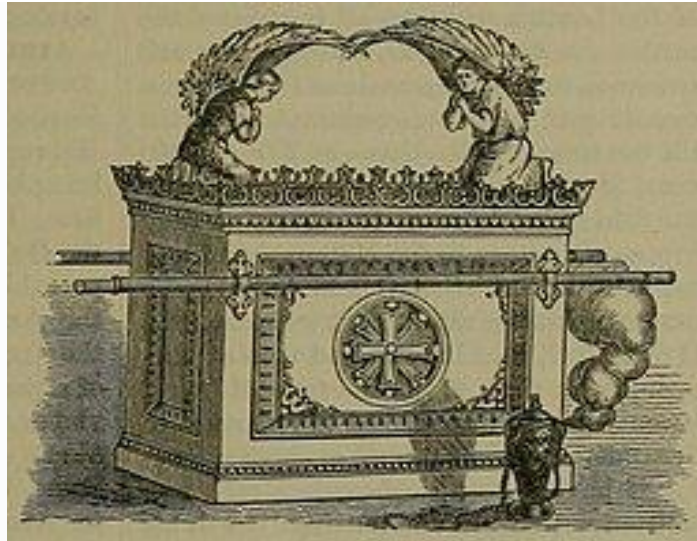
*And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is **Pison**: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is **bdellium** and the **onyx stone**. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. (Genesis 2:10-15 KJV)*

The “Life Spirit or Christ aspect” is found in three places in the physical body, its primary location being the pituitary gland as well as in the heart and the solar plexus. The “Human Spirit or Jehovah aspect” is mainly found in the pineal gland but also found in the liver. Together with “Divine Spirit or Father aspect” located in the forehead within the frontal sinus, the three aspects represent “three kings upon thrones”.

However, these kings only gave a small amount of freedom while we sleep. In order to free the three kings, we must place our attention upon “spiritual things”. Yet, using words for spiritual things may be difficult to convey their meaning that comes from information from a multidimensional higher world, thus pictures or images are better suited in understanding the true meaning. Over time an aspirant is able to build an internal “picture gallery” so as to have understanding of the spiritual realm.

The spinal column symbolizes the Rod of Aaron has thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves that can be regenerated by the “Water of Life” to bring you into the higher life. This occurs when the “tricolored serpentine spinal fire” reverses and moves upward to the brain to activate the pituitary and pineal glands.

These pineal and pituitary glands are represented by the two golden Cherubim with their extended wings pointing to one another that sit on top of the Arc of the Covenant located within the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle.

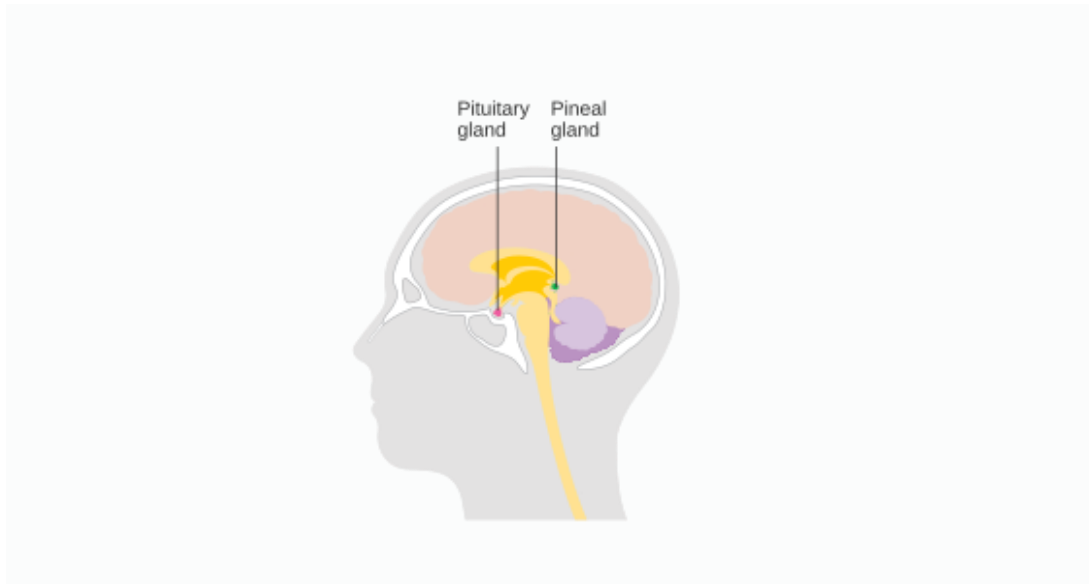


Cherubim on top of the Arc of the Covenant

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When the tricolored stream of light from the lower spine reaches the pons of the brain it splits into two parts. Some of the yellow color representing the Son combines with the blue color of the Father and moves into the pineal gland. The remainder of the yellow light combines with the red light representing the Holy Spirit and then moves into the pituitary gland. Then at a later time the two streams of light combine producing a spiritual color that we cannot put a name upon. This new color of spiritual light is the “Holy Shekinah Glory” which appears in the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies above the ark of the covenant. The shining of this light is the regeneration that makes you a High Priest so you now have the authority to enter the Holy of Holies so you can be with God and share your thoughts and the communications of others.

Pituitary and Pineal Gland and Concentration



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Pituitary and Pineal Glands in the Initiatory Process

Max Heindel in his book, *Ancient and Modern Initiation*, also discusses the roles of the pituitary and pineal glands in the process of the *Christian Mystic Initiation*. The first step of initiation is the “union of the mind and heart”. Then comes the next step in which the *stigmata* are produced upon the initiate’s body prior to their “mystical death and resurrection”. This is represented by pain, suffering, and sorrow that is seen in Christ while He is in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with

me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

(Matthew 26:36-39 KJV)

In order for this to occur in the initiate, the creative force that is flowing downward in the three segments of the spinal cord which are ruled by the Moon, Mars, and Mercury and also subjected to Neptune's rays which "light the regenerative spinal *Spirit Fire*" must now change its direction and begin to flow upward. This in turn causes the *pituitary* and the *pineal glands* to start to vibrate which then opens the initiate's "spiritual sight".

These vibrations will then reach the frontal sinus and they will feel the pain of the "crown of thorns" around their head which then moves to the other centers in their hands and feet so as to awaken and vitalize all points of the *five-pointed stigmata star* causing the entire vehicle to glow. Then a final violent pull releases the vortex in the liver from the Desire Body. The power of the energy that is produced from this causes the "sideral vehicle" to be quickly pushed upward through the skull and be released as part of the initiate's *mystical death*.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

(John 19:30 KJV)

The initiates *resurrection* comes when the their *sideral vehicle* locates and joins with Christ as his teacher and guide so they may become one body in the higher worlds to “practice the religion of the Father”.

Spiritual Growth Through the Pituitary and Pineal Glands

The key to our spiritual growth is the pituitary gland’s ability to activate the pineal gland so that we might once again become in touch with the higher worlds. Our pituitary gland therefore was once known as the “initiator” in providing the necessary energy to “light” the pineal gland.

“The pineal gland is a link between the consciousness of man and the invisible worlds of Nature. Whenever the arc of the pituitary body contacts this gland there are flashes of temporary clairvoyance, but the process of making these two work together consistently is one requiring not only years but lives of consecration and special physiological and biological training.”

Manly P. Hall, *Melchizedek and the Mystery of Fire*

The pituitary gland is feminine and ruled by Uranus that represents break through with sudden or unexpected changes and originality. Its opposite, the pineal gland is positive and ruled by Neptune which represents inspiration with spirituality, intuition, and clairvoyance. In the Bible, Jesus refers to the pineal gland as the “single eye”.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:22-23 KJV)

The primary location of the Human Spirit is the pineal gland and extends into our central nervous system. Initially, the pineal gland was our organ of vision to view the inner worlds during the Moon Period and the end of the Lemurian and early Atlantean Epochs. However, over time we came to depend on our physical eyes to view the “pleasures” of the natural world and the pineal gland became our third eye which we slowly lost use of over time. Together the pituitary and pineal gland were originally part of the involuntary or sympathetic nervous system and their sense centers spun counterclockwise (opposite the direction of the rotation of the earth and same as mediums) in their desire bodies. This meant that they did not have control over what they were seeing, whatever they perceived from the higher worlds would be strictly random.

However, today if the pituitary and pineal gland are sufficiently energized than the vision of the higher worlds can be regained at even stronger level and completely within our control as part of the voluntary nervous system (at our will) and the sense centers of our desire bodies will spin clockwise as that of a positive voluntary clairvoyant that is able to see beyond and through objects, into the invisible worlds, and investigate the human Spirit at any point in its life. Yet, the positive voluntary clairvoyant understands that this is an ability that is only used in the service to

humanity. In the Bible, Abraham had visions into the higher worlds about the future and the time when the Kingdom of God would come to the earth and what his role would be within this kingdom and Abraham acted upon his vision to do as God required of him so He might serve God and His people.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:10 KJV)

The goal of many spiritual aspirant is to live a live a moral life of perseverance that is pure, unselfish, in service to others, that refrains from meat and recreational sex. One part of our practice in TRF is to develop the skill of concentration, “the art of one-pointedness”, in which we can hold a single thought or image in our mind with the exclusion of all others. This is the essential first step to stimulate the ether of pituitary gland into an increased vibration. As the vibrations from the pituitary gland gradually increase it creates lines of force that extend outward like the magnetic lines of force from a bar magnet and eventually extend to the pineal gland.

Annie Besant in her book, *Thought Power*, describes the pineal gland which is located in the brain as the “organ for thought-transference”. If you properly concentrate on single idea, you will have the ability to send your thoughts to others. By concentrating on an idea, it creates a slight vibration in the ether of the pineal gland and in turn produces a “slight magnetic current”. The slight vibration or “quiver” is said to have a “creeping feeling” as if an ant was moving very slowly within the pineal gland. When you have empowered your thought sufficiently you will have created a current that is sufficient to transmit the thought.

This connection between the pituitary gland the pineal gland is the “bridge of the mind” (manas-antaskarana) and connects our senses to the Desire World and we now become voluntary clairvoyants and the sense centers of our desire bodies will now spin clockwise. When we are ready a teacher will find us to help us with the undisclosed second step.

In our spiritual development we must be accountable for every action in our lives. It is essential that we also lead a life that excludes alcohol, drugs, smoking, and anything that might “degenerate our creative force”. We have to learn to not waste our time and energy collecting unnecessary material possessions, to only read and view uplifting media, search only for useful information, discuss beneficial and appropriate topics with others, and focus our time on beneficial activities in terms of our spiritual development (i.e., spiritual exercises of Retrospection and Concentration), and serving others.

Pineal Gland to Send Helpful Thoughts

Often times when people are ill, having serious problems, or suffering with pain or loss our compassionate nature wants to send them helpful or kind thoughts. However, in order for us to successfully do this, the thoughts we wish to send to someone else must be sufficiently concentrated. However, just like sending an email to someone the thoughts we wish to send need to be addressed to a specific recipient or recipients.

The process is a one-way transmission like the rays of the sun traveling from the sun to the earth in which the rays are then passed through a magnifying lens to concentrate their intensity so they produce enough heat energy to ignite and burn a material like paper. Yet, as with any skill it will take time to gain the proficiency of your concentration to control and direct your thoughts at will whenever you like!

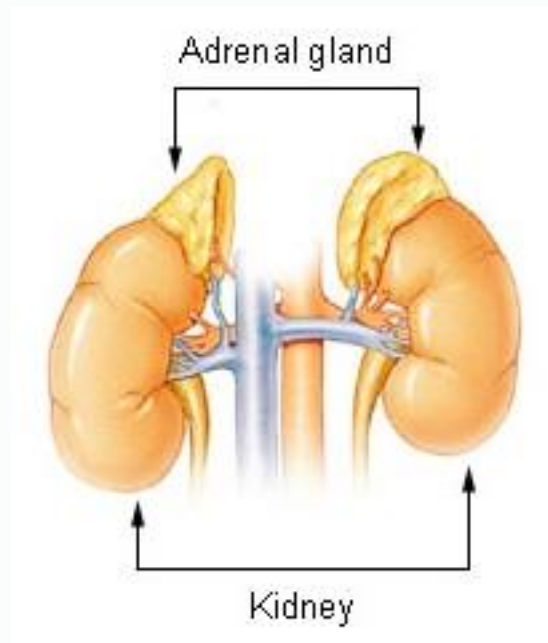
Typically, when we concentrate on something we put all our attention or focus on it. For example, a musician that becomes deeply engaged in a piece of music they are playing goes into a “zone” in which all their senses except for the auditory sense to hear the music become withdrawn. In intense concentration all of our senses are withdrawn as we become inwardly focused on an object, concept, or condition which also occurs in slow-wave sleep, our deepest stage of sleep. Yet, we are not left without any control of our faculties as our Spirit always remains with us even in our most intense periods of concentration.

Positive clairvoyants utilize “waves” they create to send messages to other people. In order to do this, they focus their concentration on the message (or idea) they wish to send and maintain their concentration until the ether within the pineal gland begins to vibrate. In turn the waves of these vibrations extend outward causing the ethers in close proximity to vibrate and carry these waves further outward so that they spread out in all directions. Eventually these waves will reach other people and the waves will cause the ether in their pineal gland of their physical body to vibrate. From here the message is transmitted the pineal gland of your desire body and then into your mind so it can be put into your consciousness.

However, the key component to receiving “a thought message” is that the pineal gland of the desire body has to be able to recreate the same vibratory rate of the pineal gland of the physical body in order for the message to be transmitted. Even the slightest difference will prevent the message from being received.

Therefore, if we can effectively concentrate and create thought-waves we can send messages to anyone we please. Our messages are similar to letters that are sent directly to a specific person but in this case, they are directed to a specific person’s mind. Yet, just as we have large group mailings to many different people our thoughts can also extend outward from us and touch and assert influence on any “receptive and responsive minds”. Which in turn creates a chain reaction as each person who is influenced now recreates the original vibration and thought and sends it back out so that its strength is even greater than the original thought-wave and like a stronger radio signal is capable of reaching even a greater number of people as it extends further from the its source.

The Adrenal Glands



EEOC, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The adrenal glands are endocrine glands that produce hormones such as *adrenaline* (norepinephrine), cortisol, and aldosterone that help regulate metabolism, blood pressure, development of sexual characteristics, and how your body reacts to stress. They have a triangular shape and are located on top of each the kidneys. The inner portion of the inner gland is the *adrenal medulla* that releases adrenaline and the outer portion is the *adrenal cortex* that releases aldosterone, cortisol, and sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone).

When we are under stress the adrenal medulla releases adrenaline, the *fight or flight* hormone, that enters the bloodstream so your body can prepare itself to deal with a dangerous situation, real or imagined. Adrenaline prepares your body to deal with the stressful situation by speeding your heartbeat and making your lungs breathe

more deeply and efficiently so your blood vessels can send more oxygenated blood to all the muscles of your body and your brain. In addition, your adrenaline also causes extra glucose (sugar) to be released from the liver into the blood stream so that it can be readily taken in by and used by the cells of the body to produce the needed energy for fight or flight response.

Your brain goes into a state of high alert in which the pupils of your eyes dilate (open) so everything you see becomes sharper and clearer so as to have your full attention. The processing powers of your brain improves like a computer that has had a higher capacity processing CPU installed (i.e., 1.6 GHz for basic tasks to 4.0 GHz for a gamer) so it can function more quickly and effectively. Ultimately, adrenaline greatly improves your ability to concentrate in terms of not only focus and speed but also the amount of information (data) that your brain is able to take in at one time, but how your thoughts and perceptions are related to that information, and even the future memory of that information.

So, while we may see the great benefits of adrenaline in terms of improving our skill of concentration the problem is that we do not have control of over our bodies release of adrenaline and we automatically have an “adrenal rush” or overstimulated response in which our bodies are flooded with adrenaline. Typically, when this occurs, we experience “tunnel-vision” that focuses exclusively on the stressful issue you are facing which is usually followed by “short-term memory loss”. These two events are most probably how we are programmed to deal and cope with highly stressful situations but are of little value of harnessing the beneficial power of concentration that is associated with adrenaline.

Using Physical Imagery to Produce Adrenaline for Concentration

One of the more common ways athletes have their bodies produce adrenaline is to image themselves sprinting or physically fighting with someone or performing any other intense physical activity. Your mind cannot distinguish between the real or imagined activity so you only need to image it to produce adrenaline. However, we do not want to create an adrenal rush so we can read passages from the Bible where other people were running or being chased, such as Elijah, Jephthah, and Joseph, and see ourselves as those people who were running from difficult situations. Or we might bring an image of David and Goliath, the Battle of Jericho, or Moses on the Mountaintop controlling the outcome of the battle by the position of his arms to feel ourselves as part of the fighting. The physical imagery from a Biblical passage or image can help you to produce enough adrenaline that will lead to your ideal state of concentration. Then using this concentration, you can accomplish a task that you once found stressful task or utilize your heightened concentration for your prayers, meditation, or the morning concentration exercise itself.

People Running in Bible

Elijah Runs from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink.

And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven

times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

(1 Kings 18:41-46 KJV)

Jephthah being Chased Away by his Brethren

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. And

Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh. And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? (Judges 11:1-12 KJV)

Joseph Falsely Accused Flees

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then

can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

(Genesis 39:7-20 KJV)

David and Goliath



Caravaggio, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In the story of *David and Goliath* we learn the tremendous value of faith in God and the courage that it brings to us. With faith in God, it becomes impossible to fail regardless how daunting the task might be. David's victory even as only a shepherd without the use of any armor stood as an inspiration to all others who watched. As Christians we need to remember that it is important how we deal with hardships and adversities in our lives and with courage to not to let them become so large that they can overwhelm or intimidate us.

*Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword,
and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of
the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast*

defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. (1 Samuel 17:45-51 KJV)

Battle of Jericho

The Battle of Jericho teaches us that we can count on God to always keep his promises. Sometimes they are immediate or other times we must patiently wait as the Israelites who waited for the land that had been promised to them in Jericho. In

order to receive what God has promised us we must have complete faith and obedience even if we do not understand what He asks us to do or why it might work. The city walls finally fell after the people walked once around them every day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. The victory at Jericho was completely Christ's and had nothing to do with the actions of man. While spiritually, Jericho or the "Moon City" is our life center found in our lower abdomen and symbolizes the connection of the human consciousness to our life center.



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And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

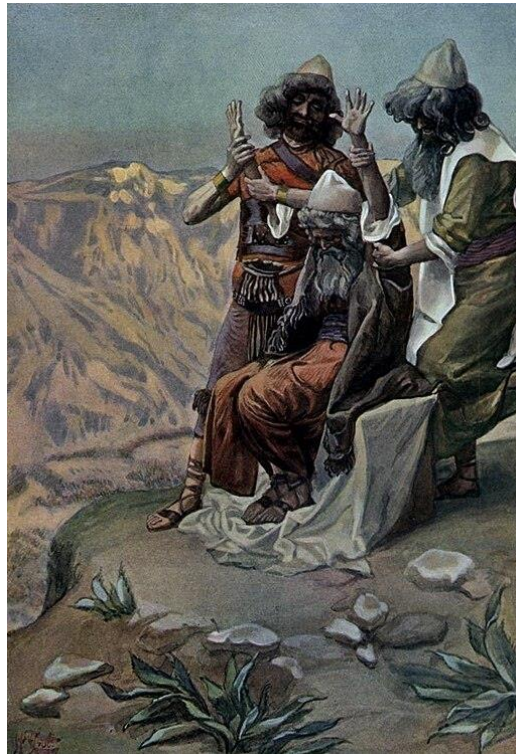
And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

(Joshua 6:15-21 KJV)

Moses on the Mountain During the Battle

In the battle with Amalekites, Moses had to keep his arms up or the Israelites would lose the battle. In many ways what this passage is showing us is that we all need help and we should work together and not alone in God's work. God knows that we

need help and sends it for us just as He sent Aaron and then Joshua to assist Moses. In life we are always receiving help even if it comes from an unknown source. We are meant to not only be the encouragers but at times even provide the help ourselves. And those that receive the help should receive it willingly, as God does not want or expect for us to meet the challenges of life by ourselves. Even though Joshua and Moses had a role in winning the battle against the Amalekites, the victory only came through the power of God.



James Tissot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with

Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel

prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But

Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under

him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the

one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands

were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited

Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

(Exodus 17:8-13 KJV)

Visualization to Produce Adrenaline for Concentration

In visualization the key is to imagine any stressful or high-stakes situation so that your body produces adrenaline. In the Bible there are many situations in which the people from the stories find themselves in desperate, dangerous, and life-threatening, situations such as Daniel in the Lion's Den, Moses parting the Red Sea to allow his people to escape from Pharaoh, Jonah inside the Whale, Samson who fought and slayed 1,000 Philistines, and Ezekiel and his vision of the resurrection of the dry bones. In addition, for many people giving speeches is a stressful event not just for giving the speech itself but for the hope that the people will hear and accept your message of your speech and enact upon it.

Image yourself in these Biblical passages or giving these speeches and you will naturally produce adrenaline that will greatly enhance your concentration yet not

produce an adrenaline rush. Then you can use your heightened sense of concentration in your prayers or meditation, prayers, or as an introduction to your morning concentration. The key to using visualization to enhance concentration is to find the Biblical passage that you respond best to and to not over respond to. For example, giving a speech might be too stressful of a situation for you to visualize for yourself if you are extremely introverted or visualizing Saint Ignatius of Antioch being eaten by wild animals in the Colosseum would be more than enough for most people to emotionally handle.

Visualization from Bible Stories

Imagine the fear that most Christians would have experienced being thrown to hungry lions and expecting immediate death!

Daniel and the Lions Den

Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard

these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his

God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (Daniel 6:12-28 KJV)

Moses Parts the Red Sea

Imagine the fear the Israelites must have experienced being chased by Pharaoh's army until they were trapped between the oncoming army ready to destroy them and the Red Sea!

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud

and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand

of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses. (Exodus 14: 19-31 KJV)

Visualizations from Bible Speeches

For many people giving a speech to a large group of people is extremely intimidating and can cause many people to become stressed and even panic. In the Bible, there are several examples where leaders with courageous hearts stepped forward to deliver the needed words to their people at challenging times.

Joshua's Speech for the People to Make a Choice

And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and

afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. And you went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve

the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:1-21 KJV)

Paul's Farewell Speech

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by

the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are

sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship. (Acts 20:17-38 KJV)

Visualizations from Bible Images

We can also use images of characters in the Bible who were placed in situations that elevated their fears and would have caused them to produce adrenaline in response.

Jonah and the Whale

Jonah disobeyed God and refuses to go to Nineveh, so he has himself thrown overboard and is swallowed by a whale. He spends three days and three nights inside the belly of the whale as his punishment for his disobedience to the Lord. For Jonah this was a terrifying situation that he no way of knowing when it might end. Trapped in the dark, all alone, and not knowing if he would live or die.



Pieter Lastman, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Samson

Samson was an amazingly strong warrior and judge of the ancient Israelites that fought the Philistines for twenty years. Once when attacked by One-thousand Philistines he picks up the jaw bone of an ass and valiantly fights and defeats one thousand Philistines. Then completely drained of energy he drinks from the jawbone to revive himself.



Giovan Battista Langetti, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Ezekiel and the Dry Bones

In a vision, God placed Ezekiel in a valley full of old bleached bones. God instructed his loyal prophet Ezekiel to prophesize to the bones. When Ezekiel did as he was

instructed the bones came to life and stood up upon each other. Then God put flesh on the bones, wrapped them in skin, and gave them breath so they came to life and formed an army. Image the stress that Ezekiel must have experienced as the resurrections occurred all around him, not fully understanding its future significance.



Christijn van den Broeck, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Creating a Challenge Mindset

In addition to using the stories from the Bible or images of events or stories from the Bible we can also use our own “life challenges” that we find difficult or in some way threatening to ourselves. For instance, you may have a fear of public speaking, being afraid to climb a tall ladder, or getting blood taken by a doctor. While, the difficulty we fear may be more internal such as feeling we don’t have the right to

ask for forgiveness from God, feeling we are not worthy of God's love and mercy, or being afraid to let go of our past so we can step into the present. Yet. God is always there for us.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ

Jesus: (Romans 3:23-24 KJV)

In creating a challenging mindset, the goal is to make our life challenge into something that is exciting, wonderful, or available to everyone and not threatening or restricted. This process is referred to as “*cognitive reframing*”. As you successfully visually yourself in this challenge mindset you will release just enough of adrenaline to produce your ideal concentration that is needed to accomplish your desired task or utilize your heightened concentration for your prayers, meditation, or the morning concentration exercise itself.

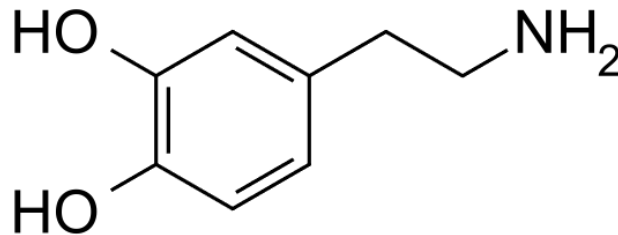
- *"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."* - **Albert Einstein**
- *"If you hear a voice within you say 'You cannot paint,' then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced."* —**Vincent Van Gogh**
- *"You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."* - **Marcus Aurelius**

Dopamine and Serotonin

Dopamine is a chemical messenger (neurotransmitter) produced in the brain and used by the nerve cells so the cells of the brain can communicate with each other.

Dopamine not only affects the brain it is also a hormone that can affect all parts of your body and behavior such as controlling the movements of your body, digestion, blood flow, kidney function as well as producing good feelings after something pleasurable (reward centers), and even being involved in your memory, learning, motivation, and concentration.

2-D Structure of Neurotransmitter Dopamine



Harbin, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Neuroplasticity and Sculpting of the Brain

Many things about ourselves we born with such as five fingers, the ability to produce hormones such as dopamine or serotonin, however there are certain things we can change about ourselves through “experience and training” such as our brains. *Neuroplasticity* is the brains’ ability to “change, reorganize, or grow neural networks” though training, learning and experience. In a very simple example, this seen when we study and learn and new language we are actually changing or “sculpting” our brains.

The same effect is seen when we practice concentration, meditation, and praying. When we dedicate time each day over long periods of time to activities such as concentration our brains change (we develop new neural pathways by the growth of the neuron's dendrites and axon so that the brain can rewire itself, changing the strength or weakening of specific connections between neurons, and organizing and reorganizing of information) and we now perform the task at exceedingly high levels of mastery. Unfortunately, our brains can also be changed through negative experiences and training in activities that don't produce changes we necessarily want such as religious dogmas that teach us that we lowly creatures that can only come to God in our afterlife or poor experiences in first playing a sport teaches us that we are not capable or have no ability to play any sports.

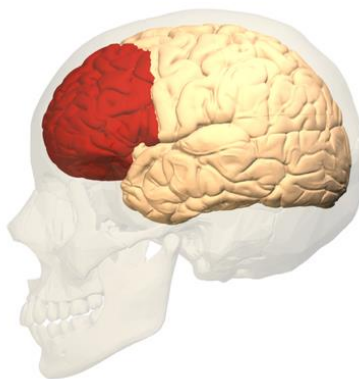
Dopamine and Neuroplasticity

Research is now showing that we have the ability to change or sculpt our brains. If you make the effort to consistently pray than you will increase the "activity of the prefrontal cortex" of the brain and thereby develop "thicker frontal lobes", the part of the brain that is responsible for focus and concentration. One study on prayer and its effects states that it only takes three minutes of prayer a day to raises the dopamine levels in your body. While another study clearly shows data that it only requires twelve minutes of prayer a day for a period of eight weeks and the results of increased activity in the frontal lobes can physically be observed on a person's brain scan.

“When prayer elicits feelings of love and compassion, there is a release of serotonin and dopamine,” **Andrew Newberg, M.D.**

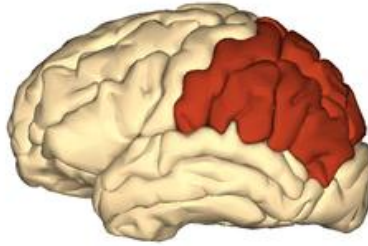
The *frontal lobes* of the brain are also involved in our higher cognitive functions such as our positive and negative emotions. Ultimately, the *prefrontal cortex* of the brain is the “control center of the brain” because it is there to monitor our thoughts and actions and not let things get out of control. For example, suppose we encounter a stress such as a loud noise the *prefrontal cortex* controls our emotional response so that we don’t begin crying and screaming in fear, we simply become more attentive and look around ourselves to make sure that we are not in any immediate danger. Therefore, as we incorporate prayer into our lifestyle, we find we become better able to deal with our emotions and reduce sources of stress and anxiety.

Prefrontal Cortex of Brain (Red)



Polygon data were generated by Database Center for Life Science(DBCLS)[2]., CC BY-SA 2.1 JP
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Parietal Lobe of Brain (Red)



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In terms of the brain activity, scientists have also found that in people who regularly pray there is “less activity in the *parietal lobe*” of the brain. As the activity of the *parietal lobe* of brain decreases, we begin to move away from our sense of self to a sense of becoming more of “one with the universe”. In addition, our sense of space and time now shifts so that we begin to experience that we are in the presence of God and that He is within us as one. As these experiences in prayer will produce pleasurable emotions of love, compassion, mercy, etc. our reward systems within our brains will now be activated and in turn produce dopamine and serotonin so we feel pleasure, satisfaction, and good feelings about ourselves. Ultimately, the more you pray the more you will change or “sculpt” your brain as the key to your brain’s change is repetition through prayer or meditation.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2 KJV)

Serotonin is produced in the brain (10%) and the intestines (90%) and like dopamine is also a neurotransmitter (chemical messenger). It is primarily involved in regulation your moods, emotions, and digestion. It is also involved in creating a person's state of well-being and happiness, a "mood stabilizer". When the body is at its proper level of serotonin than you feel most happy, calm, emotionally grounded, and focused. Dopamine and serotonin are similar, yet different, and sometimes they synergistically work together in the brain or at times one can inhibit the other depending upon the required outcome in the body. In times of prayer, the serotonin acts to relieve us of our stress and put us in a state of bliss while the dopamine activates our reward centers and brings pleasure, happiness, and a state of well-being.

Dopamine and Goals

In addition to prayer, dopamine is also released when we have plans and goals and then make progress towards our goals. If we break our goals up into manageable chunks and set reasonable milestones for the accomplishment of specific tasks and track our progress over time then we have a continuous basis by which our brains can reward us with dopamine.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV)

Therefore, in terms of planning and setting goals for ourselves we must take care to craft *SMART Goals* so that we can maximize the dopamine release by our bodies as part of our bodies reward system. Even the Bible directs us to focus on God so that can move forward in our lives and achieve what is needed in our lives, as that should be our goal and then our problems will disappear.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

(Proverbs 4:25-27 KJV)

SMART GOALS

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Achievable

R = Relevant

T = Time-Bound

If you asked most people if there was something “big” they wanted in their life they would probably have no problem telling you what it is, i.e., a deeper relationship with God, to connect to your inner-Spirit to explore the higher worlds, to love God and your fellow man with all your heart, etc. However, the real question is have they created a plan by which they will accomplish this goal? Unfortunately, most of us skip this critical step and opt the *try to figure it out as we go approach* which in

most cases only leads to disappointment. However, if we really want to get something we need to take the time to set goals so we can better understand all the ideas, concepts, and components of what we are working towards, how to effectively manage and focus our time, effort, resources, and energy so we can be successful and then our bodies can reward us by releasing dopamine.

First, you need to be very clear about what you want to achieve with your goal. Being *specific* (**S**) is about identifying a goal that is what you plan to accomplish and actions you must take. The two most common goals you can start with are to either (a) complete a project or (b) improve your ability on a task, ability, or performance. For example, I will improve my skill of observing objects or people in detail so that I will be more successful in my morning concentration exercise and my ability to hold a given image in my mind even in busy locations such as subway stations and shopping centers.

The goal must also have component that is *measurable* (**M**) such as a unit of time related to the actions of the goal. For example, by spending time before concentrating, i.e., 15 min., I will take the time to observe my object (i.e., a pencil) in both 2-D and 3-D so as to fully identify its *qualitative* and *quantitative* observations in the greatest possible detail. With the goal to be able to bring the image of my object (i.e., a pencil) to my mind and hold it there consistently without blurring or fading for 5 minutes in a busy location.

This goal is *achievable* (**A**) and something that I am capable of doing. For example, as I start every morning in bed by practicing my morning exercise of concentration

of my object (i.e., a pencil). Then for my job I travel by subway every day during busy times in which I can also practice my concentration of holding my object (i.e., a pencil) in my mind.

I consider this *relevant* (**R**) in terms of my goal because without the skill of concentration the *Rosicrucian Fellowship* makes it exceedingly clear that no one can proceed any further in their spiritual progress. This is important because it will allow me to deepen with relationship with Christ and better serve my fellow man.

In terms of being *Time-Bound* (**T**), I plan on accomplishing this goal of being able to hold my image (i.e., a pencil) in my mind for 5 minutes in 12 weeks.

Possible Milestones for my Goal include (*not all are needed*):

Hold the image (steady) in my mind in a quiet place for 2 min – 3 weeks

Hold the image (rotate) in my mind in a quiet place for 2 min – 5 weeks

Hold the image (steady) in my mind in a busy place for 2 min – 7 weeks

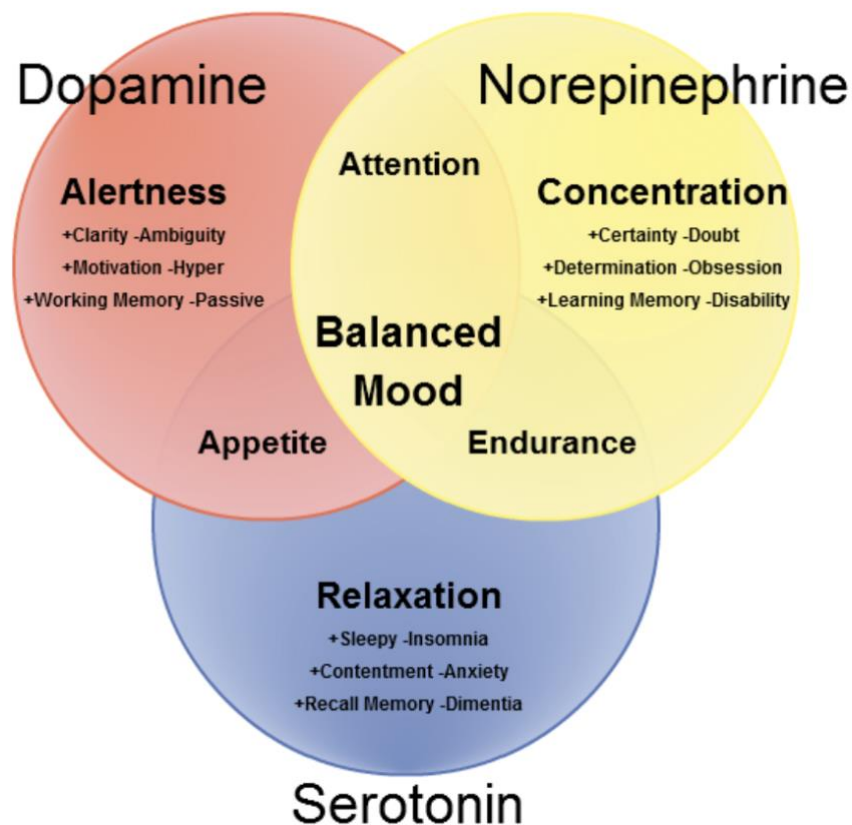
Hold the image (rotate) in my mind in a busy place for 2 min – 9 weeks

Hold the image (steady/rotate) in my mind in a busy place for 5 min – 12 weeks

Make certain that you take the time to celebrate your progress towards your goals in terms of accomplishing or reaching specific indicators such as realistic goal chunks, new skills and abilities, milestones, given periods of time, success rate statistics, etc. The strongest motivation for any goal is to make sure to find as many ways as possible to make yourself successful. In addition, if you also make your practice

enjoyable and fun than your brain will be sure to reward you with an ample supply of dopamine.

Relationship Between Dopamine, Adrenaline, and Serotonin



Niklis Papageorgio, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

All hormones in the body are involved with other hormones either directly in pairs in feedback loops or by groups of hormones working to create an equilibrium within your body. In terms of *balancing your mood*, dopamine, adrenaline (also called norepinephrine), and serotonin all work together at the

proper body levels to ensure that at specific times or over periods of time you feel energetic, sleep well, have proper digestion, healthy skin, maintain your body weight, your learning abilities stay optimum, your memory remains sharp, don't become over stressed, you are motivated for activities within your life, you can concentrate and remain focused when needed, etc. How these hormones actually work together is something that neuroscientists are actively studying, yet much still remains unclear.

Central to maintaining the proper levels of dopamine, serotonin, and adrenaline is a proper nutrition to ensure that your body has the adequate raw materials to produce these hormones. Exercising each day and proper amounts of sleep each night are also essential to increase levels of dopamine and serotonin as is spending time outside in the sunlight, finding ways to reduce your stress, smile, and laugh, participating in fun and pleasurable activities, mood induction (think about something that makes you feel good) and spending time or helping other people and animals, and practicing mindfulness techniques such as concentration, meditation, and prayer.

Spiritual Concentration

Initially, as we work on our morning exercise of concentration, Max Heindel suggests that we start with anything as long as it is “pure and uplifting by its nature”. We spend considerable time developing the skill of concentration with this object or person until we make it make it even more realistic than the actual object or person itself. Then we come to the critical step of dropping the image so that we might then see into the Desire World and in essence being a positive clairvoyant capable of investigating the questions that will explain the higher worlds and your continued development in them.

Yet, when we speak of *spiritual concentration*, it is the use of our concentration to put us within the presence of God and not just for a given time of prayer or for when we desperately need help but ideally for our entire lifetime. With spiritual concentration we can be before the Lord regardless of whether we are cooking, cleaning, eating, washing, reading, etc. It is keeping our attention on God when our senses are calling us to the attention of trivial matters. Brother Lawrence in the *Practice of the Presence of God* used his spiritual concentration to learn as much as he could about God so ultimately, he could use this knowledge to love God even more. Therefore, when Brother Lawrence speaks about the presence of God he is speaking about divine love.

Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge. At other times I beheld Him in my heart as my Father, as my God. I worshipped Him the oftenest I could, keeping

my mind in His holy presence and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from Him. I made this my business, not only at the appointed times of prayer but all the time; every hour, every minute, even in the height of my work, I drove from my mind everything that interrupted my thoughts of God.

Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of The Presence of God*

Spiritual concentration is much like we find in eastern meditation in which we attempt not to have the focus of our mind to be drawn in by what is occurring around us and the input from our senses. We want only to put our concentration on the spiritual issues of our lives and God. As we understand that the more one can focus the mind exclusively on God the greater energy, it will bring into their bodies to open their hearts and minds. The spiritual energy that we acquire is our source of courage and strength and builds within us the trait of perseverance that we will always use to move forward with an understanding that God's love and promises are for an eternity.

In *The Rosicrucian Philosophy In Questions and Answers, Volume II*, Max Heindel is describing the "*True Mystic Prayer*" in which we are in God's presence, face to face. We meet God in the presence by being in His "silence" with no need for words, images, or thoughts. By being in His presence we are united with the Father and we experience what the Father experiences and there is no need to ask the Father for anything as He has already assured us. We are there to give our complete and unconditional love in "voiceless adoration". True spiritual concentration is how we pray without ceasing.

“In this way we may pray without ceasing, inwardly, while we work as zealous servants in the world without; for let us always remember that it is not intended that we should dream our lives away. While we pray to God within, we must also work for God without.”

Max Heindel, ***The Rosicrucian Philosophy In Questions and Answers, Volume II***

Creativity and Concentration

Creativity is something that exists in everyone. However, in order to express one's creativity you must be able to extend into the lower areas of the mind where your creativity and innovation are to be found. Yet, just tapping into your source of creativity and innovation will not make you a master painter, writer, or musician. You still must apply yourself to your art with constant dedication and passion but not forget to also work with work with mind. When you tap into the part of your mind where you store your creativity and innovation it frees you to go beyond the norms and conventions of your art and express who you are, your uniqueness as person who is different and original and has discovered within themselves something worthy of sharing with others because it speaks of the love and compassion as Christ had and therefore is inspirational to those that experience it.

*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,
whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of
faith; (Romans 12:6 KJV)*

As human beings we are quite proficient at functioning at the analytical and intellectual level of the mind. The difficulty for many of us is to make the shift to the creative level of the mind in order to find and express our true self and our creativity. Luckily, *concentration* is ideal to “focus the mind inward” to act as a prompt or “guiding force” to set our creative flow into motion on the inner surface of the mind. So, while it is important to remember that our concentration does “not allow entry to the creative level” it creates the “mental atmosphere” much like Christ’s love and compassion created the atmosphere to transform us and lead us to our salvation. As once our concentration has created that atmosphere for our creative flow within the mind then the mind puts forth new or modified thoughts, ideas, concepts, ways of thinking, techniques, skills, methods, etc. (resources) that we can now understand and apply that become our signature expression or “guiding force” in our creative efforts.

*Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before
thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.
(Proverbs 4:25-27 KJV)*

Interestingly, the same process by which one gains access to their creativity is the same process by which one also gains access to their intuition. This is when we do not rely on our senses or have to have proof or evidence to believe or accept something to be true such as Jesus is the Son of God. For Christians, intuition, is “being led by the Holy Spirit” and it provides a method by which we can communicate with God the Father. Even Solomon showed the value of wisdom and intuition when he requested them from God to rule his people.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? (1 Kings 3:9 KJV)

Albert Einstein is often quoted as saying, “*At times I feel certain I am right while not knowing the reason.*” Affirming his belief that truth came from his intuition. And he went even further to state that our great discoveries come from beyond our intellect or wisdom, they come from a place within us, our intuition. For Max Heindel also saw intuition as a powerful force, he believed it was through our connection to our *Inner Power* that we can connect our inner-Christ to our conscious mind and thereby receive His divine messages that come in the form of intuition, inspiration, and original ideas.

“The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will, and the solution comes to you and you don’t know how or why. All great discoveries are made in this way.” **Albert Einstein**

Eight-Fold Path

Just as Jesus delivered His Sermon on the Mount, Siddhartha Gautama or the Buddha upon his own enlightenment delivered his sermon on an *Eight-Fold Path* that described a path of enlightenment that was possible for all men. In essence it represented a “middle way” between the two contrasts of a harshly aesthetic life and a life of earthly pleasures. The eight precepts or elements of the path are practiced one by one so that they may help change us and better understand ourselves and world around us. Each precept acts as chisel that carefully removes areas of wood from a wooden log and slowly begins to shape it and then finely smooths it so we begin to see a noticeable form such as that of a face of a wise old man. Ultimately, the eight precepts shape our destiny toward enlightenment and our higher evolution as a race.

The eight precepts or great truths consist of:

- (1) Right Knowledge
- (2) Right Thought
- (3) Right Speech
- (4) Right Activity
- (5) Right Means of Livelihood
- (6) Right Exertion
- (7) Right Memory
- (8) **Right Concentration**

In the Buddhist concept of “Right Concentration”, it is something that has been developed after many lifetimes so that one may know anything about something by placing your concentration upon it. It is the final step in the Eight-Fold Path and requires one to train their mind to become “obedient”. It is considered a form of training in which the mind develops a sense of “one-pointedness” so strong that when your mind concentrates upon an object, especially one that holds knowledge than that knowledge will be available to you regardless of where it might be within the object or if in some way it was obscured the knowledge will be revealed to you.

Similar to what Max Heindel describes in the *Morning Exercise of Concentration*, the Buddhist focus their concentration on all the activities of their daily life and try to concentrate on them without letting their minds drift so that they might do them perfectly. This unlike focusing on a simple object such as pencil takes many years for most people to accomplish. Then once the person can successfully concentrate on their outer life they can now shift to concentrating upon things of a higher or more spiritual nature. For the Buddhist, *Right Concentration* is their key to their ability to concentration during meditation so that they can gain the knowledge and wisdom that will allow them to avoid worldly difficulties and suffering and find happiness they can share with others. Finally, there are those monks that devout their entire lifetime to this practice and their Right Concentration in meditation to the Lord becomes a form of *Right Meditation* that brings them to higher planes.

ASTROLOGY

Capricorns and Concentration

Our creative powers are a result of our thought forces, yet it is important that we learn to control our thoughts and the power behind them so that we put that power into its proper uses so that it will not only benefit ourselves but our higher evolution. Our concentration provides the key factor in establishing the “conscious control and direction” of our thoughts.

Capricorn, the goat, is the tenth zodiac sign and is a southern constellation found between Sagittarius and Aquarius and ruled by Saturn. The key concepts for Capricorns are their fierce *determination to achieve* and *social honor*. For the astrological sign *Capricorn*, concentration is of great significance and is product of its many keywords such as; ambitious, practical, responsible, patient, perfectionist, efficient, methodical, authoritative, industrious, disciplined, reliable, steady, etc. as all of these keywords would require the mental quality of concentration.

Capricorn along with Taurus and Virgo are *Earth signs* indicating that they are practical, skillful and down to Earth. In other words, they are well grounded and self-disciplined, but perhaps most noticeable is their tremendous ability to remain focused and maintain their concentration even in the most challenging of conditions. Therefore, they are exceptional planners, strategists, and employees or volunteers with the highest possible work ethic that can always be counted upon. They firmly believe in long term goal setting for both their lives and their work and have the persistence and dedication to keep themselves accountable and on track

regardless of what factors may try to derail them and they often meet with great success in their personal and professional lives. Therefore, Capricorn is associated with one's career and reputation and the status and public image you will achieve.

Saturn as Ruler of Capricorn

Saturn is perhaps most famous for its ring system that surrounds the planet. It was the last planet discovered in classical astrology, *Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn*, the planets that could be observed with naked eye. Classified as one of the gas giant planets, it is second only to its neighbor, the other gas giant, Jupiter in size and has 146 moons. Its astrological symbol is that of a god's scythe or sickle as Saturn was the god of agriculture, harvest, and "seed sowing". The power of Saturn to transform people lies in bringing out developing our personal responsibility.

In astrology it is often a combination or lack of planets and not just a single planet that determine a given trait. However, Saturn is often thought of as being the planet of *focus* and *concentration*. It provides us with the discipline, organizational skills, and attention that is needed to ensure success in our long-term goals through our perseverance and an unparalleled work ethic. Even though it is thought of as the "planet of limitation and restriction" due to its association with caution, fear, and conformity to rules and regulations it can also channel these traits to help us to accept the challenges of responsibility and honor our commitments and help us grow. Saturn will often bring struggles and hardship but they will be the lessons we need to grow.

In our lives, Saturn provides us with a clear sense of purpose and is there to provide needed life lessons so we clearly understand where we need to do the work in our lives and setting limits and boundaries when needed. It also teaches us the value of sustained effort and perseverance in terms of becoming who we are meant to be through the dedication and commitment we must make over a prolonged period of time to actualize our efforts. It is through this lesson we also come to understand that the wisdom and enlightenment for spiritual growth will also need to become part of our long-term goals and Saturn can help you stay attentive and focused while you are on your spiritual path and should you stray will create “barriers or issues” to put you back on your spiritual path as Saturn wants to help us to overcome challenges and to ensure our success.

Saturn is the ruler of Capricorn and when Saturn finds itself in Capricorn you will experience the full effect of Saturn and a magnification of the traits of Capricorn. When Saturn is in Capricorn, there is an all-out drive to do it all and just keep going and they clearly don't mind accepting authority and being in charge to make sure it all gets done. They understand that achieving their goals and success is difficult and they would be the last to give up. It also helps you to be practical and realistic in working towards your goals. Yet, they are never be careless or impulsive in their work, they are cautious and look towards their knowledge, experience, and thoroughness in their planning efforts to be successful. By Saturn being in Capricorn, you come to be resourceful, sensitive and thoughtful to others, and have insightful judgement. In some cases, this may mean re-establishing a peaceful and

well-balanced family life and re-evaluating your financial decisions to ensure that meeting your long-term goals.

On the negative side, Saturn in Capricorn tends to make people severe and stern and not to be very empathetic towards others leading to loneliness. Their constant strive to excellence can lead to burn-out and experiencing jealousy when considering the success and achievements of others as it can be difficult to accept that your success may come later in life. In addition, you will not be a risk taker or feel comfortable venturing out side of the norms, and you will always follow the rules regardless of their restrictions or fairness. One of the more difficult life lessons for you to learn will be to trust yourself so that you will be calm and confident in the decisions you need to make even when it will not, please everyone.

Other Planets & Houses and Concentration

In astrology as we previously noted, nothing is as simple as one planet being the ruler of a trait such as *concentration*. It is important that one take note of “combination of planets” when considering a trait as other planets can add to that trait or reduce the effect of a specific trait. Therefore, it is important in a trait such as concentration that we also look to see how *Mercury*, *Mars*, *Venus*, *Jupiter*, and *Pluto* can affect our powers of concentration (see table below). In addition, it is also important to take into account the *planets that rule the third and ninth house* in the chart you are analyzing in terms of understanding your powers of concentration.

Planet	Relationship to Concentration
<i>Mercury</i>	Conscious Mind, Senses, Intellect, Memory, Learning, Analytical Thinking, Focus, Concentration, Communication, Sharpness of Mind, Quality of Thoughts, Rational, Objective Thoughts
<i>Mars</i>	Energy, Passion – Undivided Attention and “Strong One-Pointed Focus”, Action, Desire, Motivation
<i>Venus</i>	Love, Pleasure, Values – Refined Focus to Improve Accuracy, Creativity, Art
<i>Jupiter</i>	Knowledge, Growth, Expansion, Wisdom, Curiosity – (strong) Confidence and Well-Developed Concentration, Abundance, Philosophy, Spirituality, Growth Expansion, Good Judgement
<i>Pluto</i>	Depth, Transformation, Purification of Emotions – Add Greater Depth in Focus, Extremes, Subconscious, New Approach and Perspective
<i>Uranus</i>	“Thought Power”, Originality, Radical Ideas, Revolutionary Vision, Visualize New Possibilities, Innovation, Embrace Change, Breakthroughs

Additional Perspectives on Concentration

Sri Swami Sivananda

Sivananda, S. (2009). *Concentration and Meditation*. Divine Life Society.

In the same way we concentrate on waves of light, sound, and even other materials like water when it is converted to steam and then concentrated so it can move a piston back and forth in a steam engine, we need to gather all of the “dissipated rays of the mind” so that they can also be concentrated. Once our mind can concentrate, we can use it to discover the things we have awaiting us within our soul, such as happiness, joy, knowledge of the world, and even eternal life. Our goal in life is to learn to *collect our mental rays and place them entirely upon the mind of God*.

It is important to start your practice of concentration on unmistakable or obvious objects larger objects such as a bright star in the sky or a full moon on the horizon. While for some, it will be a picture of a specific deity that they are extremely familiar with such as Lord Siva, Krishna or Jesus Christ. While other “gross forms” could include objects without a lot of fine details (i.e., a red balloon or the blue sky above you). Regardless of the object you select, you should like the object so your mind is accepting of the practice. If you chose something that doesn’t appeal to you then the mind will quickly tire of the practice and wander off. Over time and with greater practice you can use more complex or intricate objects (i.e., a water color painting of a flower, the State of Liberty, or a male peacock), concepts (thoughts and ideas that exist as material objects, i.e., a table lamp or lap top computer) and even, abstract ideas that do not exist as material objects in our reality (i.e., life,

truth, a feeling, etc.). However, you should only do one thing at time so you can ensure your full attention and concentration.

Deep concentration leads to a state of “one-pointedness” in which you lose track of your physical senses, your own body, and the external world. Some people already have developed excellent concentration in playing a sport or a musical instrument, reading a book, or building a piece of furniture. However, concentration requires you to place your attention on “pure and divine thoughts”. Over time your goal should be to replace all your worldly thoughts with spiritual thoughts so that your mind now only has pure thoughts on which to focus. Therefore, it is your responsibility to spend time collecting these higher thoughts for groups that teach them, reading appropriate spiritual writings, spending time with similar people in discussion groups and serving others, and staying away from those things that distract you from the truth and your needed time for acquiring them.

In the beginning, the practice of concentration will be challenging, however, your goal is to keep bringing your mind back to the object (or point) you are visualizing. In essence, you are trying to narrow the focus of the mind by decreasing the number of thoughts that are unrelated to the object until you can keep your mind solely upon the object itself. To do this you must learn to collect all the “dissipated rays of the mind” even those that you had used to enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world, gently release them, and without forcing or fighting within yourself refocus your thoughts back onto the object of your concentration. This process is best described as an “inward turning of the mind”.

Swami Sivananda recommends learning to concentrate on many different things, such as incredibly large objects such as the Himalayan Mountains to extremely small things such as mustard seed or even the point of a pin. Then you can practice your concentration on many other objects in your environment that are either very far from you or extremely close to you. After you become proficient with this you can then begin to practice concentration on virtues such as patience, love, mercy and compassion. Then you will be prepared to concentrate upon images of deities and seeing yourself as part of the highest spiritual class capable of creating anything and having an understanding of the “ultimate truths”.

Before we can begin to concentrate, we must cleanse and purify our minds from our passions and desires, so that all distractions are eliminated. We must have control of ourselves and strive to always be of a peaceful and cheerful nature. Your ultimate goal should be to succeed in your greatest passion of establishing a oneness with God, a true sense of God-realization. Therefore, everything you do in your life should be done with “perfect concentration” or a true sense of one-pointedness. Whatever work you perform should reflect your best effort and always be complete. Then slowly over time you will become the master of your mind and it will always obey what you ask of it and put forth the highest quality and most efficient effort so as to produce the best possible outcomes for you.

Therefore, in order to develop proper concentration, we need to not only let go of our wants and desires we also need to move towards greater solitude in our lives, learning to become more silent on the outside and the inside, finding ways to control our negative emotions and feelings such as anger, worry, jealousy, and

revenge. Then we can let go of habits that don't help us build and develop an ethical and good character. Our inner strength is a direct result of the time we spend concentrating on God and in turn this fills us with the energy that will make us "superhumans". Concentration produces our "spiritual strength" because it "opens the inner chambers of love or the realm of eternity."

Concentrating on Picture of Jesus

"Concentrate gently with open eyes on the picture till tears trickle down your cheeks. Rotate the mind on the cross on the chest, long hair, beautiful beard, round eyes, and the various other limbs of His body and fine spiritual aura emanating from His head, and so on. Think of His divine attributes such as love, magnanimity, mercy and forbearance."

The process of concentration first requires us to learn to become observant and only then we can learn to focus our concentration through attention. Therefore, attention is considered the main component of our will in which you make the will your "faithful servant". Many different factors can be used to bring forth our attention such as having strong beliefs, desires, expectations, wishes, and needs as well as feelings of hope and reasons for purpose. Once attention is sufficiently developed in our concentration, we can then use our concentration in the process of introspection which then can be used to bring forth knowledge of the inner and higher worlds. Obtaining knowledge in this way is a practice in which you are "speaking to your subconscious mind" which holds many things that you are not aware of as it is

knowledge you may not have realized you experienced or it may be knowledge and experiences from your many previous lives.

In the Bible, Christ tells us to “watch and prayer” and while this can refer to being cautious, staying clear of temptation, and being strong in our beliefs and faith. Yet, it also about introspection, the watching of our minds. Then we need to try to keep God in our constant presence and always be ready to turn to Him in our time of need when we are tempted by our desires, improper feelings and activities, and to turn from ourselves or God.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41KJV)

Once you have found success concentrating on pleasing objects you can then start practicing on objects or ideas that are unpleasant and uninteresting. If you add interest to your concentration process you will find that over time your interest will gradually begin to develop. This is how the strength of the mind is developed so that as you learn to place greater attention on objects and ideas, they will produce a greater force upon your mind. Anything you are not successful at are in most cases is due to your inability to maintain your attention. The problem many people have is that they don't always understand where it is best to place their attention when they have a problem such as pain from an illness or disease. They place their attention and concentration upon the disease and the affected part of their body rather than concentrating on another object or idea such as a specific god or spiritual book.

The key to your success in the practice of concentration is to practice every single day without exception. After having spent time in the practice of concentration you can move to “emptying thyself” as described in the second chapter of Philippians. Then once you have come to empty yourself you can then allow Jesus to “fill thee”.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13 KJV)

Swami Sivananda also goes into detail on how to “read with concentration” using spiritual books. Part of reading involves rereading in which you will gain new thoughts, ideas, and insights from each new reading. The process involves reading up to three pages in your book and then stopping so you can concentrate and focus your complete attention on what you have read by allowing your mind to “associate, classify, group, combine and compare” the information from your reading. This will effectively produce a wealth of knowledge (“esoteric meanings”) and understanding (“philosophical significance”) on any desired subject.

Example of Concentration Practices

While lying down you can focus your attention and concentration on the *moon, any star, or the “blue expansive sky above”*. Or while sitting you can focus your attention and concentration on a favorite *chair* or any virtue, i.e., *divine love, mercy, compassion, etc.*

Trataka or “steady gazing” is a practice of staring upon an image such as that of Jesus Christ until tears come to your eyes. Then closing your eyes to visualize the image that you were staring at. Then repeat the process trying to increase the time that you can gaze upon the image before closing your eyes.

Annie Rix Militz

Militz, M. R. (2017). *The Nature of Concentration*. McAllister Editions.

Annie Rix Militz uses “to gather to one common center” as her definition of concentration and the common center is found within you as the One, Christ, or your divine self. It is the Christ-with you that can be used to still your mind so that you can focus your attention and concentrate. If the Christ-presence is not active within you, your first responsibility is to awaken your “Lord-self” just as the disciples who awoke Christ when they thought the storm on the Sea of Galilee would sink their boat. Your Christ-self is the power by which you can find the “still place within”. In addition to making our mind still it also must be made clear so it is purified. In perfect stillness there is the feeling of nothingness and you enter the cosmic consciousness in which you lose all consciousness of yourself and merge with a universal mind.

We can recite verse from a spiritual book over and over again to help us in the practice of concentration, such as *The Lord's Prayer* for Christians while the Hindus use mantras. Your goal is to “take a single thought and raise it above your other thoughts”, as Moses rose up to be the leader of the Israelites and led them to their freedom. In addition to *The Lord's Prayer*, other texts include “*Thy Will is done in me*”, the **twenty-third Psalm**, and any other appealing verse.

Psalm 23 KJV

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside
the still waters.*

*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for
his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will
fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort
me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Interestingly, Annie Rix Miltz also recommends Brother Lawrence's book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, as one of best sources for learning concentration (see previous *Spiritual Concentration*). In which he teaches us to be with God at all things and times in our lives, even in the most mundane activities, see God within everyone, and that life consists of peace, purity, and blessings when we teach ourselves to see it.

Even single words such as *peace, unity, mercy, charity*, etc. work just as well as a point of concentration. The key is to "use them as Leaders about which to gather your wayward and scattered thoughts." One of the ways to make concentration as

natural as possible in your life is to love the life you are living, love and offer service to others, and most importantly speak, love, and think about the truth at all times. Yet, it is helpful to have a “leading thought” to bring you into your practice of concentration, such as:

Not by might, nor power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts

(Zechariah 4:6 KJV)

In terms of centering yourself quickly or becoming silent, Annie Rix Militz recommends using the opening from *Psalms 103*. However, it is not simply the words “but through realizing their meaning”. Praising God is the act of centering yourself which provides the “poise, peace, and power” to put you into the right frame of concentration. The blessing of the opening words of *Psalms 103* touches all that is within you including your “soul consciousness”.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” (Psalms 103 KJV)

Concentration can easily occur when you take the time to be observant and bless everyone from your heart and every single thing that comes into your life. You even need to bless those things that you find negative or unpleasant and continue to bless them until you come to understand their meaning in your life. It is too easy to lose your concentration when you find yourself upset, annoyed, or even worried. When you express your “divine self” even in the most difficult situations you are in full control ready to utilize your endless powers of concentration.

In order to have concentration, you must have devotion. In devotion we are committed because of our “love of truth”, our desire to be one with God in which we give our entire self to Him, and we show this through our service to our fellow man. Therefore, we are willing to obey God’s first Commandment by concentrating everywhere you find yourself, in both good and difficult situations there is no difference when you are fully devoted to God.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (Matthew 22:37 KJV)

In “Mental Planting”, a type of concentration, our thoughts are the seeds that you plant in your mind. The technique involves repeating a word for a desired outcome such as *faith* a given number of times. Then with your senses calmed repeat the word within your heart. This will cause thoughts, feelings, and connections to spiritual writings or ideas about the word to come forward and this now germinates the seed (the word) within your mind so that it now grows into a full plant or even a towering tree that now produces its own seed completing the cycle. As the gardener of the plant growing in your mind, carefully monitor its growth, prune it as needed to keep it healthy and maintain its shape and appearance so it will bring forth the greatest amount and highest quality fruit. Concentration upon “Seed-thoughts” in this manner offers us the opportunity to explore the greatest depths of our consciousness in addition to proving clarity and the confidence in our new thoughts and beliefs so we can now incorporate them into our lives.

Theron Q. Dumont (William Walker Atkinson)

Theron Q Dumont. (2024). *The Power of Concentration*. Intell Book.

In order to develop the power of concentration you must first learn attention by watching yourself as closely as possible. This means being able to control all of your thoughts and feelings. Essential to this process is your ability to hold a single thought for extended periods of time. Therefore, concentration requires that you *will* or direct your mind to focus on one thing so it completely “absorbs your whole thought”. In simple terms, when you concentrate you are willing yourself to eliminate all thoughts except one. This allows you to have control of the things that you do unconsciously so you can now do them consciously so you better develop your manner and habits and work on those things that negatively affect you.

While developing your concentration you must seek to use your concentration in everything you do, including your work, everyday tasks, your conversations, and every possibility or option in a plan or decision. It is especially important that you connect your concentration to an inner belief of omnipotence so that you can eliminate all thoughts of fear and any negative or destructive thoughts that will inhibit your development. This is how you will be able to bring your thoughts to life so that you create the environment that will be most conducive to you being the “ruler of your kingdom”. Therefore, we need to use our will to control and build the force of our minds so we can do the things that will develop us spiritually.

Success in everything requires concentration of both the mind and all the actions of the body. The use of your senses and movement of any of your body parts is all

controlled by your mind; therefore, these actions represent the mind and we must also learn to concentration upon them. By learning to control our bodies we are also learning to gain control of our mind. By focusing on one action at a time we can learn to control all of our actions including the unimportant ones so as to develop proper habits of concentration. If a negative habit is developed the only way it can be eliminated is to concentrate intensely on its opposite habit.

The real power of concentration comes when your thoughts are from your undying belief that they are righteous and align with the “divine laws of thought”. Then if you really want to experience the fullness of life than your thoughts must also come from a place of love. Thinking about “Good, Truth, and Success” will also hasten your spiritual development that requires the least amount of effort on your part. Therefore, concentrate only on these things and other constructive thoughts that will be of benefit to you. When you are in the deepest concentration you become one with the creative energy within you and its flows through you bringing your thought forms to life. In addition, your mind can then receive messages from the “cosmic intelligence” as well as bring its cosmic energy within your body producing a “supra-consciousness” within you that is capable of receiving “higher cosmic vibrations” to help lift you to higher levels. In essence, you are now filled with divine power and connected to the “universal mind”.

Your mind will not give in so readily unless you put forth the power of your “mental resolve” and not back down until your mind conforms. However, this will require all of your patience and persistence in your efforts. Perseverance means that your effort is continuous and makes use of all of your energy to keep your thoughts

focused until your concentration brings forth your desired thought forms. It is essential that we learn to identify our inner force of our mental resolve so we can learn to be successful. Yet, in order to have persistence you first must have courage so that we have confidence in our efforts. Courage makes us strong so that we have the “will to do” what we need. Our courage directs and concentrates our attention and concentration and helps to ensure our success in our spiritual development.

“Perfect concentration” can only be found when you have “peace of mind”, when you are completely at peace with everything in the world then you will concentration that can be directed in any manner. When you have learned to quiet your mind and are in a state of peace your subconscious can now work together with your conscious mind by sending it needed knowledge and essential wisdom. As any negative thoughts arise in your mind you now automatically transform them into positive thoughts so that you are allows working with positive thought-forms and their manifestation.

Our concentration also offers others the opportunity to feel things as you feel them within yourself. By concentrating on an object or idea you are filling it with your “radiant vibrations” and others can feel your vibrations as well as the vibrations of the given thought or object. If you can truly feel things of the world, you can use your thoughts and their vibrations to share those feelings with others. For example, you might concentrate on the image of a rose flower and the thought of divine love so that when others see the same image of the rose flower, they too are filled with the divine love you have shared.

In practice, if you wish to enter into deep concentration the ideal time is after you have done your spiritual reading or read “something that is inspiring”. As you have put yourself into a higher state in which the mind is focused and attentive for concentration. Relaxing your body with slow deep breathes helps to further prepare you to completely relax so you are now ready to receive the information, knowledge, or wisdom that the spirit will now provide you. It is essential you believe in success and you already have what have concentrated upon. This is ultimately, how you can produce the ideals that will now become your future. The images that you form within your mind determine how you will act in your life.

In terms of reading spiritual writings, it is suggested that you start by reading the book completely. Then you should go back and read it again for a second time. However, this time you stop when something strikes you in the reading and reflect upon it. To further impress what has caught your attention in the reading, continuing reading and rereading it several more times. Over time this activity will become second nature to you so that you are always identifying the good things in your reading and bringing them within yourself so they become a part of yourself.

Ernest Wood

Wood, E. E. (1996). *Concentration*. Quest Books.

The body is only a garment and the senses but peep-holes in the veil of flesh, and when these are quiet and that is obedient, and the mind dwells in contemplation of your immortal possibilities, a window opens within you, and through it you see and know that you shall be what you will to be, and nothing else.

Concentration of the mind is likened to a powerful magnet that can attract or repel those things it comes in contact with. In a higher sense, concentration is the means by which we can gain “complete control of the mind” and thereby you experience your “true state”. In developing concentration on an image of a desired object or action we need to utilize the power of our will to control our thoughts and ideas. Using exercise to develop your ability to recall information builds within you the “habit of recall” which produces a “mood of concentration” which you can engage whenever you wish.

There is a delicate balance in willing the mind, as it should never be a command but a learning process in which you experience joy and happiness in the process. It is best described as a “mind-living” in which the thoughts you have are always connected to love and the power of your will so that they all exist together in a state of harmony. From this, we can have an understanding of the world around us and our own divine purpose in living our lives. The ultimate goal of our concentration should be to bring meaning and purpose to your life.

When you concentrate no special feeling will occur within your body. However, you will have to train your eyes so that they do not try to focus or strain to see the mental object that is within your mind. It can be helpful to un-focus your vision for concentration so that when you image an object in front of you can remain relaxed not attempting in any way to focus the vision of your eyes. You start the practice of concentration with a specific object or idea in mind and a period of time that you wish to do the exercise. Then you must relax yourself, “launching yourself gently into concentration ... as you would float a little paper boat upon a pond”, so that there is no tension in either your body or your mind.

In developing attention, Ernest Wood speaks of a “triple course” that one follows. Initially, we put our attention on an object because we are interested in it, secondly our interest connects to our like or dislike of the object, and finally we put our attention on the object because we are interested and have a desire to “understand the nature, qualities, and functions of this object.” We learn that the truth about an object from our concentration that does not take into account our likes and dislikes and we see the object without any biases such as how an object or thought might please us or make us unhappy. We must view the object or idea with perfect calmness of the body and mind.

When you practice concentration, your goal should be to produce mental images that are “rich and strong”, which means the mental images must be “natural” in terms of the “setting and position” and characteristics (size, shape, color, etc.). For instance, if I was having tea with a friend, we are having tea in the kitchen. The tea

cup he is serving me in is standing on the kitchen table next to me. Even though I am tempted to try to focus solely on the tea cup these are initial thoughts are necessary thoughts to start the process of concentration.

Now if I observe the tea cup, I find it to be four inches tall and three inches wide, cylindrical with a handle, and white in color. My attention is so focused on the tea cup that the thoughts of the kitchen and the table now disappear so that my only thought is upon the tea cup. Then in your mind you also need to eliminate yourself, the “I”, from the seeing of the tea cup and make the seeing of the tea cup more “intimate”. Therefore, the thought in my mind of “I will see the tea cup” becomes “Let me be the seeing of the tea cup” and your concentration will exclude yourself (the “I”) and only be on the object (the tea cup).

Lastly, a mental image should not just be a visual image, you need to add in the rest of your senses (hear, smell, taste, and touch). This means that if you are visualizing a pencil, you can *smell* the wood and graphite from its newly sharpened or the rubber of the pencil, you can *feel* the texture of its six-sided barrel and how it writes on paper, you can *hear* the sound of the erasure rubbing on the paper or how it sounds when you tap it on your desk, and there is even a *taste* in how you feel about this brand of pencil or how well it writes on the paper. Sometimes with a new object or idea that you are attempting to visualize you may need to start by asking yourself some basic observational questions (i.e., color, shape, size, arrangement, etc.) to obtain all the information you need for your *five senses visualization*.

In concentration it is essential that you have a “steadiness of mood” without any negative traces of fear, anger, jealousy, etc. as these feelings will only cause your mind to wander. To have a quiet mind, you need to focus on the things that are pure, good, and calm as there is permanence with these things. You have to have good and kind feelings continuously with everyone so you can share the same with others.

We need to work on exercises of concentration not because they are necessary but because they will help us to address any bad habits (i.e., being tense, not removing our “I”, allowing things to be unnatural, etc.) we have acquired within ourselves. Then we can still concentrate even when we find ourselves in places and conditions that are less than ideal (i.e., a loud subway station) because we can ignore all the information that is coming to us from our external senses. We experience this feeling when we become deeply focused in writing a poem, reading a book, or practicing a musical instrument.

Sometimes it is difficult for people to concentrate on a large or complex object or text so it becomes necessary to chunk it or break it up into smaller parts. You first start with one part of the object or text and stay with that until it becomes perfectly clear and then you can continue by adding another smaller piece to create a larger compound. Then you can remove this compound image from your mind and concentrate on another small part of the object and then bring back the compound part and put them together to form a larger compound part to concentrate on and to continue this process until an image of the entire object has been created in your

mind. You can practice this technique using geometric figures, complex objects, extended scriptural verses or spiritual writings, etc.

In reading, it is suggested that you stop reading at short intervals and create “mental pictures” of your reading. While in studying it is important to remember that you should only concentrate on one piece of information at a time. After you have concentrated on each piece of information separately you can then put them together to form one large mental image – your portrait of the all the information put together. When you concentrate on this, you will then begin to see how all of the information is similar, different, related in different ways, and new thoughts and ideas will fill in and add to your understanding of a bigger picture.

In looking carefully at your life, you will notice that it follows a repeating process of creating things and ideas that we concentrate on that then produce reactions from ourselves and then we move on to a new object and idea to start again. Yet, what we choose to concentrate upon is usually only a small part of the object of idea, leaving the larger part to be ignored. Even our senses only take in small pieces of information from the world around us leaving the vast majority of it unnoticed. Ultimately, we experience our life with having focused our attention or concentrated on only a tiny fragment. So, we should strive to become masters even in our limited areas of concentration so we can grow and expand our consciousness.

Annie Besant – Thought Power

Annie Besant. (2024). *Thought Power: Its Control and Culture*. Intell Book.

Training the mind to concentrate is a difficult task for most people as we must unlearn a habit that has improved our chances of survival. Being able to quickly change our focus or our attention allows our mind to grow and improve and often leads to progress. Yet, if we wish to grow spiritually than we must break this habit of placing our attention on something outward and learn to focus our attention on an inward single object or idea and concentrate upon it. Our mental bodies become the images of the objects we experience in the world. Yet, this is what we must learn to stop, because as we produce these images, they continuously modify our mental bodies. Our goal is to keep our attention one object or idea so as to produce one image “perfectly within itself”.

Our minds through the power of our will must be kept “kept shaped to one image” so that through the process of contemplation or mediation you can have complete knowledge of the object or idea. Our images of objects and ideas can be acquired by reading descriptions of them; however, pictures often provide far more complete due to the greater detail they provide. Thus, we can usually reproduce a complete and more realistic image from a picture than from the words which are only symbols of the things they wish to represent and at best will give us only a basic sketch or understanding. In concentration, we are actively using our ability to observe all the components and details of an object or idea and over time we be able to take in a greater amount of detail in a shorter period of time.

In being able to effectively concentrate, we must be able to disregard all the things that come into the mind that the mind feels the need to address. Many outside factors must be ignored and even the resistance you use to ignore these factors must eventually be allowed to pass. There is a state of equilibrium you must find between resistance and nonresistance, a place of quiet that turns off the volume of any outside impressions. Then the mind must hold and concentrate on only a single image or thought without responding to it in any manner such as changing and moving its components to different positions or thinking about them in any way that tries to compare or contrast them, explain something else, create connections between them, or discover their meaning. By concentrating on one thing only we are developing a “one-pointedness” of the mind.

Once the skill of concentration (one-pointedness) has been sufficiently developed the next step is to remove the image or thought from your mind so that you now have a state of fixed attention that is not being directed at anything. In this state, your mind is blank and you will be perfectly calm but it will only last briefly. As your concentration on an object or thought from the lower world will suddenly shift to now observing “objects of consciousness in the higher” which now allows the Ego to begin shaping the mental body and fill with your vibrations. Ultimately, as your powers of concentration increase you will come to discover the “non-existence of space for consciousness”.

It is helpful to concentrate on something that is pleasurable and does not give you any feelings of pain. Therefore, you should work with a “beloved image” so that you always wish to bring this image to your mind. For Christians, such an “object

of devotion” could be Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, any saint or martyr, or even an Angel. While if we chose to use something of a “non-devotional nature” we should use a deeply meaningful idea, something insightful or touching, or thoughts that challenge our beliefs and understandings as these will attract and hold the attention of our mind. Virtues can also be concentrated upon and are special in that the “mind shapes itself to the virtue and repeats its vibrations, the virtue” and in return the specific virtue becomes part of who we are and how we live our life. Our concentration is the method by which we shape our minds or “self-create”.

As the practice of concentration can be difficult, you can build towards it by starting with the process of “Consecutive Thinking”. Take for instance a scene from the life of Jesus in the New Testament or a story of a prophet from the Old Testament from which you will create a series of consecutive images. In this process you allow your mind to move from one consecutive image to the next without getting stuck on anyone of the images. The key is to see each image as realistically as possible with the greatest amount of detail and color as possible. Slowly with repetition, the set of images becomes real and the mind will focus its attention the “central figure” or your “object of devotion” within the images. This is also a process used to work with something that has occurred anytime and anywhere and come to all understandings of it and its significance in the bigger picture of life.

On its own, the mind acts as magnet attracting those thoughts and ideas it desires and repelling those it does not like or finds offensive. Generally, we always attract the same type of thoughts we encourage ourselves to dwell upon or we find

agreement with in terms of the things we do with our life. Therefore, in order to train the mind to only allow good and beneficial thoughts by being diligent in the control and selection of thoughts that we allow to enter the mind. Over time our pure thoughts will fill our mind and we become drawn to only to those things and actions that are positive and beneficial or what is called “right receptivity”.

Using the process of concentration not only is a way to advance spiritually it is also the means by which we can use our thought power to help others. If we wish to truly help someone, we can do far better than offering a kind thought. The process involves waiting until the recipient is in a calm state or asleep and then concentrating on an image so that it is addressed to the recipient and with intense concentration so the thoughts “one-by-one” are sent to the mind of the intended person. Ideally, the images and ideas that are directed to the specific person are not intended to control but to stimulate them to put in the effort to perform the intended action or change in their attitude or behavior. The stronger the thoughts we create the longer they will remain with the recipient. The same is found with the effectiveness of prayer, as its effectiveness is proportional to our level and intensity of concentration.

Essential to our development of concentration is building our powers of observation by daily practice. Initially we should thoroughly observe an object in all its details and then place the object in our mind for a short period of time. Then the next day we should bring the object into our mind again for a short time and then compare it to the actual object to check and see where it doesn’t match or is incorrect.

Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda, S. (1989). *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Vedanta Press.

Essentially all the knowledge we have, whether it comes from the external world or our divine nature within comes from our concentration. The mind has many layers and when we go deep enough within these layers we come to the home of God.

However, in order to go within our mind, we must go beyond our senses and control them and then we can “see Him who is the Reality of the universe”. It is a gradual process in which you bring your focus or attention of the mind into progressively “smaller limits”, much like a beam of light that intensifies by slowly narrowing in its diameter to a smaller concentrated point. Then we discover that the more concentrated your mind becomes on a single object or thought the greater its power is brought upon it to discover its external and internal knowledge.

Forms of yoga such as Raja Yoga not only work with the physical body it also works to help students learn to control both the body and mind so that one can come to realize God. A controlled mind brings joy and happiness while an uncontrolled mind will be the source of all your misery. Unfortunately, the great majority of people are allowing their bodies to be controlled by their mind so they will have little if any spiritual growth. The only way to reverse this is through concentration upon the mind so that “mind turns back upon itself”. By developing our powers of concentration on the mind we are increasing the amount of knowledge we can acquire about ourselves and the external and internal worlds as well creating an “instrument to see God”.

Concentration requires that we hold our attention on an object or thought.

Concentrating on external things is the natural function of our mind so that is easy.

The difficulty is to concentrate on internal things or bring the mind inward upon itself. Therefore, as we move our concentration inward it works best when we concentrate upon things we love. Then we will experience concentration and know it to be so as we will lose all sense of time, the past and present will now exist as one and we will be within this oneness. Concentration allows us to control the subconscious mind by arranging and rearranging its contents (i.e., thoughts, ideas, impressions, feelings, opinions, beliefs, etc.) creating a classification system with a set of classification groups so you now have control over them, so that you will then also have control of our conscious mind.

In the practice of yoga, one is attempting to gain “freedom from nature”. All the power that is needed to do this comes from our soul. Yet, in order to have access to this power we need to start by having control over our body and mind then we can use the power of our soul to liberate ourselves. We must use our will which can be empowered by our reasoning, thoughts and feelings of love, and our sense of devotion to our belief of truth and the omnipotence of the divine. “The concentrated mind is the lamp that shows us every corner of the soul.” Ultimately, our salvation and freedom come from our controlled mind.

Concentration allows us to open the many layers of the mind and produces our actions. Initially your concentration is used to merge all “nerve energies” and power within all body cells into a single force that you can direct with your will. Next you should focus your mind upon one point. By using your will, you can then move the

nerve energies up through your spinal column which opens the mind one layer at a time as it passes through the different chakras so as to experience different aspects of the inner worlds. Its final destination is the pineal gland within the brain, “the seat of conservation of potential energy, the source of both activity and passivity.”

Pratyahara is the “withdrawal of the senses” or “the conscious withdrawal of energy from the senses”, it is how we eliminate all possible distractions. While this is followed by *Dharana*, the holding of the mind or the concentration that is placed on one object or idea. A suggested practice for this is to hold your concentration on specific parts of your external body such as your hand so you only feel that part of your body. Then you move within your body and focus on a specific point within your heart. As this is quite difficult for most people, it is easier to use your imagination to place a lotus flower that is brightly shining with light within your heart. Then you can direct your mind to the point in your heart that light is radiating from.

Our mental attitude creates the world we choose to live in. Our thoughts create both the negative and positive things that we experience. Therefore, we must start by believing in world by accepting that everything in the world is good and holy and holds meaning for us. If we find something in the world to be bad or evil then we must not blame world but look within ourselves so we can see the world as the beautiful and sacred place it really is. Take the time to study your mind so you can not only develop the ability and power to attach it to some object or idea but also learn to detach it. Be strong in your mind and words so you can believe in yourself and love so you can move closer to God.

Final Observations

In S.R. Parchment's book, *Steps to Self-Mastery*, he describes advanced students in the Rosicrucian Fellowship Temple of Healing who no longer needed to use the method of looking at the Rose Cross to activate their concentration for healing. At first, they did use this method to enlist their concentration until they were able to produce "the inner glow - light within" then they could simply close their eyes and bring forth their inner light from their concentration. However, until we can develop the required control of our minds we will need to start with "something objective and tangible for our focus" which is why students are instructed to direct their focus to the white rose of the Rosicrucian Emblem during the healing service. Yet, with dedication and persistence will eventually be able to contact our inner light, "burning bush", on our own after you have sufficiently mastered the skill of concentration.

In Buddha's *Parable of the Raft*, he uses a raft and large body of water that one wishes to cross as a simile for explaining how critical it is to learn to let go of things that no longer serve us. Buddha explained to his students that even though we need teachings and methods to develop spiritually at some point there will come a transformation from within us whereby they are no longer needed on our spiritual journey. If we continue to hold on to these teaching and methods, they can become prisons for us that prevent our further spiritual development. In the analogy, Buddha likens the raft (dharma) to the spiritual teachings and methods that are needed by the student to cross a large body of water (our constantly changing reality). However, when the student reaches the other shore (new perspective), they

should not then carry the raft on their heads or shoulders as the purpose of the raft was to cross the water and *not* as something to be clung to.

I will teach you the Dhamma compared to a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. - Buddha

All the methods or skills that we use in our spiritual development are not static, they change as we change. Take for instance our communication with God the Father and how we use words and even images to express our thoughts, feelings, and offer Him praise and thanksgiving. At first, we may even ask God for many things for ourselves or lament about the problems and difficulties in our lives. All of that is fine, because we are at least talking to God and if we continue in our spiritual development those communications will change. Max Heindel goes as far to say that prayer is the key to soul growth, it is essential and should be constant. Prayer which he defines as “proper concentration” is a skill, a tool, a method that we need to work on to develop so our souls can grow. Yet, how we communicate in prayer or proper concentration with the Father will change as our soul grows until we come before the Father in *True Mystic Prayer* in which we are not speaking or visualizing within our minds but maintain complete silence with nothing within our minds so no communication is even necessary, “a voiceless adoration”.

However, there is the true mystic prayer—the prayer where we meet God face to face, as Elijah met Him. Not in the tumult of the world, the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, do we meet Him, but when all is still the soundless voice speaks to us from within. – Max Heindel

Therefore, as you read and perhaps work on some of the methods to develop and improve your skills on concentration realize that after persistent practice some of these methods may be dropped once the transformation occurs in you, while others will either change and evolve as you grow spiritually or can continued to be used as they are simply enhancements to your evolving practice. Hopefully, you can honestly reflect upon your spiritual growth and needs so you can hear what your inner-Spirit is guiding you towards so you may move closer to Christ in your relationship. As you grow spiritually teachers will find you to help you one your path but remember that your teacher is already within you.

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

- Swami Vivekananda

In the next book in this series on The Rosicrucian Fellowship, we will discover how concentration is beginning of meditation so we can explore the full meaning and method of mediation in TRF.

The spiritual journey is individual, highly personal. It can't be organized or regulated. It isn't true that everyone should follow one path. Listen to your own truth. - Ram Dass