

The Way to Seership

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C. W. Leadbeater at Adyar, 1885

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Since this seership is so desirable, since it lies latent in every one of us, is it possible for us to develop it? Certainly it is possible, if we are willing to take the trouble; but for most men [and women] it is no light task, for it means self-control and self-denial, perseverance and single-mindedness. Other men [and women] have done it, so you can do it; but you cannot do it unless you are prepared to throw all your strength into the effort, with an iron determination to succeed.

The motive too, must be pure and good. The man [or woman] whose enquiry is prompted merely by curiosity, or by an ignoble desire to obtain advantage or wealth for himself [or herself], will do well to take warning in time, and leave any sort of occult training severely alone until mental and moral growth are further advanced. For added power and knowledge mean added responsibility, and the higher sight may be a curse instead of a blessing to a man [or woman] who is not ready for it.

There are many ways by which the inner sight may be opened, and most of them are full of danger, and decidedly to be avoided. It may be done by the use of certain drugs, by self-hypnotisation, or by mesmerism; but all these methods may bring with them evil results which far outweigh the gain. There is, however, one process which can by no possibility do harm, and that is the way of thought-control and meditation. I do not say that the undertaking is easy; on the contrary, it is excessively difficult; but I do say that it can be done by determined effort, because it *has* been done.

The man [or woman] who wishes to attempt this must begin by acquiring control over his [or her] mind – a herculean task in itself. He [or she] must learn to concentrate himself [or herself] upon whatever he [or she] may be doing, so that it shall be as well done as is possible for him [or her] to do it. He [or she] must learn to wield his [or her] mind as a skilful fencer wields his [or her] weapon, turning it at will in this direction or that, and able to hold it as firmly as he [or she] wishes. Try to keep your mind fixed on one definite subject for five minutes; before half the time has passed you will find that wandering thoughts have slipped in unawares, and that the mind has soared far away beyond the limits which you set for it. That means that it is not perfectly under your control, and to remedy this condition of affairs is our first step – by no means an easy one.

Nothing but steady practice will give you this power; but fortunately that practice can be had all day long, in business as well as during hours of leisure. If you are writing a letter, keep your mind on that letter, so that it may be written perfectly, clearly, quickly. If you are reading a book, keep your mind on that book, so that you may fully grasp the author's meaning, and gain from it all that he [or she] intended you to gain.

In addition to thus practising concentration in the ordinary course of life, it will help you greatly if you set apart a certain time each day for special effort along these lines. Early morning is the most suitable; but, at any rate, it should be at a time when you can be sure of being undisturbed, and it should always be at the same hour, for regularity is of the essence of the prescription. Sit down quietly and get your mind perfectly calm; agitation or worry of any sort is absolutely fatal to success. Then turn the mind upon some subject selected beforehand, and consider it attentively and exhaustively, never allowing your thoughts to stray aside from it in the slightest degree, even for a moment. Of course at first they *will* stray; but each time you must drag them back again and start afresh. You will find it best to take concrete subjects at first; it is only after much practice that the more abstract can profitably be considered.

When through long habitude all this has become thoroughly familiar to you, when you have attained the power of concentration, and when the mind is well under your control, another step may be taken. Begin now to choose for the subject of your morning meditation the highest ideal that you know. What the ideal is does not matter in the least, for we are dealing now with basic facts and not with outer forms. The Hindu may take Shri Krishna, the Muhammadan, Allah, the Parsi, Zoroaster, the Buddhist, the Lord BUDDHA, and the Christian, the Lord Christ, or if he be a Catholic, perhaps the Blessed Virgin or one of the Saints. It matters not at all, so long as the contemplation of that ideal arouses within the man [or woman] all the ardour, devotion and reverence of which he is capable. Let him [or her] contemplate it with ecstasy, till his soul is filled with its glory and its beauty; and then, putting forth all the strength which his long practice of concentration had given him [or her], let him [or her] make a determined effort to raise his [or her] consciousness to that ideal, to merge himself [or herself] in it, to become one with it.

He [or she] may make that endeavour many times, and yet fail; but if he [or she] perseveres, and if his [or her] attempt is made in all truth and unselfishness, there will come a time when suddenly he [or she] knows that he [or her] has succeeded, when the blinding light of the higher life bursts upon him [or her], and he [or she] realises that ideal a thousandfold more than ever before. Then he [or she] sinks back again into the light of common day; yet that one momentary glimpse can never be forgotten, and even if he [or she] goes no further, life will never look the same to him [or her] as it did before he [or she] saw.

But if he [or she] persists in his [or her] endeavour, that splendid flash of glory will come to him [or her] again and yet again, each time staying with him [or her] longer and longer, until at last he [or she] will find himself [or herself] able to raise his [or her] consciousness to that higher level whenever he [or she] wishes – to observe, to examine and explore that phase of life just as he [or she] now does this; and thus he [or she] joins the ranks of those who *know*, instead of guessing or vaguely hoping, and he [or she] becomes a power for good in the world.